

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

Women in Law and Development in Africa

N°25 - January 2006

EDITORIAL

The major event of the year 2005 for African women was unquestionably the entry into force of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. It is therefore understandable that it was celebrated in the countries by women's rights activists as you can read in the section "Network's news" and by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at the 38th session which this 25th issue of the newsletter also talks about.

Several other indicators about equality and development objectives for African women other than the entry into force of the Protocol make us look at the future with optimism. First, we have the increasing commitment of governments and inter-state institutions which are taking concrete actions aiming to promote gender equality and women's rights. In our West African sub-region, we report in this issue on the commitment of ECOWAS in this respect. There is increasing awareness and mobilisation of women who are better organising themselves, thinking and taking actions in order to consolidate their gains, to capture new rights while contemplating possible developments at the national, regional and global level. The 10th AWID forum, the numerous initiatives taken by women groups at the global, regional and national levels such as the campaign for the appointment of a woman as the next Secretary General of the United Nations, the one for the appointment of women judges at the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, the "why not a woman" programme in Côte d'Ivoire, that we are pleased to present to you in this edition, are perfect illustrations of this observation. However, we still have a long way to go. Our network is proud to continue contributing by initiating, early this year, a new three-year programme on women participation in governance in 7 West African countries with the financial support of the European Commission.

I rather leave you to discover all these topics without forgetting to wish you a happy new year 2006. We must acknowledge that it is starting under good omens! A woman has for the first time been sworn in as the president of an African State, after having won the presidential election of November 2005 in Liberia. Let's therefore celebrate the event.

Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson – Sub-Regional Coordinator

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Also available on our website:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng

Echo from the 10th international forum of the Association for Women's Rights and Development (AWID)

EVENTS

We promised in our previous issue to revisit the 10th AWID forum on women's rights and development held in Bangkok from 27 to 30 October, 2005. Kafui Kuwunu, Programme Officer at WILDAF who participated in the forum gives us a more detailed account of the deliberations of this forum.

For 4 days, participants attended various types of activities that are plenary sessions, thematic sessions and workshops, group discussions, caucus and cultural activities.

Plenary sessions

Every day commenced with a 2 hour plenary session. The opening plenary of Thursday, 27 October was aimed at providing answers to some questions such as: what have we changed and why are we here? It was a retrospective glance of what had been achieved by the feminists of the world in terms of failures, success and perspectives for women in their quest for well-being in a more just world. To answer this question, six main purposes and roles were advanced. They are:

Using the forum to globally connect all women's movements and other feminists.

It was an exceptional moment when thousands of feminists from all over the world gathered in the same room to talk to each other and review how to take advantage of this world that is increasingly hostile to women.

Understanding the changes that feminists were able to make.

Panelists recalled how attitudes, concepts, institutions have changed. Women movements have imparted a new vision and reality to the world: women have turned the private space into a public sphere revealing violations that they silently suffered and endured before, how mechanisms of gender equality have been implemented by States and how training activities in universities and schools for a better consideration of gender issues have been initiated. The participants realised that the exercise was necessary in order to

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The 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The session will be held 27 February – 10 March 2006 in New York. The following two themes will be discussed:

- Enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work.
- Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels.

There will also be lot of NGOs parallel events.

Visit the session website at: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/50sess.htm

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa Seventeen (17) States have ratified it and 39 have signed it as of January 24, 2006. Entry into force : 25th November 2005

WEST AFRICA	EAST AFRICA	SOUTHERN AFRICA	CENTRAL AFRICA	NORTH AFRICA
BENIN	COMOROS	LESOTHO	Burundi	Algeria
Burkina Faso	DJIBOUTI	MALAWI	Congo	LIBYA
CAP VERDE	Ethiopia	MOZAMBIQUE	Chad	
Côte d'Ivoire	Kenya	NAMIBIE	Democratic Rep. Of Congo	
GAMBIA	Madagascar	SOUTH AFRICA	Equatorial Guinea	
Ghana	Mauritius	Swaziland	Gabon	
Guinea	RWANDA	Zambia		
Guinea Bissau	Seychelles	Zimbabwe		
Liberia	Tanzania			
MALI	Uganda			
MAURITANIA				
Niger				
NIGERIA				
SENEGAL				
Sierra Leone				
TOGO				
14	10	7	6	2
Number of countries for each region				
16	13	10	9	5
Number of countries which have ratified for each region				
8	3	3	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.

“Good governance and women’s participation in West Africa”, a new project of WILDAF to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

The sub-regional office has just signed a financial contract with the European Commission for a project on “good governance and women’s participation”. Commenced in early January 2006, this project will last three years and 7 West African countries namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo will benefit from it. Its overall objective is to contribute to an effective participation of women in governance at local and national levels. Specifically, the project aims at building capacities of women in urban and rural areas to influence decisions, policies and programmes implemented by the authorities for a better consideration of the basic human rights of women and gender equity.

Why initiated such a project?

In the early 90’s, all countries in the sub-region embarked on a process of democratisation characterised by the adoption of new Constitutions and laws instituting political pluralism, decentralisation, liberalisation of community life and acknowledgment of individual rights and freedoms. In principle, the reforms cleared the way for a massive participation of citizens, men and women, in the management of public affairs, a prerequisite for good governance. Thus, the Constitutions of the countries concerned by the project enshrined the principle of gender equity and prohibit discrimination based on gender. Similarly, they recognise the right of every citizen to participate in the management of public affairs. On their part, laws relating to decentralisation enable women to accede to new decentralised structures. However, according to information of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Sub-Saharan Africa, representation of women in parliaments was 11.3% in 2000. It was estimated at 5% at local government level. Being in greater number in associations and civil society organisations, they do not influence decision-making bodies as such.

