

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

Women in Law and Development in Africa

N°24 - October 2005

EDITORIAL

A DREAM FINALLY BECAME A REALITY: The protocol on women's rights in Africa comes into force this 25 November, 2005

There we are! The good news that women's rights activists have been expecting for over two years is finally announced. The African Union Commission announced this 26 October, 2005 the recording of the 15th instrument of ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to women's rights.

In accordance with the provision in Article 29 (1), this instrument of protection and promotion of African women's rights will come into force 30 days after the date of the 15th deposit, that is precisely on 25 November, 2005.

The entry into force will mark a decisive stage towards the taking root of a culture of respect and exercise of women's human rights in the African society. We are thus delighted to have achieved this. However, let us not lose sight of the fact that our objective to have a global ratification is not achieved yet and that we must remain mobilised more than ever to obtain the adhesion of all the other African countries. In the meantime, we must also begin the struggle for its effective implementation in those countries that have already ratified the protocol. At this important stage of the protocol, for those who would still need the background of this instrument, which is henceforth the pride of all African women, please to find it on: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/publications.php3#391

In this atmosphere of joy but with a great pinching in the heart, we have the duty to announce the departure of Colette Lelièvre, our former Communication Officer who left us since last August. In this issue we make a point of paying her a tribute for the work done in two years and of testifying the quality of the relationships we have had with her. Also, let us discover with Mrs Zo Randriamaro the impact of the cancellation of some African countries' debt on the life of women. Moreover, we note with relief that the World Bank becomes the champion of the fight against inequalities and poverty through his annual report on development in the world "Equity and development" of which you will read a short extract in this issue. Also, take note of what the women committee of GCAP thinks of the outcomes of the world summit held in New York last September and of the main documents resulting from this meeting. Finally, please refer to our usual headings such as Focus on Women of honour, resources, etc.

Good reading and congratulations to African women

Beatrice AJAVON, Administrative and financial officer

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Also available on our website:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng

"Equity is complementary to the pursuit of long-term prosperity" ¹

The World Bank has just published the annual report on development in the world 2006 "Equity and Development". Ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action "Fight for equality, development and peace" whose implementation has just been evaluated, and five years after that of the Millennium Development Goals, this report comes just at the right moment to remind and show us how inequalities between nationalities, races, sexes and social groups, which start at the birth, end up slowing down a country's development.

Are the policies recommended for long time by the World Bank not responsible of this situation of increasing inequalities and poverty? It is fortunate that the institution made itself the champion of the fight against inequalities and poverty. Let us wish that from now on human being be in the centre of its action.

The following passage in which the report presents the course of two South African young people, one of whom is a black girl born of a poor family in rural area and the other a white boy born of a rich family of Cape Town, illustrates how inequalities wrongfully condemn for life to poverty part of the human potential, including women, necessary to the development.

Consider two South African children born on the same day in 2000. Nthabiseng is black, born to a poor family in a rural area in the Eastern Cape province, about 700 kilometers from Cape Town. Her mother had no formal schooling. Pieter is white, born to a wealthy family in Cape Town. His mother completed a college education at the nearby prestigious Stellenbosch University.

On the day of their birth, Nthabiseng and Pieter could hardly be held responsible for their family circumstances: their race, their parents' income and education, their urban or rural location, or indeed their sex.

Yet statistics suggest that those predetermined background variables will make a major difference for the lives they lead. Nthabiseng has a 7.2 percent chance of dying in the first year of her life, more than twice Pieter's 3 percent. Pieter can look forward to 68 years of life, Nthabiseng to 50. Pieter can expect to complete 12 years of formal schooling, Nthabiseng less than 1 year. Nthabiseng is likely to be considerably poorer than Pieter throughout her life. Growing up, she is less likely to have access to clean water and sanitation, or to good schools. So the opportunities these two children face to reach their full human potential are vastly different from the outset, through no fault of their own. Such disparities in opportunity translate into different abilities to contribute to South Africa's development. Nthabiseng's health at birth may have been poorer, owing to the poorer nutrition of her mother during her pregnancy. By virtue of their gender socialization, their geographic location, and their access to schools, Pieter is much more likely to acquire an education that will enable him to put his innate talents to full use. Even if at age 25, and despite the odds, Nthabiseng manages to come up with a great business idea (such as an innovation to increase agricultural production), she would **(Continued p.3)**

¹ M. François Bourguignon, Chief Economist, the World Bank

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa				
Fifteen(15) States have ratified it and only 38 have signed as of October 26, 2005. Entry into force: 25 th November 2005				
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	Chad	
Ghana	Madagascar	Zimbabwe	Equatorial Guinea	
Guinea	RWANDA	Swaziland	Gabon	
Guinea Bissau	Tanzania	MALAWI		
Liberia	Uganda			
MALI	Mauritius			
Niger				
NIGERIA				
SENEGAL				
Sierra Leone				
TOGO				
14	9	7	6	2
Number of countries for each region				
16	13	10	9	5
Number of countries which have ratified for each region				
7	3	4	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.

" Equity is complementary to the pursuit of long-term prosperity "

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find it much harder to persuade a bank to lend her money at a reasonable interest rate. Pieter, having a similarly bright idea (say, on how to design an improved version of promising software), would likely find it easier to obtain credit, with both a college diploma and quite possibly some collateral. With the transition to democracy in South Africa, Nthabiseng is able to vote and thus indirectly shape the policy of her government, something denied to blacks under apartheid. But the legacy of apartheid's unequal opportunities and political power will remain for some time to come. It is a long road from such a (fundamental) political change to changes in economic and social conditions.