Development policies, plans and programmes adopted at national, local and at decentralised level do not really take account of the practical needs and strategic interests of women despite the often manifest option for the integration of gender into the planning documents. This lack of particular attention for women is also reflected in budgets through which the portion allocated for the satisfaction of women’s needs is difficult to determine.

Traditionally, public sectors such as those of water, electricity and health are being privatised in many countries. There is a situation in which the satisfaction of essential needs that constitute fundamental human rights is often entrusted to private stakeholders seeking profit. Due to their family responsibility, women are the ones who particularly suffer from the consequences of privatisation and difficult access to water, health, electricity, etc.

In all countries, public authorities often mention budgetary constraints. Globalisation is also often seen as a factor that negatively influences choices in favour of women and the availability of resources allocate to them. However, it is obvious that a redefinition of priorities during the adoption of policies and programme design would better make it possible to take viewpoints, needs and interests of women into consideration. It is thus important in this regard to influence those currently active in the decision-making bodies.

The capacity building activities in the project will be done through two strategies, among which training of women’s rights organisations in decentralisation, gender, budgeting and budget analysis process, lobbying and techniques of negotiation. The second strategy will be based on networking and exchange of information and sharing of best practices at all levels, namely local, national, sub-regional, and even regional level.

WOMAN OF HONOUR



Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, first woman elected as Head of State in Africa

Elected on the 8 November, 2005 with 59.4% of the votes after free, transparent and democratic elections, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, first woman President of Liberia and in Africa was sworn into office on 16 January, 2006 for a 6-year term. For this historical event, many African leaders were present in Monrovia.

Aged 67, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a widow and mother of 4 children. She occupied high ranking positions in the United Nations, the World Bank and in private financial institutions. She was also Minister of Finance in her country in the late 1970s.

Known as the « Iron Lady » because of her strong personality, she promised during her appointment to break with corruption and to govern in a spirit of national unity for the reconstruction of Liberia, this small African country ruined by so many years of war. Under our administration, corruption will be the main public enemy. «We will face and fight it » she said. She undertook to work for the empowerment of women and capacity building as well as to defend their rights. In that vein, she stated that she will ensure the strict application of the law passed on rape.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is strongly supported by international community, namely the United State and the European Commission and also by Liberian and African women. They had the privilege of holding talks with her on 14 January, during a women’s forum organised to celebrate her coming to power. An important delegation of representatives of African women’s organisations including Bineta Diop of Femmes, Africa Solidarité, Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi of African Women Development Fund, our sub-regional coordinator, Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson attended this forum and the swearing-in ceremony to give their support to the one whose election marks the beginning of a new era for African women.

We wish her good luck and lot of courage.

ECOWAS involves itself in the promotion and protection of African women's rights

A workshop on integration of gender in development and women's rights was held at Saly Portudal, Senegal, from 6 to 8 December, 2005. The initiative emanated from the ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development (ECGD) which invited the gender focal points of ECOWAS member States and the members of the Advisory Council of the said centre to this meeting. The deliberations should make it possible, among others, to harmonise the conception of tools, to build capacities of focal points on gender and to train them on women's rights, and to adopt a plan of action for the integration of gender and women's rights in development policies and programmes.

There was an unanimous decision on the need for the Centre and the States, particularly the Ministries for Women's Affairs, to focus henceforth on women's rights through all their actions.

It was observed that all countries have now integrated gender into their poverty reduction strategy papers and they have a policy on gender. However, concerning what has been achieved, participants acknowledged that these policies must be reviewed so that the approach is integrated therein. The representative of Mali pointed out that this review process is in progress in her country with the support of UNICEF.

Consequently, participants decided, that apart from the CEDAW, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of women in Africa, as well as the Solemn Declaration on gender equality in Africa would form the basis of their actions.

Thus, they placed among other points in their plan of action lobbying for the ratification of the Protocol by 8 countries of the sub-region that have not done so yet. The formation committees to review legislative texts of national laws to be harmonise in accordance with the Protocol where the ratification and the submission of ratification instrument have already been done, the vulgarization of the Protocol and let the population be aware of its contents and that of the Solemn Declaration. Collaboration with civil society organisations at sub-regional and regional levels for the implementation of the plan geared towards women's human rights was also inserted as a must in the workshop documents.

It should be pointed out that ECGD was established during the 26th meeting of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held in Dakar in January, 2003. Its mission is to do all within its means to create an enabling environment to foster the development of women in the sub-region. To that end, it has to launch, develop, facilitate, coordinate and monitor strategies and programmes likely to ensure the integration of gender issues into ECOWAS programmes.

We commend the Centre and the official focal points on gender for having chosen a vision, which, undoubtedly will make it possible to make giant leap forward in the sub-region on gender equality and creating conditions for a sustainable development.

As far as civil society is concerned, it is ready to collaborate with strategic partners that are working for the full integration of the rights of West African women

Soon, the documents of the meeting will be available in the website.

Echo from the 10th international forum of (AWID)

(continued from page 2)

recall the origins of the feminist movement, to constantly focus on where it is going.

Better understanding how the world has changed around us and the big challenges that threaten the benefits and gains of these past decades of struggle. The constant increase of the militarization of States, the phenomenon of major companies that wish to control the world and increasing religious fundamentalism, the lack of real will on the part of governments to promote women's rights, the HIV/AIDS pandemic were cited by the panellists to demonstrate to the participants of the forum how big the threat hanging over feminist movement was, threatening the achievements of the past years. The panellists concluded that it was necessary for women to meet and evolve new strategies and programmes of actions.

Conducting a self-analysis and taking up some responsibilities with respect to the demands of women. How do women live through these changes every day? That is the main question that was asked. Women need to think deeply about it in order to dismantle and rethink the structures that oppress them.

Pondering over how things are changing? Are the changes the result of actions such as popular movements, establishment of strategic alliances or by the establishment of a space within public institutions? These are some questions, according to the panellists whose answers will make it possible to fine-tune analyses, solve problems and create the change. To that end, women need to build their capacities, while identifying needs for the change.

Finally, the last purpose and role of the forum is to revive and revitalise the hope and expectation of seeing a world where women's dreams would come true.

While the two plenary sessions of Friday 28 and Saturday 29 October addressed the same issue namely, to know what change is taking place around us, that of Saturday continued to brainstorm over the issue of the day before; at the same time, it went further by focussing on how we activists should change and what we can do to do the change. Indeed, in view of the rise of religious fundamentalism, the ever-widening gap between

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Interview of Abdourhama Amina, Director of the Promotion of Woman in Niger and gender focal point in Niger

LIBRARY

This interview was given during the workshop on integration of gender in development and women's rights which was held at Saly Portudal, Senegal, from 6 to 8 December, 2005.

WiLDAF: Good day Mrs Abdourhama Amina!

Madame Abdou Amina: Good day WiLDAF !

WiLDAF: The government of Niger through the Ministry in charge of Woman has carried out advocacy and sensitisation actions in the area of women rights. What was exactly the matter?

A A: The matter was to conduct advocacy and sensitisation actions namely the creation of a socio-cultural context favourable to gender. As you know it, Niger is a country which population is 98% Moslem and many religious people think that gender and equality issues are inconsistent with Islam.

That is the reason why the Ministry in charge of the Promotion of Woman has initiated series of three workshops aimed at government officials, members of Parliament and managers of technical departments and members of the civil society on the theme gender and Islam.

WiLDAF: What were arguments that emerged from the debates tending to show that gender is not inconsistent with Islam?

A A: Arguments emerged from the debates tending to show that gender is not inconsistent with Islam. They are as follows: Koran is a holy book more «gender» than other books of the kind. Hence each time we talk of «Moslems» we refer automatically to Moslem women; «faithful men» «faithful women» «men» «women» etc. Koran has never referred to a sex category without referring to the other. And when it comes to generalise, it talks of «humans» and God said «the best of you (men and women) will be the one that on the doomsday will go to the heaven». It has also been said in a sura that «God's blessing comes down in homes where three girls are raised» what has not been said concerning boys. God also said while talking to

men, «the best among you will be the one that will have been mild towards his wife.»

WiLDAF: What impact did this action have?

A A: The impact of this action is noticeable at various levels:

- Concerning decision-makers: one notes the Prime Minister political commitment which asked that the debates get a large diffusion.
- The members of Parliament committed to sustain henceforth the actions of the Ministry in favour of women and to lead themselves populations' sensitization actions.
- Associations of religious people: committed to make the promotion of women's rights and to participate in popularization action of arguments elaborated on gender and Islam.

WiLDAF: Can one hope that the context is favourable to the withdrawal by Niger of reserves expressed on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women as well as on the ratification soon of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa?

A A: One can have a lot of hope since the Protocol is currently on the government's agenda since it will be discussed very shortly at the Cabinet Meeting. Concerning the CEDAW, arguments for the withdrawal of the reserves are elaborated, a plan of action for its implementation has been elaborated and all internal texts contrary to the CEDAW have been listed to be harmonize. However these various actions can succeed, not only with the political support to the highest level but also with the contribution of the civil society and the support of the partners in development

WiLDAF: Thank you. Mrs. Abdourhama Amina, Director of the Promotion of Woman, Niger.

“Where is the money for women rights?”

This report is the result of an action research initiative launched by AWID to explore where is the money and to give insights into possible strategies for changing the existing funding landscape so that more resources are made available to women's rights organizations.

Available in PDF at:

www.awid.org/publications/money_report_2005_en.pdf

Guide for Global Health Research funding

Author: Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research

The Guide is the fundamental component of the Road Map. It contains summary information about funding sources for global health projects, including eligibility criteria, application procedures and contact information. You can view the sources according to deadline date, type of funding (research funding or capacity development/training) or by the name of the opportunity. The information provided in the summaries is not exhaustive but rather is intended to serve as a guide to help you determine which sources you would like to look into more closely. Please visit the websites of the sources you think are most applicable to your work to learn about all of the details related to eligibility and application.

Guide:

www.ccrsm.ca/default.cfm?lang=f&content=funding_roadmap&subnav=roadmap

Source: AWID Resource Net Announcements Issue 295

Meeting the Challenges of Unemployment and Poverty in Africa Economic Report on Africa 2005

Published by the Economic Commission on Africa (ECA), the report shows that, although Africa is experiencing an unprecedented economic growth, poverty is increasing.

Read the full report (PDF only):

www.uneca.org/era2005/full.pdf

«Why not a woman?»: A programme of the Coalition des Femmes Leaders de la Côte d'Ivoire (CFELCI): BODOUA Affoua Hélène talks more about it

WiLDAF/FeDDAF met madam Bodoua Affoua Hélène member of the Coalition. She is in charge of gender issues at the Ministry of African Integration. She answered our questions during the ECOWAS meeting of gender focal points in Senegal December 6-8th 2005.