As striking as the differences in life chances are between Pieter and Nthabiseng in South Africa, they are dwarfed by the disparities between average South Africans and citizens of more developed countries.

For the entire abstract of the report visit the following site:

econ.worldbank.org/wdr/wdr2006/

Source: Abstract from the short report



Colette LELIEVRE completed her two years mandate at WILDAF – West Africa

Two years already! In our publication n° 16 of October 2003, we announced to you the arrival of Colette Lelièvre, CUSO volunteer, within the team of the WILDAF sub-regional office, as communication officer for a two-year term. Our expectation was great; she had to take up the challenge of giving an impetus to communication within the network.

Since then, time has gone and the two years passed by very quickly, too quickly... We had to part with Colette at the very moment we started together to be delighted at the undeniable results of working hours and self-sacrifice she gave to WILDAF. As evidence, we can mention some figures which speak for themselves; the number of those visiting our web site from July 2005 to the departure of Colette was 9418 whereas it was 1937 in July 2004; the number of subscribers to our quarterly newsletter almost doubled during the same period passed from 738 to 1384.

Yes! Since last 2 August, Colette returned with her family to her native Quebec. On this occasion, WILDAF West Africa wishes to pay her a deserved tribute in this issue. Admittedly, Colette made arrangements to generously transfer her knowledge to the other members of the personnel, but her departure, as the sub-regional coordinator, Kafui Adjmagbo-Johnson underlined it at the farewells reception, will present us with a big problem because she set her standards very high and we will have many difficulties of ensuring the transition while waiting for another communication officer as competent as she is. We infinitely thank her for the effectiveness of her work, which allowed for a revitalisation of communication within the network and her initiatives, which gave a new dimension to WILDAF and therefore, a greater visibility of the actions of our network on the international level. As an example, we can mention the remarkable participation of WILDAF both in the African NGOs forum for the decennial evaluation of Beijing in Addis in October 2004 and in the 49th session of the United Nations on the status of Women where WILDAF – West Africa had to cover these historical events by producing daily bulletins.

In the name of the team of WILDAF – West Africa, our national networks and, with your permission, on your behalf dear readers, we thank Colette. We also thank her husband.

Goodbye dear Colette and every success for your new projects.

WOMAN OF HONOUR



An African woman among the 10 Sigrd Rausing Trust Award Winners

The African Women's Development Fund, and its Executive Director, Ms Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi have been honoured with a prize of £100,000 from the Sigrd Rausing Trust, UK for promoting women's rights.

Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi is Co-founder and Executive Director of the African Women's Development Fund - the first Africa-wide fundraising and grant-making organisation for African women. Before this she was Director of Akina Mama wa Afrika, an international development organisation for African women based in the UK. While at AMWA, she helped to set up the African Women's Leadership Institute.

AWDF: www.awdf.org

Source: www.sigrd-rausing-trust.org/documents/ProfilesofAwardWinners.pdf



Launching of an African prize « Women of subsistence »

From 25th to 26 November, the African Women Development Funds will celebrate its 5th anniversary. During the celebration, the fund will launch a prize called "Women of subsistence". This prize will recognize significant achievements of African women, and also to raise the profile of those who do their work out of the limelight and to encourage emerging leadership. Recipients for 2005 include Ms Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, political leader, Liberia, Mme Josephine Ouedraogo, AG Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Dr Musimbi Kanyoro of the world-wide YWCA, Ms Ama Ata Aidoo, the accomplished writer, from Ghana, and several outstanding AWDF partners from various African countries.

Source:

www.awdf.org/wos/index.php?pid=2

First meeting of Ministers in charge of Women and Gender in Dakar for the implementation of the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (SDGEA)

From 12 to 16 October, 2005, was held in Dakar the first meeting of Ministers in charge of women and gender of the African Union States. These first line officers in charge of the promotion of women and gender in the continent set themselves the objective to take ownership of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) adopted by the Heads of State and government in Addis Ababa in July 2004 and to find ways and means for its implementation.

Prior to this meeting, a one-day meeting was organised by civil society women. It was an opportunity for women networks involved in the campaign in favour of gender equality to prepare their effective contribution to this ministerial conference and to review the objectives which they set during the preceding advisory meeting on integration of gender perspective into the African Union programme. This was the 6th one held in Tripoli, Libya on 1-2 July, 2005. A final document entitled the Dakar Commitment was adopted to be submitted to Ministers in charge of women and gender.

During the plenary session of 15 October, NGOs were invited to present the Dakar Declaration, their contribution to the Conference of Ministers. The Representative of NGOs, Kafui ADJAMAGBO-JOHNSON, sub-regional coordinator WILDAF for West Africa, first all thanked the organisers of the Conference, the African Union, as well as the ministers, for having given the floor to NGOs. She recalled that the tremendous progresses achieved by women in the fight for their promotion were obtained thanks to the inventiveness but also to the solidarity showed by women, mainly about the objectives "of equality, development and peace" since the first decade of women declared by the United Nations in 1975.

She continued by specifying that it is in the name of this solidarity that women's rights NGOs are addressing women ministers in order to make of them allies who could support their recommendations with their respective governments. At the end of her intervention, the speaker gave to the Minister of Senegal, on behalf of NGOs, for the attention of the Head of State, Lawyer Abdoulaye WADE, a personalised specimen of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, relating to Women's Rights. She explained that this act expressed NGOs acknowledgement for the exceptional contribution of President WADE to the promotion of Gender Equality within African Union. Moreover, while acting this way, NGOs hope to find with President WADE an ally and a spokesman who could help to convince his peers of the African Union to ratify the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, relating to Women's Rights.

Following the presentation, the minister in charge of women and social affairs of Senegal, Chairperson of the conference, thanked the NGOs for their contribution and pointed out that the Dakar commitment contains very concrete and relevant recommendations.

She therefore suggested that the document serves as the foundation of the plan of action that the conference will adopt for the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

She also underlined that the role of sentinel of the civil society was very beneficial for governments. With respect to

the message to President WADE, she suggested that the personalised copy of the protocol is given solemnly to the Prime Minister for the President during the closing ceremony scheduled for the end of the day. This was done.

The floor was then given to other ministers taking part in the Conference. Speeches were successively delivered by Algeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Tunisia, Guinea, The Gambia, Togo, Ghana, Angola and Mauritius. The Ministers in charge of women and gender of these countries unanimously thanked and congratulated the NGOs for the proposals which were made and mentioned the need for collaboration with NGOs. The interventions stressed the particular importance of certain recommendations, namely those relating to:

- the support that African States should give to the resolution of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on discriminatory laws against women;
- the transformation of the Declaration on Gender Equality into bill to be adopted by the Parliament.

Following the debates, the conference noted the report of the civil society and requested the African Union Commission to define the terms for the implementation of the recommendations recorded therein.

For the entire Dakar Declaration:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=631

The Solemn Declaration: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=576

Debt cancellation to African countries and its impact on women in those selected countries: An interview with Zo Randriamaro

What does the G8 recent debt cancellation to poor nations represent for women in those selected countries?¹

In the following lines we recall an interview produced by AWID with Zo Randriamaro, a human rights and gender activist from Madagascar. A sociologist by trade, Zo has served as an expert within several international development organizations, the United Nations and USAID. She was the former Manager of the Gender and Economic Reforms in Africa (GERA) regional programme, and has recently joined the WEDO Board (Women's Environment and Development Organization).

AWID: Why are so many groups (human rights, women's rights and civil society organizations) campaigning right now for debt cancellation?

ZR: I think that this is a result of a combination of factors tied to a changing economic and political context as well as various approaches to the debt problem within international institutions. It is clear that one of the reasons why the debt issue has moved to the forefront in the international arena is because of the increasing pressure civil society organizations have created through numerous campaigns such as jubilee 2000 for debt cancellation. The significant impact of such a pressure has been amongst other things, a growing awareness of the debt problem and its consequences on civil society organizations, such as women's organizations and the public at large.

As far as women's rights are concerned, several campaigns and studies have highlighted the negative impacts of the debt on women and their family's access to essential social services. These impacts are a result of expenditure and budgetary cuts to cover the cost of servicing the debt, which usually involve social sectors such as education and health. As well, numerous studies have shown that debt repayment economic measures, rather they were tax policies, monetary policies or budgetary measures; all had negative consequences with greater impact on women than on men because of existing structural gender inequalities particularly in terms of access to and control over

resources.

Pressure by civil society has also led the governments of these indebted countries to increasingly voice the issue of incompatibility between their goals to fight against poverty and their development goals and the conditions imposed upon them as they pertain to their repayment of the debt. As for African nations, a clear example of this collective claim was quite evident in the NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development) where it figures prominently.

If we were to examine the changes in the approaches to the debt problem within international financial institutions (the World Bank and the Monetary Fund) who play a central role in this area, one can see an internal dynamic which has led to questioning certain guiding principles which governed the debt problem in the 70's. This internal dynamic has been partially generated by the external pressures I mentioned earlier, but also mainly by the constant failures of measures put in place in order to repay the debt, such as the first generation of Structural Adjustment programs (SAP) whose final outcome was to guarantee repayment from debtor nations. Following their failure, Bretton Woods institutions launched a new approach to the debt problem which essentially was put in place through the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) Initiative along with what could be called the "second generation of SAP introduced through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). While the PRSP process was still driven by the main SAP

conditionality which was a determining factor in the increase of poverty and its feminization, they also introduced a participatory approach to the Poverty Reduction Strategies. This approach aims particularly at guaranteeing the participation of civil society in the PRSPs. Without going into further details as for the nature of such participation which is quite debatable, I believe nonetheless that it contributed to raising awareness and led to civil society organizations mobilizing. By opening up spaces to question and voice these issues, the PRSP process contributed somewhat to the vulgarization of the debt problem amongst a greater number of organizations from civil society, specially women's organizations which have recently become a preferred target as a result of the claims some of them have made to see women participate more fully to the PRSP process.

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LIBRARY

On the follow-up of Beijing+10:

The resolutions adopted during the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women are now available in French and English. You can download them while visiting: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cs-w/csw49/documents.html and download some documents at **E/CN.6/2005/11 (Final Report)** and E/CN.6/2005/11/CORR.1 in any language you want. This report is about 145 pages. You can find on WILDAF/FeDDAF-WA website some resolution at: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/rubrique=nouvelles_monde.php3#635

Progress of the World's Women 2005

Author: UNIFEM
"Women, Work and Poverty" makes the case for an increased focus on women's informal employment as a key pathway to reducing poverty and strengthening women's economic security. This report marks the fifth anniversary of the UN Millennium Declaration and the tenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. Summary of the report available at: www.unifem.org/resources/item_detail.php?ProductID=48

Debt cancellation to African countries and its impact on women in those selected countries: An interview with Zo Randriamaro

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AWID: The G8 has just agreed to cancel the debt for a group of African countries. What does the cancellation entail? What impacts will it have on women's lives in those countries?