WiLDAF: Good afternoon madam BODOUA Affoua Hélène.

B A H: Good afternoon

WiLDAF: Ivorian women are said to have launched an action titled "why not a woman". What is this action? How did it start?

B A H: This action named "why not a woman" corresponds to the need to promote women in decision-making bodies. Through this programme, we intend to encourage women to act by themselves in order to be seen in a different way and their opinion taken into consideration. It is an awareness raising programme, awareness of the youth, children, but mainly awareness of women themselves. They have to realise that they have a role to play; they can make a contribution. Here, CFELCI dares to propose an alternative. That is why this programme is a vast campaign of sensitisation of men, women and children on the perception that each and every one of us has about women, the role they can play in our day to day lives and in the life of the nation.

To begin with, it is a programme of the Coalition of Women Leaders of Côte d'Ivoire established since April 2003 after the outbreak of the war because women felt a little bit responsible for what was happening. They had to go beyond their political membership to try to contribute to the reconstruction of the Nation. We have had the advantage of being brought together by the then Director of the American Cultural Centre, an important initiative because, at that time Côte d'Ivoire was so divided it would have been difficult for an Ivorian woman to bring together all these women around a table.

The Coalition decided to work in the decision-making spheres (Government, National Assembly, Communes...) for the representation of women on these bodies, and their representation in the economic world and the consideration of their work

in public finance.

WiLDAF: Who are the women or women's organisations involved in it? Was it possible to rally women of all political beliefs and socio-economic conditions around this action?

B A H: The Coalition of Women Leaders of Côte d'Ivoire is a national and non governmental organisation with various political backgrounds. It brings together women leaders which are motivated and prepared to work for the promotion of women at all levels and within public and private governmental decision-making bodies.

Yes, women of all political beliefs and socio-economic conditions are united together around this action (women from numerous women organisations, various political tendencies, spouses, mothers, workers, housewives, CEOs, executives, ministers, members of Parliament, religious...).

WiLDAF: What has been concretely planned for the upcoming elections? Can we expect a strong female candidate supported by women during presidential elections?

B A H: What is planned for the next elections is the sensitization of women so that they get involve in politics because

they do not dare often. They lack self confidence. The programme intends to boost the confidence of women in two ways:

- Organisation of a tour of political parties to encourage them to insert in their Constitutions an article for parity or for quotas to show women that they rely on them and that they want to grant them a particular place;
- Request political parties to trust women so to break resistance, to allay suspicion. By requesting women and men who want to be candidate to do so openly in order to give chance to women to express their ambitions and enable parties to make its choice;
- Training of 200 women (women to win, women to bring political change) throughout the country and in five regions of the Côte d'Ivoire (North, South, East, West, Centre) in order to provide them with tools to challenge the men.

We wish that these women who are candidates to bring something new, particularly:

- In their way of campaigning (campaign based on truth, ethics);
 - To have a programme and stick to it. They should disseminate the problems of the society which they intend to defend at the National Assembly, for instance, to ensure that laws to be adopted will take into consideration the aspirations of the grassroots women. In other words, "I struggle to defend my party, but I also struggle to defend the cause of women and thus I prepare a programme". The programme targets all elections. However, given the budgetary
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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: March 1st 2006 (for April 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

«Why not a woman?» in Côte d'Ivoire

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constraints, the programme specially targets legislative and municipal elections and afterwards general council elections.

But if there are women who wish to stand in the presidential elections, the programme will support them. The programme targets a percentage of 30 to 50% of women in government and in institutions.

WILDAF: Do Ivorian women feel concerned by the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women? When will its ratification by Côte d'Ivoire take place and what are women doing in this regard?

B A H: Absolutely, Ivorian women feel concerned by the Protocol on the Rights of Women since Côte d'Ivoire adhered to the Charter and mainly in the part relating to women's rights. Côte d'Ivoire knows that the Protocol entered into force since early December 2005. We are obliged to ratify it and this action is in progress.

WILDAF: Thank you very much.

**Violences
against women
are violences
against the
society.**

**Creation of a francophone
price on democracy in
Bamako**

The Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) has announced on Tuesday November 10th 2005 in Bamako the creation of "Prix francophone de la Démocratie, des droits de l'homme et de la paix."

Article:

www.democratie.francophonie.org/article.php3?id_article=1501?id_rubrique=72

Echo from the 10th international forum of (AWID)

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the poor and the rich, considering the growth in biomedical technology and the impacts on peoples' rights, the panellists wondered whether the changes were unavoidable and the future was pre-determined. They held discussions on how to preserve the gains, how to bring their influence to bear on the world market and promote the admission of new identities, fight against structural and systemic inequalities from the domestic level to global level and to change governments' policies and international organisations such as the UN. The session, despite all these changes occurring around us in terms of threats and opportunity, ended on a positive note; change is possible not to the detriment of women but to their benefit if they are enlightened, ready to seize all opportunities to act.

The closing plenary session ended in a summary of main points. It availed the participants of the opportunity to say what they have learnt from this meeting and review actions carried out. Furthermore, the last plenary session drew the outlines and orientations of the feminist movement for the future. As Lisa VeneKlasen, an American feminist and one of the panellists who drew conclusions of the forum said, change is not linear but dynamic; it is sometimes chaotic, confused and disorganised but negotiable. It is also, ephemeral, intermittent but especially non permanent. For these reasons, women need to be enlightened, ready to seize all opportunities, share their analysis of the reality at the national, regional and international level, and involve all segments of the society, young and younger. Women should not be ignorant of discussions that are going on about the future of our planet; they should demand to be at the places where discussions are held about technological, scientific and monetary issues rather than to be reactionaries once the changes have occurred.