ZR: In order to best understand the potential impacts of this debt cancellation on women's lives, one must first understand the reach of such a decision coming from the G8, beyond the grand statements in the media and the triumphant tone of some African countries and civil society organizations. First of all, as you well know, not all African countries have been exempted even though among the countries which have been excluded, many need the cancellation of their debt in order to satisfy their citizens' basic needs. For example, in order to reach the MDGs it is estimated that not only must the debt be cancelled for all the countries in question, but they must also be allocated an additional aid of approximately 16.5 billions dollars.

Furthermore, even for the countries who benefit, in the end, this cancellation relates only to 10% of their debt since it only pertains to the debt owed to the WB, the IMF and the ADB (the African Development Bank). In comparison to Sub Saharan Africa's \$ 230 billion US in foreign debt, the \$40 billion US fixed ceiling the G8 has agreed upon in terms of the debt cancellation is a far cry from their existing needs. Although we can not deny that such a cancellation is a positive step forward as it does represent a breath of fresh air for those countries in question, they would have to be subject to the qualifying conditions imposed by the WB and the IMF.

Those conditions usually mean trade liberalization measures which often put women at a disadvantage given gender inequalities in terms of access to and control over resources. There are also privatization measures of basic public services such as water which constitutes a common good to which all citizens should benefit and whose value to women is widely recognized, especially in Africa where they usually are responsible for insuring the family's water supply. New conditions pertaining to good governance, the fight against corruption could be added to the G8 conditions at will.

As for its potential impacts on women, if the resources freed from the cancellation of debt are efficiently allocated to sectors which are important to women, especially basic social services (such as education, health, water, energy and transportation), and if the mechanisms to insure their access to those services are in place, then it could have positive impacts on women's lives. We are therefore facing a major obstacle which is the absence of such mechanisms as far as the existing resource allocating and managing system pertaining to the debt cancellation. That is why gender mainstreaming this system (which is essentially comprised of PRSPs and national budgets) is of paramount importance if women's needs and those of other marginalized groups are to be

taken efficiently into account in all concerned sectors.

Also, the impacts on women are not limited only to the level of resources being freed by the cancellation of the debt; they are also tied to the conditionality that comes with cancelling the debt. Those conditions are generally similar to those who come with the SAPs and whose enormous social costs mainly to women, are now well known. Many analysts are even wondering rather the conditions tied to the cancellation of the debt would not in the end increase, or at least perpetuate the indebtedness of those countries that benefit from the cancellation of their debt given that they entail drastic economic reform measures. And we know that they are likely to maintain those conditions which favor indebtedness, such as the deterioration of the terms of trade due to an accelerated liberalization of trade and investments.

AWID: What did the G8 decide not to cancel the debt for all the countries? What are the reasons for this selection? Do they seem fair and equitable to you?

ZR: Despite the official speech which placed a concern for justice and equity in the forefront of the G8's preoccupations, I do not think that justice and equity played a significant role in the G8's decision which is essentially the result of a technical assessment process based on criteria such as the completion point in the HIPC Initiative's framework. Therefore, only those countries who have reached

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

Send us your text (long or short, what counts is the content!) by e-mail to WiLDAF West Africa. **The deadline for the reception of the texts is: December 1st 2005 (for January 2006 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.

info@wildaf-ao.org

Debt cancellation to African countries and its impact on women in those selected countries: An interview with Zo Randriamaro

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this completion point were granted the cancellation and the other 20 countries that could be eligible in the future will also have to reach that completion point.

The political negotiation process among the members of the G8 also played a role in that decision. There was a power play between those who favored a greater debt relief and those who were strongly opposed to it. The power play has undoubtedly been in favor of those who were opposed to it. And when we also know that the United States who has strong hold on the WB was the main opposition, we are not at all surprised by the G8's decision.

This decision is even more unfair and inequitable when one is to examine closely a critical aspect of this cancellation which seems to have evaded many commentators and which has to do with the links between debt and development aid. In fact, those twenty countries that have been privy to that cancellation will probably see the equivalent of that amount deducted from the aid they will receive. We are therefore faced with the notion that the will to confront the debt problem is reduced to a sort of accounting manoeuvring which allows the creditors to give the impression that they are making a great effort in favor of those debtor nations while maintain the status quo in their relations with these countries.

AWID: What can you add in conclusion?

ZR: To conclude, I would say that the cancellation of the entire debt is a crucial issue for women, since this is the only way to guarantee that they will not continue to carry the burden of their impoverished families and communities and to pay with their time, their labor and their dignity for the failures of the Nation-states and the injustices of the international economic order.

Source: Carrefour vol.4 issue 37

¹ Seven out of the 18 countries which qualify for cancellation are in West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

Cancellation of Debt Campaign: www.africaaction.org/campaign_new/debt.php

Jubilee Debt Campaign: www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

Also read a previous interview with Zo Randriamaro on the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of the NEPAD published in our January 2005 newsletter.

Campaign in West Africa for the ratification and/or the implementation of the protocol on women's right in Africa

Fourteen countries in West Africa are organising, between October and November 2005 under the coordination of WILDAF West Africa, national workshops on the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights relating to women's rights in Africa. These meetings will aim at building capacities of women's rights organisations and more particularly civil society organisations with respect to the follow-up of the protocol implementation, adopting a follow-up plan for the protocol implementation and the removal of reservations where there exist. In countries where the protocol is not ratified yet, follow-up committees must, during the workshop, evaluate and update the plans of lobbying for the ratification of the protocol in order to obtain this ratification as soon as possible. It should be stressed that in West Africa: five (5) countries have ratified the protocol and submitted the ratification instrument to the African Union; in four (4) other countries the Parliament has adopted the law authorising the ratification and the procedures are in progress for the submission of the ratification instrument; in the six (6) other countries, the focal points are busy pushing the Parliament to adopt the law authorising the ratification according to the case, the bill having already passed the stage of Council of Ministers and submitted to the Members of Parliament.