During this four-day Forum, no stone was left unturned to ensure that every one left with a new self-confidence that allows for believing in change in spite of the adversity of the world in which women live. The plenary sessions were successes in view of the personality of the various panellists and also their view and organisation. Visual effects, photos, video, shows caught attention. It also gave rise to some poignant testimonies as the affirmation of the sexual identity of some participants or the activism of women fighting the policies of Bush in the USA.

WiLDAF/FeDDAF-West Africa will attend the 2006 CSW

WiLDAF/FeDDAF-West Africa will attend the 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It will organize in parallel two workshops, one on good governance and the other on the follow up of Beijing+10 and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Activities undertaken during the 49th session:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=484

Declaration at the 48th session:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=307



ECOWAS Watch

Conversion of ECOWAS Secretariat into a Commission

The Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS has been transformed into a Commission. This is one of the recommendations of the Council of Ministers submitted to Heads of States and Government of the sub regional institution at the 29th summit.

The objective of this change is to encourage the improvement of performance of the community, to increase the efficiency of the executive and to contribute to the acceleration of the integration process.

During the opening ceremony of the Council of ECOWAS Ministers, the executive Secretary General, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, was convinced that to overcome poverty, West Africa should give priority to the regional components when elaborating national programme for peace and security and in its relation with partners in development.

Read the press release:

news.ecowas.int/en/presseshow.php?nb=5&lang=en&annee=2006

Source: ECOWAS Press release N°3/2006 - 11/01/06

Akua KUENYEHIA (Ghana) reelected for a second mandate as Judge at the International Criminal Court

Resumed session of the fourth session of the Assembly of States Parties, held at United Nations Headquarters on 26 and 27 January 2006. Mrs Kuenyahia is a member of WILDAF-Ghana and she continues her work in the network.

Questionnaire sent to candidates by the ICC Coalition:

www.iccnw.org/buildingthecourtnew/issues_campaigns/electionjudges/CICCCQuestionnaireICCcandidates_eng.pdf

Reply by A. Kuenyahia:

www.iccnw.org/buildingthecourtnew/issues_campaigns/electionjudges/CICCCQuestionnaireAkuaKuenyahiaGhanaReply.pdf

WILDAF met Mrs Kuenyahia when she was first elected. Read the interview she gave us at:

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=683

What is ICC: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=471

International Criminal Court: www.icc-cpi.int

ICC Coalition: www.iccnw.org/index.html

Related article: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=456

NETWORK NEWS

News from our networks were up to the minute with the news being mainly focused on the 16 day annual campaign against gender violence. The themes of the campaign were selected based on the most recurrent aspects of violence in each country. It should be pointed out that the special features of this year's campaign are that its launch fortunately coincides with a historical event in African women's fight for equality. That is the entry into force of the Protocol to the African Charter relating on the Rights of Women. In addition to the activities in connection with the campaign, some of our national networks celebrated this event. This was the case of the networks of Benin, Senegal and Togo.

BENIN: During this 2005 campaign, WILDAF/FeDDAF BENIN again broadcasted spots on violence against women during fifteen days. The spots were broadcasted during peak viewing hours on the Benin national television.

At the same moment, activities were also organised on the entry into force of the Protocol on the Rights of Women. Banners announcing the coming into force of the Protocol and the victory of women who campaigned for it were displayed at strategic places of Cotonou.

GHANA: In order to speed up the process of passing the law on domestic violence against women, WILDAF/FeDDAF Ghana organised various sensitisation activities on this issue; consequences of this violence on the life of women and its negative impacts on the national economy. To this end, the network carried out a project entitled "Faces of Violence" on 25 November 2005 which consisted in 13 women wearing wedding dresses standing up at strategic corners of Accra. They had fake bandages on different parts of their bodies to symbolise cases of violence in their households or families.

Moreover, the network collected pictures depicting serious cases of domestic violence whose exhibition at the "British Council" was also combined with a conference attended by various political personalities. Also, members of other women's rights organisations in Ghana were in attendance. The conference aimed at helping the public to grasp the seriousness of the issue of marital violence. Through the exhibition of these shocking pictures, WILDAF intended to secure the support of the Ghanaian population on the bill on domestic violence. This action attracted wide media coverage.

In the interior of the country, various activities were also organised to mark the 16 day activism against gender violence. A workshop on the domestic violence bill in Ghana was organised for the staff of media on 9 December at Takoradi in the Western region. At Durba Mphor in the Wassa District, a workshop was organised on violence against women and children.

Bill on domestic violence: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=406

TOGO: In relation with the campaign against gender violence, WILDAF/FeDDAF-Togo again choose the same theme as 2004 which was on «fistula and early marriage», an issue so far considered as taboo with regards violence against women. Why did they choose again the same theme? Following the 2004 campaign, the population, especially those of areas most affected by the phenomenon, like Dapaong, expressed the desire that the Togolese network continue to work on the same issue in 2005 in order to reach more people and deepen the discussions. To that effect, many activities were conducted with the financial support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). They were mainly focused on the reproduction of leaflets and information notes on fistula and early marriage, the official launch of the campaign in Lomé and the organisation of radio broadcast at the rate of ten (10) in the rural areas and five (5) in Lomé.

The leaflets thus produced and an information note were made available to the population through the members of the network and the para-legals. These two documents enabled the radio presenters to prepare their programmes. Some media used it in local languages. The calendar for 2006 was also designed with messages on early marriage and fistula.

(next page 9)

NETWORK NEWS

(continued from page 8)

The official launch ceremony of the campaign in Lomé took place on 25 November under the chairmanship of the Minister of Population, Social Affairs and Promotion of Women and in the presence of guests including the UNFPA Representative, Mr. FANIDJI, the Coordinator of WILDAF/FeDDAF sub-regional Office, Mrs ADJAMAGBO – JOHNSON, the Representative of the Minister of Human Rights, Democracy and Reconciliation, members of the network and representatives of various NGOs. Many speeches were delivered during the ceremony.

In her welcome address, Mrs EDORH, President of WILDAF/FeDDAF – TOGO, first lauded the entry into force of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa that very day. The news was welcomed by the audience through loud applause because this implementation henceforth provided a legal framework for a more effective fight against gender violence. After a brief presentation of the network, she pointed out the reasons why they again adopted the theme of last year and gave a short explanation on fistula. Furthermore, she reaffirmed the desire of the network to make this disorder known in the most remote corners of the country through para-legals and members of the network who will be trained during a workshop. It will be organised in relation with the campaign at Dapaong for a better management of victims who can regain a normal social and sexual life through treatment. She also stressed on the need for women to mobilise themselves against early marriage. Finally, she thanked the Minister who gratefully accepted to personally chair the launch ceremony and especially UNFPA for its financial support for the achievement of this campaign.

Speaking next, the Assistant to the UNFP Representative clearly explained what fistula is and pointed out that to put an end to the silent suffering of those experiencing it, three strategies are to be adopted, namely: prevention, healing and restoring hope. Finally, he congratulated the network for having continued to be mobilised against this disorder and restoring hope to women who are affected. He also expressed his gratitude to the Togolese Government, especially through the Minister of Population, Social Affairs and Promotion of Women and the Minister of Health who is sparing no efforts to eradicate this disease from Togo. Indeed since 2003, a survey aimed at knowing the impact of this plague in the country was initiated, followed in 2004 by another one to assess the capacities of health facilities to offer treatment in order to prepare a better national response. The findings of this survey are being studied and will soon be available. He reiterated the entire readiness of the UNFPA to carry out, together with the Togolese Government, NGOs and communities, the fight to eradicate obstetric fistula in the entire country. The Minister of Population, Social Affairs and Promotion of Women pointed out that laws on violence against women have been adopted and that the Peoples and Family Code is being

reviewed in order to modify unfavourable provisions and also to ban all discrimination against women. She congratulated WILDAF/FeDDAF - Togo for the efforts being made in order to give hope to women suffering from fistula so that they can live normal sexual and social life and eradicate early marriage in our society.

Concerning the programmes, they were aired on public and especially private media throughout the country in order to explain what fistula and early marriage are, show the dangers that the victims of early marriage are exposed to physically and psychologically and explain to communities the damaging effects of these marriages, explain the psychological consequences on women victims of fistula and finally to help the patients to get rid of their guilt and encourage them to react by seeking treatment.

At Dapaong, a training workshop was organised on 12 and 13 December on the campaign theme. The workshop brought together fifteen people selected from among the para-legals and members of development NGOs known for their devotion to the cause of women and especially to their physical and moral development. This workshop aimed at contributing to a better management of women victims of fistula for their recovery and social rehabilitation. Participants will act as relays so that the message can reach the population of the most remote villages.

SENEGAL: Like other countries, WILDAF/FeDDAF Senegal seized the opportunity to celebrate the entry into force of the protocol in connection with the campaign against gender violence. A big meeting was organised with the media together with the Association of Women Lawyers of Senegal and the Coalition of the Women's Rights Defence Organisations under the chairmanship of the Minister of Women, Family and Social Development of Senegal. Several interviews were granted to the press who massively accepted the invitation of the network and the event was covered by the national television of Senegal.

6th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government was held 23-24 January 2006 in Khartoum (Sudan). His Excellency Sassou-Nguesso President of the Republic of Congo was designated to assume the Chairmanship of the African Union.

The candidacy of Sudan was denied but it was assured to chair AU in 2007.

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

Djibouti ratified November 7th, 2005 totalising 40 deposits of the instruments of ratification. 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

Mauritania ratified December 14th, 2005 for a total of 22 States which have deposited their instrument. It is into force since 25 January 2004.

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

Sudan ratified January 21st 2006. Only 9 out of 53 States ratified it yet and 37 countries signed it.

African Union: www.africa-union.org

38th session of the ACHPR: a session to be written in gold in the history of the fight for human rights in Africa

From 21 to 25 November, 2005, WILDAF West African Sub Regional Office participated in the 38th session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) which was preceded by the NGOs forum held from 18 to 20 November at Kairaba Beach Hotel in Banjul, the Gambia.

Apart from the usual issues discussed during ordinary sessions, the 38th was marked by, inter alia, the celebration of the entry into force of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the beginning of duties by new Commissioners including Reine ALAPINI-GANSOU, lawyer and General Secretary of WILDAF/FeDDAF – Benin.

Indeed, the session coincided with the date of entry into force of the Protocol. WILDAF/FeDDAF and the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies in Banjul seized this opportunity to obtain from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to officially celebrate its entry into force. On Friday 25 November, day of entry into force of the instrument, the morning session was devoted to an official ceremony attended by delegates, observers and administrative and political authorities as well as civil society organisations of the Gambia.