These national workshops are planned for two days and are organised within the framework of the "LOBBYING for the ratification of the protocol to the African Charter relating to women's rights in Africa" project with the financial support of OSIWA. They will be held some time in October and November 2005.

At the same time, the sub regional office supported by GTZ-German is rewriting the protocol in a language which will be understood by everyone. This document will be disseminated shortly in the countries of the sub region.

Millennium Development Goals:

What the Women Committee of GCAP think of UN world summit agreements

Women cite successes in un world summit agreements on gender equality, but underscore lack of political will to tackle poverty, foster peace, and ensure human rights (United Nations, New York City, September 14, 2005).

After months of pressuring governments on women's rights, advocates from around the world have achieved some gains on gender equality in the World Summit outcome document, despite the lack of meaningful action on the total package under debate.

Advocates ensured that women's rights issues were not casualties of the Summit's high-stakes poker game. In fact, the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality (#3) has been expanded from an original focus on primary education to include the following:

- An end to impunity for violence against women
- The goal of universal access to reproductive health
- The right to own and inherit property
- Equal access to labor protections
- Increased representation of women in government decision-making bodies

In addition world leaders agreed to repeal all laws that discriminate against women and promised to implement the landmark Security Council Resolution 1325, which promotes women's increased participation in peace and security processes.

One of the most significant achievements of the Summit was a historic agreement on the responsibility of states and the international community to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Another concrete gain is a commitment to double the budget for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

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ECOWAS Watch

The website of ECOWAS was updated. It provides information and documentation to which much wished to have access. It seems that all is not completed because there is still information on ratifications and signing of protocols to be integrated, and the texts are finally available in French and English. While the thematic heading on gender is not very supplied (the policy on gender is not available but there is documentation concerning a forum which was held in September 2003 in Abuja, Nigeria) on the contrary, that on children gives information about the mechanism of peer review of the actions undertaken by Member States to improve the status of children.

ECOWAS' organs websites

Court of Justice: www.court.ecowas.int
ECOWAS Parliament: www.parl.ecowas.int

European Fund for Development: joint report 2004 ECOWAS- European Community

Document compiled within the framework of the progress review of the strategy of regional cooperation (2003-2007).

Report of 9th EFD and the logical framework available on: www.wildaf-ao.org/fr/article.php3?id_article=649

FORUM OF POLITICAL PARTIES, MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN WEST AFRICA

This Forum's main objectives were to facilitate dialogue and interaction at the regional level between the three categories of actors as regards their respective and common roles in the prevention of conflict, the building and strengthening of peace and democracy at the local, national and regional levels. This Forum's aim was also to help establish a network of these diverse actors and facilitate their concerted involvement in actions to be carried out.

The ECOWAS was urged so that the "Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance" must be ratified as soon as possible by its member States who have not yet done so.

Read the final declaration at: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/ecrre/articles.php3?id_article=634

NETWORK NEWS

Togo: Since October 20, 2005 WiLDAF – TOGO has been conducting a campaign to revitalise the "SOS Girls" committees which was set up in schools on the occasion of the campaign of 2001 against sexual harassment in schools and training centres. For that purpose, after an inventory the committees are being reconstituted for some members are no more at school.

In addition, a law draft punishing sexual harassment has been written and discussed with lawyers during a diner at Hotel Mercure Sarakawa on August 27.

Also, on October 20 and 21, WiLDAF – TOGO has organized a workshop on the protocol to African Charter on Human and People's Right on women's rights in Africa. During the workshop three presentations relating to the historic of the protocol, the follow-up of the implementation mechanisms provided in the Charter and the Protocol and the process of "domestication" of regional and international treaties.

Each of these presentations was followed by interesting discussions. There were group works which worked on the development of strategies and an action plan in view to disseminate the protocol and for its effective implementation.

At the end of the workshop, the follow-up committee of the protocol accentuated its lobbying on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that the protocol ratification's instrument should be deposited with the Commission of the AU as soon as possible in order to allow that the protocol enter into force. Thanks to this action and with WiLDAF support the instrument is effectively deposited immediately that allowed Togo to becoming the fifteenth country having ratified the protocol.

Sub-regional office: WiLDAF/FeDDAF – West Africa hold in its premises a working session on 2 and 3 August, 2005 with two representatives of SNV West Africa, a Dutch Development Organisation intervening in 28 countries across Africa, Latin America, Asia and Central Europe.

The objective of this activity was to discuss the possibilities of a sustainable partnership in order to improve effectiveness, efficiency and impact of interventions of both of the structures in the sub-region in the attainment of gender equity, poverty reduction and good governance, define the terms and conditions of this partnership and set up a plan of action. The outcomes of the deliberations are favourable for a partnership between the two institutions and a provisional plan of action was adopted. Its finalisation is ongoing. But we have to notice that for the moment no protocol of partnership was signed.

In addition, thanks to the financial support of the Francophonie Intergovernmental Agency, WiLDAF/FeDDAF –WA coordinated the activities of a delegation of francophone women from Africa to the 10th forum of AWID held in Bangkok, Thailand from 27 to 30 October, 2005. According to terms of this contract, WiLDAF/FeDDAF had the responsibility to identify and coordinate the participation of ten representatives of Francophone African NGOs.

EVENTS

Sub-regional symposium on "Gender, human rights and culture" from 21 to 24 November, 2005

Benin, through its Ministry for Family, Social Protection and Solidarity, plans to organise a sub-regional symposium from 21 to 24 November, 2005 in Cotonou, with the support of development partners. This symposium will serve as a forum of exchanges between specialists in gender, human rights and culture issues.