It was an official ceremony, rich in colours and events. It should be recalled that the celebration of the Protocol coincided with the launch of the 16 day campaign on violence against women this 25 November and it availed the representatives of the Gambian women organisations the opportunity to share their daily life and successful experiences in the fight against gender violence through poems and testimonies. Speeches and addresses were also delivered on this occasion. Several people took the floor to celebrate the protocol. These included the representative of WILDAF/FeDDAF - West Africa who was present at the session. She seized the opportunity to thank all women and men who assisted in the drafting, adoption and ratification process of the protocol. She lauded their steadfastness and endurance, their faith in a better future and especially their various supports which made it

FOLLOW-UP on NEPAD

Olusegun Obasanjo thinks that NEPAD is in real progress

The Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, lauded in Khartoum «important progress» that has been accomplished since the foundation of NEPAD, an economic and political programme of the African Union.

Mr. Obasanjo, who is chairing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), said that there was noticeable progress in peace and security since the last 18 months.

Read the article in French:

www.jeuneafrique.com/jeune_afrique/article_depeche.asp?art_cle=PAN60026olusesrgorp0

possible to achieve the result being celebrated on that day. She did not forget to pay a tribute to financial partners who provided their support to the process as well as to the two special rapporteurs on women's rights in Africa who supported the whole process. Through them, she expressed the gratitude of WILDAF/FeDDAF to the African Commission for having played a key role in the process. Finally, she called on everybody to pursue the mobilisation in order to make of this instrument a real tool for the promotion of women's rights on our continent, while ensuring that all the 53 African States ratify and implement it.

The 38th session ended a few days later with the nomination of Commissioner Reine ALAPINI-GANSOU as special rapporteur on Human Rights activists in Africa.

See the final communiqué of the session:

www.achpr.org/english/communiqués/communique38_en.htm

EVENTS

The 39th ORDINARY SESSION of the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights will run from 9 to 23 May 2006 in Banjul, the Gambia.

UNITED NATIONS

Human Rights Committee
Eighty-sixth session will take place in New York from 13-31 March 2006. Democratic Republic of Congo will be examined.

Committee against Torture
34th session: 2-20 May 2006
Venue: Geneva, Switzerland
Committee conclusion on Togo.

Committee on children rights
42nd session: 15 May to 2 June 2006
Venue: Geneva, Switzerland
Examination of the 2nd report of Tanzania.

International symposium on training and research in population and development of Africa: issues and challenges

It will be organized by the Training and Demographic Research Institute, an inter-state organization in Yaounde (Cameroon) from May 23 to 26, 2006

The main objective of the Symposium is to reflect on issues to care about for the drafting of the strategic plan of the Institute. At the same time, it will contribute to the improvement of the training of African Executives in the field of population and development and it will reinforce research in demography on the continent.

More information in French (PDF):
www.iford-cm.org/depliant_SYMPOSIUM2.pdf

2nd African Conference on rights and sexual health: Sexuality, economy and development in Africa from 19-21 June 2006

Organised by the African regional office of Planned Parenthood Federation of America-International et the African Federation for Sexual Health and Right, the conference aims to give to participants the opportunity to discuss issues of sexuality, sexual health and rights and to share their experiences and talk about new innovative programs, to create alliances and networks and finally to publish research on these issues.

For more information, contact:
Africa Regional Office,
Tél : +254.20.272.704.952
Email: conference@ppfa.or.ke

Source: AWID Carrefour - Vol.5 - N°3 - 17/01/06

URGENT ACTION

The Next United Nations Secretary-General: Time for a Woman

1945-2006: 3 Europeans, 2 Africans, 1 Latin American, 1 Asian, 0 Women

In the sixty years since the United Nations was founded, no woman has ever been elected to serve as Secretary-General, despite the fact that there are many qualified candidates. Women are underrepresented in the ranks of the organization, as well as at the top. As of 30 June 2005, women occupied only 37.1% of professional and higher positions and only 16.2% of the Under-Secretaries General were women. Women's unequal access to positions of decision-making power around the world hinders progress toward all the United Nations' goals, including equality, development and peace.

The election of a new United Nations Secretary-General will take place in 2006, when the term of current Secretary-General Kofi Annan comes to an end. Tradition has it that the post of Secretary-General should rotate so that each geographical region gets its "turn." Women have never had a "turn," and there are many qualified women from all regions of the world who could serve as Secretary-General.

Read the article and what actions you can do at:
www.equalitynow.org/english/actions/action_1102_en.html

Source: Equality Now – Women's Action 11.2

RESOURCES

Women in the Economy of Solidarity

The workgroup on Women and economy of solidarity from the Alliance for a responsible, plural and unite world asks the question how liberal economy and of solidarity can be remodelled using a feminist perspective.

Read the document:
vision.socioeco.org/fr/documents/pdf/nobre_fr.pdf.

Source: AWID Carrefour Vol.5 N°3
17/01/06

Africa and the Doha Round: Fighting to keep development alive

As a result of unfair trade rules and falling commodity prices, Africa has suffered terms-of-trade losses and increasing marginalisation. Ten years after the Uruguay Round, the poorest continent on earth, which captures only one per cent of world trade, risks even further losses, despite promises of a 'development round' of trade negotiations. This would be a great injustice. There cannot and should not be any new round without an assurance of substantial gains for Africa.

Read the document:
www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp80_Africa_and_the_Doha_Round/download

LIBRARY

All Global Monitoring Report: Literacy for life

This fourth annual *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, produced by an independent team housed at UNESCO, invites us to give renewed and bold attention to the global literacy challenge.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 aims to shine a stronger policy spotlight on the more neglected goal of literacy - a foundation not only for achieving EFA but, more broadly, for reaching the overarching goal of reducing human poverty.