The main objective will be to institute a sub-regional debate to exchange on experience as regards gender, human rights and culture in order to improve provisions and actions so that women and men can involve themselves and contribute to poverty reduction while taking into account the socio-cultural context of the region.

The symposium will be a significant contribution to the attainment of the MDG and to the implementation of the recommendations of CIPD+10 and Beijing+10, namely with respect to eradication of extreme poverty and reduction of hunger, through the exercise of responsibilities by women and the enhancement of their participation in decision-making.

Participatory, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Course November 21 - December 2, 2005, Kenya

This course aims to enhance the impact of development programmes by improving the accountability of development organisations. According to the organisers, the course will enable the development worker to: link planning, monitoring, evaluation to learning and accountability; Explain concepts related to planning, monitoring and evaluation; Understand different types of monitoring including how to conduct impact monitoring and impact evaluation; Adapt and apply various participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation tools; and Design simple monitoring framework for projects and programmes.

Information:
www.comminit.com/training2005/2005-events/events-3760.html

Source: Pambazuka 220, 8 September 2005

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

180 countries have ratified the Convention up to 18 March 2005.

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

Follow-up on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW

Up to 15th September 2005, only 72 countries have signed, of which 8 African countries and 4 from West Africa.

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

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

No change since 11 June 2004. Only 45 States parties have agreed on the amendment yet. To know more about the amendment, read our July 2004 Newsletter No 19 at:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/rubrique=autrebulletin.php3?id_rubrique=83

More information on CEDAW: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=294

Source: E-Civicus 255 15 June 2005

1800 activists and feminists at the 10th FORUM of AWID from 27 to 30 October, 2005 in Bangkok, Thailand

The last weekend of October 2005 witnessed a particular wave in the Thai capital city Bangkok because of the presence of approximately 1800 women and some men at the Sangri-La Hotel of the city. Met during the 10th Forum of AWID, these men and women were greedy to see women's rights become a daily reality in the life of all citizens worldwide, have had to discuss and share various aspects of woman problem around the topic "How does the change take place? ".

To the question to know the rationale of this forum, six major reasons d'être were put forward. It is a matter of: 1) using the forum to connect all women movements and other feminists worldwide, 2) understanding the changes that occurred since the sixties, 3) better understanding how the world changed around us and the major challenges which threaten the gains of these last decades of struggle, 4) making introspection and taking responsibilities with respect to women's requests, 5) wondering about how things change in order to complete our analyses, addressing issues and creating the change, 6) finally, reviving and revitalising the hope to see a world where women's dreams will fully take shape.

During this four-day Forum, all was implemented so that all leave with new self-confidence that allows for believing in the change despite the adversity of the world surrounding us. According to Lisa VeneKlasen, an American feminist and one of the panellists who concluded the Forum, the change is not linear but

Dynamic, it is sometimes chaotic, confused and uncoordinated but negotiable; it is also fleeting, intermittent but especially non permanent. For these reasons, women need to be alert, ready to grasp all opportunities, to share their analyses of reality at national, regional and international levels, to commit all strata of the society, young and less young people. We must not, she continued, ignore discussions that are held about the future of our planet, we must claim to be where discussions are conducted about technological, scientific and monetary issues rather than to be reactionaries once the changes take place.

WiLDAF West Africa was not outdone during this significant event on women's rights. It was represented at this 10th Forum by its sub-regional coordinator, member of the Planning Committee of the Forum and the Programme Officer of the Office. It should be mentioned that the participation of other representatives of women organisations from Africa was made possible thanks to an agreement concluded between the sub-regional office and the Intergovernmental Agency of Francophonie. The latter requested the services of WiLDAF to coordinate the participation in the forum of about ten representatives of NGOs established in some francophone countries of Western and Central Africa, Madagascar and Djibouti. Our next issue will come back in more details on this 10th forum of AWID.

Read daily reports on: www.awid.org

African Union Watch

Notice of the Fourth Ordinary Session

PURSUANT to Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure of the Pan-African Parliament notice is hereby given of the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament which will be held from **Monday, 21st November to Friday 2nd December, 2005** at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, Republic of South Africa.

Source: www.pan-african-parliament.org

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

No change (46 ratifications) since the inauguration of the Parliament on 18 March 2004. It is in force since December 14th 2003.

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

No change since 25th June 2005, so there is still a total of 39 ratifications. Cape-Verde, Erythrea and Tunisia did not sign it yet. It is in force since December 26th 2003.

Follow up of the Protocol related to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

Twenty countries ratified as of 21st August 2005. It is into force since 25 January 2004.

Follow up of the Protocol on the Court of Justice of the African Union

Up to 11th May 2005, 8 out of 53 States ratified the Protocol and 37 countries signed it.

African Union: www.africa-union.org

Women and health: a concern of the AU?

The African Ministers of Health met in Gaborone (Botswana) in mid-October within the framework of the meetings they organise every two years. It was preceded by a technical meeting with independent experts in September and then by a meeting of experts of the AU Member States in October.

The meeting of Ministers was heavy because they took note of many reports such as a draft project on maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity in Africa and a draft of the working framework on reproductive health. The least one can say is that women are not a particular target. Thus, in the aide-memoire of the meeting, it is only noted that women, just like elderly persons are the most affected by poverty and that this has an impact on lack of food and can cause a nutritional deficiency. Certainly, AU and its Member States have long way to go in the field of health but women account for over 50% of the African population and they have specific needs.

Moreover, it was said and repeated that the millennium development goals, of which several target women's health, cannot be achieved without gender equality. There is thus a particular effort to be done so that women actively participate in the development of the continent. It is important for them to be in good health so that they can participate and plan their family life according to their work and their education. Did women have the possibility of influencing the writing of the two drafts, either on maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality in Africa and another on the policy framework on reproductive health and the other reports which will surround the actions of the Member States?

For the moment, these two documents are not available on the AU site. Let us hope that this will be quickly done because the ministers hope to cause their decisions adopted during the Summit of Heads of State and Government in January 2006.

Aide-memoire of the meeting, Experts and Ministers agenda: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php?id_article=637

Meeting: www.africa-union.org/Social%20Affairs/African%20Ministers%20of%20Health%202005/home.htm

Vacancy at AU

www.africa-union.org/home/Welcome.htm

The **agenda of AU activities** is available in Word and pdf:

www.africa-union.org/News_Events/Calendar_of_%20Events/DRAFT%20CALENDAR%20OF%20MEETING.doc

African Union Award for human rights

www.africa-union.org/award/award.htm

Deadline: 10 November 2005

FOLLOW UP ON NEPAD

Press release following the 13th meeting of the African peer review mechanism panel of eminent persons

The APR Panel also discussed, amongst others, the modalities for the peer review of **Ghana** and **Rwanda** to be undertaken by the APR Forum at its forthcoming Summit in November 2005. The Panel also deliberated and agreed on the work programme of the APR Secretariat and the schedule of the reviews in the next countries namely Kenya and Mauritius in the immediate future and Uganda, **Nigeria**, Algeria in the next stage. www.nepad.org/2005/news/wmview.php?ArtID=38

EVENTS

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

The 38th Session of the Commission will be held from 21 November to 5 December, 2005 in Banjul (The Gambia). NGOs with observer statute with the African Commission are invited to participate in the session.

The precise venue of the deliberations of the said session will be notified in due course and put on line on Internet site (www.achpr.org) of the African Commission.

Participants wishing to make a contribution or to intervene on one or more items on the agenda, are invited to indicate it in advance and to deposit their contributions/statements at the Secretariat two (2) weeks before the beginning of the session.

Millennium Development Goals:

What the Women Committee of GCAP think of UN world summit agreements

(Continued from p.7)

However, women's groups have been dismayed by a shameful lack of political will on the part of governments to tackle poverty, foster peace, and ensure human rights. The grand bargain envisioned for the World Summit has failed. This bargain called for a serious commitment to trade reform, debt relief and financial resources for development in exchange for a Human Rights Council, Peace-building Commission, and UN management reform. Instead, countries deferred these issues to the General Assembly, where the same political divisions prevail.

The US was rebuffed on its top priority of UN management reform, because of its refusal to agree to any substantial compromise on development issues. With the arrival of Ambassador Bolton, the US shifted into high gear, issuing ultimatums, insisting on hundreds of amendments and renegeing on past commitments.

No progress was made on the key demands of developing countries—The US and a few other wealthy nations refused to commit to deadlines for giving 0.7 percent of GNP for official development assistance. Agreements on trade were virtually meaningless. The "agreement" on climate change was a step back from what the G8 agreed to at their recent meeting in Gleneagles, which was already weak. Furthermore, the permanent members of the Security Council retain their veto power, even in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Women expected more from their governments. Once again they have missed an opportunity to take meaningful and bold action on the world's most critical problems. But women's advocates will not be deterred. We will continue to press for our rights and to hold governments accountable for their commitments to the world's women. Source: mailman-new@greenet.org.uk/pipermail/gcap-women/2005-September/000654.html

mailman-new@greenet.org.uk/pipermail/gcap-women/2005-September/000654.html

NEWS FLASH - NEWS FLASH

Liberia: Girls sell sex to stay in school

When Precious was just 12, she sold her body for the first time to a man nearly four times her age. Now 18, the Liberian schoolgirl sleeps with five to six men on an average day to pay her school fees of 1,500 Liberian dollars (£16) a year and to buy food. Precious receives the equivalent of between 27p and 54p from each client.

Article:

www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2089-1763702,00.html

Source: Pambazuka 220, 8 September 2005

Ghana: Teenage Pregnancies on the Increase

About 70, 000 adolescents in Ghana are expected to have children by the end of 2005, considering the current trend of high rate of teenage pregnancies, said Brendan O'Brien, Chief Strategic Planning Officer at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Source: IPPF's article of July 19 2005

Mauritania: Mauritania union doubles number of female members

The General Confederation of Workers in Mauritania (CGTM) has increased its female membership from 15 to 30% through a massive recruitment of women in the informal sector. The aim [of recruiting informal workers] is not only to ensure an improvement in the working conditions of these women but also in their living conditions, which will benefit their

Global Call to Action Against poverty:

www.whiteband.org/index_html/switichLanguage?set_language=en

2005 world summit:

www.un.org/summit2005

Also see our file on MDGs in our July newsletter.

Other resources: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=638

families too, says Abdallahi Ould Mohamed, CGTM General Secretary. The women flooded to our union because they were carried by the hope of an improvement – however small - in their extremely difficult conditions. For more information, visit: www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991222817&Language=EN

Niger: Women banned from grain stores

Polygamy is Common in Niger, Men Control the Food
The UN, aid agencies and the government of Niger have all been blamed for their slow response to aid some 2.5 million people in the country who are facing severe food shortages. However, the story may be more complex, as evidence is now emerging that some problems spring from the country's social structures.