This fourth edition of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* focuses on literacy, one of the most neglected of the six goals adopted in 2000 by 164 countries at the World Education Forum in Dakar (Senegal).

The report is an authoritative reference that aims to inform, influence and sustain genuine commitment towards education for all.

Full report:
portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=43283&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Women 2000 and Beyond: Gender equality and empowerment of women through ICT

This document is produced by the Division for the Advancement of Women. It aims to promote the objectives of the Declaration and the platform for action of Beijing.

Available in PDF:
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/w2000-09.05-ict-e.pdf

Gender, women and health: incorporating a gender perspective into the mainstream of WHO's policies and programmes

A report by the Secretariat of the World Health Organisation published in May 2005.

Read the whole report:
www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB116/B116_13-en.pdf

Also read their annual report on health in the world: **Make every mother and child count**

Report:
www.who.int/entity/whr/2005/en/index.html

FINANCING

The Native Leadership Scholarship (NLS)

The Native Leadership Scholarship (NLS) program creates educational opportunities for women around the world who are grassroots leaders, organizers and activists demonstrating financial need. NLS invests in women's leadership and leadership development by supporting non-doctoral graduate education in human rights, sustainable development, and public health.

Deadline: 26th March 2006.

More information:
www.nativeleaders.org/index.html
Pre-application form available in DOC format at:
www.nativeleaders.org/preapp/english_preapp.doc



Call for nominations for the Perdita Huston Human Rights Award for 2006

PERDITA HUSTON (1936-2001), author and journalist, was committed to giving voice to women in developing countries. The Perdita Huston Human Rights Award was established to celebrate Perdita Huston and to recognize the life and work of others who are outstanding advocates for women's rights in the Third World.

The 2006 Awardee will receive US\$10,000

WHEN ARE THE NOMINATION MATERIALS DUE?

Nominations must be received in the Office of the Secretariat of the Perdita Huston Human Rights Award no later than February 22nd, 2005.

Check criterias for selection at:
www.perditahustonaward.com/default.htm

Nominations can be sent electronically to contact@perditahustonaward.com, or mailed to:

Perdita Huston Human Rights Award
c/o Mulhauser and Associates
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Suite 712
Washington, DC 20036
Fax: (202) 463-0182

NEWS - NEWS - NEWS

Togo: CEDAW: Encouraging Togo's new Government to persevere in its determination to promote gender equality

It was difficult to bridge the gap between "principles and good intentions" and the existing reality in Togo.

During the 34th session from January 16th to February 6th, the Committee for the elimination of all forms of discrimination, CEDAW, examined the situation of women's life in Togo, a country which has ratified the Convention in June 1983.

Read the press release:
www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/wom1529.doc.htm

International: WTO agreement a betrayal of development promises

International agency Oxfam condemned an agreement at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Hong Kong as failing to deliver on development promises. The agreement reflected rich countries interests far more than those of developing countries and would not deliver the reforms poor countries needed, Oxfam said.

Read the press release:
www.oxfam.org/en/news/pressreleases2005/pr051218_wto_betrayal

West Africa: West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)

From 4th to 6th January 2006, the third West Africa Civil Society Forum was held in Niamey, Niger. The statement presented to the Council of Ministers and Head of States of ECOWAS made important recommendations among which the issues of the ratification and the implementation of protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa by West African States.

The recommendations: www.wildaf-ao.org/eng/article.php3?id_article=684

Kenya: Small Loans for Men Will Keep Violence Against Women Down

Micro-credit facilities for men could emerge as a powerful tool to check the alarming increase in cases of violence against women in Kenya. Experts say that with easy access to small loans for

income generating activities, men would have less time on their hands to be abusive.

Article:
ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=31578

Source: Inter Press Service (IPS)

Mali: Women at the World Social Forum in Bamako: Solidarity, training and communication

African women who come at the Forum in Bamako have big expectations. They expressed it in a workshop named «the Feminist Dialogue» at the Palais de la culture in Bamako.

«I came in Bamako with numerous expectations. The first one is being realized at this moment which was to see women from all over Africa get together and exchange on problems they are dealing with.» said delighted Ivette Ngwevilo Rekangaly President of Mouvement gabonais pour le bien être familial.

Read the article in French:
www.ipsterraviva.net/tv/wsf2006/viewstory.asp?idnews=474

Source: Terraviva / IPS – 21/01/06

Nigeria: Forced evictions in Lagos make thousands homeless

Hundreds of Nigerians are still sleeping out in the open nearly nine months after bulldozers and armed police arrived in the Makoko community of Lagos, demolishing homes, churches, a mosque and a medical clinic. After three days of destruction, the community was obliterated, leaving about 3,000 residents -- many already destitute -- homeless. The main victims of excessive use of force during evictions are women, children and the elderly, as evictions normally occur during the day, when most men are away at work. Women are also exposed to violence after evictions, when men leave the area in a desperate search for alternative housing for their families. Such violence includes rape and other sexual violence, and armed robbery.

Article:
www.amnesty.ca/resource_centre/news/view.php?load=arcview&article=3199&c=Resource+Centre+News

WILDAF WEST AFRICA Newsletter

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Mali: WSF opens with a call for justice

The Malian capital of Bamako opened its doors to the World Social Forum (WSF) yesterday with a passionate call for justice in all walks of life.

The historic event – this is the first time the forum is being held in Africa – has attracted some 10,000 representatives of civil society organisations and social movements from across the world. They marched over three kilometers to the Modibo Keita stadium, the venue where the official opening of the event took place.

Read the article:
www.ipsterraviva.net/TV/WSF2006/viewstory.asp?idnews=448