Source: IPPF, article of 25 August 2005

Nigeria: National Birth Registration Scheme Launched

The Federal Government in Nigeria has launched a National Birth Registration scheme. It is meant to indicate the commitment of Government to the well being of Nigerian women and children.

Source: IPPF's article of 15 July 2005

LIBRARY

The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: An Instrument for Advancing Reproductive and Sexual Rights (June 2005)

To download the document: www.reproductiverights.org

URGENT ACTION

Campaign for the nomination of Women as judges at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights which the Protocol entered into force on 25th January 2004 after the deposit of the 15th instrument of ratification has started the process of selection judges. Although it is not compulsory, the AU wishes that Member States encourage the participation of civil society like women's groups in the process of selection of nominees. Follow the process of selection to ensure that enough women nominees are proposed. If necessary, think to propose names of women.

Time is against us. **The deadline is 30th November 2005** for the deposit of nominations. Please act now! Read: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=630

LIBRARY

Prioritising Budgets for poverty Reduction

Nine African countries studies on the budget transparency among which 3 West African countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria.

www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC18952

Source: Eldis Poverty Reporter of 20 July 2005

G8 Gleneagles 2005

At the G8 Gleneagles Summit 6-8 July 2005, the G8 countries committed themselves to double the development assistance to Africa by 2010.

Read the final communiqué (pdf) on:

www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/PostG8_Glneagles_Communique.0.pdf

The other documents are available (pdf) on:

www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1119518704554

The 2005 World Summit

All the main documents are available on: www.un.org/summit2005/documents.html

« In Larger Freedom »

Kofi Annan presents report outlining actions needed to follow up on the commitments made in the historic Millennium Declaration.

Available on: www.un.org/largerfreedom/

Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

This paper examines the interface between globalisation and democratisation in Nigeria. www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC17871

Millennium Development Goals

Which African countries are likely to achieve these goals?

Find out on: www.uneca.org/mdgs/MDGs_page.asp

FINANCING

Call for Biodiversity projects: "combine the conservation with sustainable development"

The Fondation Ensemble
Submission Deadline: 15 March 2006

The Fondation Ensemble is calling for concrete project proposals that combine the conservation of the natural heritage of underprivileged populations with sustainable development activities. To learn more, visit:

www.fondationensemble.org/ensemble_eng/news.php?id=19&lang

Source: E-Civics 270, 08 Nov. 2005.

RESOURCES

UN report warns against focusing on FDI as development policy

A new UN report suggests that excessive emphasis on attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) may distort development policy in Africa, and in some cases FDI could actually limit long-term growth potential.

Source: MDG/ECA
www.uneca.org/mdgs/Story7September05.asp

Africa can move faster on MDGs, says report

A new report on the Millennium Development Goals published by the Economic Commission for Africa says that despite widespread pessimism, some African countries are on course to meet key Goals and that with the right policies; many more could meet the target date of 2015.

Article: www.uneca.org

Source: ECA Press Release No. 14/2005 – 13 September 2005

GOOD WEBSITES

The **Coalition for Improving Maternity Services** (CIMS) is developing a list of organizations contact information in preparation for a global survey of mother friendly practices and a Global Summit. CIMS was founded in 1996 in the United States and is now a coalition of more than 50 organizations representing over 90,000 members. CIMS mission is to promote a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs. International interest has been growing in the steps of the Mother Friendly Childbirth Initiative (MFCI).

Language: English

URL: www.motherfriendly.org/MFCI

EVENTS

Portugal: Conference on ESC Rights

CIDESC – International Centre on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with the collaboration of the Office of the President of the New University of Lisbon, in partnership with Ethical Globalization Initiative.

Location: Rectory of the New University of Lisbon, Campolide Campus, Lisbon

Date: 24th – 26th November 2005

Language: English and Portuguese

Information: www.esc-rights.org/EN/conference_organization.htm

World social forum

World Social Forum (WSF) is a polycentric event which will take place in Bamako (Mali) from January 19th to 23rd, 2006, in Caracas (Venezuela) and Karachi (Pakistan) from January 24th to 29th, 2006. The WSF will come back to the centralised one and will take place in Nairobi, in Kenya.

Date: 19-23 January 2006
Venue: Bamako, Mali

www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=12&cd_language=2

Role of the Media in the Development of Education in Africa

Date: 20-22 March, 2006
Venue: Lagos, Nigeria

Organised by the Teens Resource Centre, this event will provide a forum to discuss how media power can be harnessed to aid in developing education in Africa.

www.comminit.com/events_calendar/2006-events/events-4087.html

Source: Drum Beat of November, 4 2005

WILDAF WEST AFRICA Newsletter

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Flash News - Flash News - Flash News

Togo: Men Reluctant to Allow Pregnant Wives to Undergo VCT

More than 18 months into a programme to prevent vertical transmission of HIV in Togo, half the pregnant women approached are still refusing to be tested for the virus during prenatal consultations, often because of pressure from their male partner, doctors said.

Article:
www.ippf.org/imspublic/IPPF_News/NewsDetails.aspx?id=4599

Nigeria: Violence against women must stop

It was "Folake" who was jailed after she accused a man of rape.

To take action:
web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/nga-180705-action-eng

Africa: School fees 'barrier for girls'

The biggest barrier to girls' education around the world is school fees, a charity argues.

Save the Children says in a report that 17 of the 25 countries with the most girls not in school still charge fees. It says another 4.5 million children would go to school if fees were abolished in 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance.

The report focuses on girls, who are said to make up 60% of the 100 million children worldwide not being schooled. Save the Children says that in Liberia, for example, sending one child to school costs half the average income of £62.

Report in PDF:
www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/3531_schoolbook.pdf

Article:
news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/4215934.stm