

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

Women in Law and Development in Africa

N° 29 January 2007

EDITORIAL

The editorial staff of the WILDAF Newsletter and all of the staff of the sub-regional West Africa office are happy, at the beginning of this New Year, 2007, to wish you good health, happiness, peace and success in all of your endeavours. We hope that the fight for African women in 2007, in particular, is fruitful and equal to their efforts.

The Eighth Conference of the heads of state of African Union governments, held on January 29th and 30th, gave us, in effect, the opportunity to assess the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on gender equity in Africa, adopted in July, 2003. It revealed that the States made very few efforts and because of that, very little progress was made since the heads of state committed themselves to supporting women's promotion. Moreover, the fact that only 9 out of 53 heads of state effectively produced an assessment report on the implementation of the Solemn Declaration is proof to their lack of efforts. These reports made during the 9th women's consultative meeting held on January 24th and 25th prelude to the summit must incite us to roll up our sleeves and demand concrete acts which go beyond simple declarations and are more likely to make a change in the lives of women and the African population in general.

For that purpose, all this year we will emphasize in our publications, actions that are related to "coalitions of women and governance" created as part of the WILDAF West Africa program: "Participation of women in governance".

The current issue is dedicated to Togo's coalition... You will also find an article on the usefulness of new information technology and on communication to advance the rights of women and reports on campaigns against violence done to women. Our usual columns, Women of honour, Library, and News are included. We'll let you discover it by yourself.

Once more, Happy New Year!

Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson
Sub-Regional Coordinator

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**Also available on our
website:**

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng

How can information and communication technologies (ICT's) be used as a tool to speed up women's rights

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) became unavoidable for the society's development. The popularity of the internet, above all since 1994 (when the Web was invented), is betrayed by a fear of the unknown new tool called "new" communication technology on the society in general and on women in particular.

Almost all private or public sectors want to benefit from the opportunities that the ICTs offer. Women are not few in numbers, but do they really make an efficient and effective use of ICT's? Initiatives were taken and numerous projects permitted to train them in this sense. But what is the reality? Do women truly have access to NICT's? Do they use them regularly? What are the consequences of introducing these new work tools to the success of their activities? What roles must they play in the era of ICTs ?

We will try to answer these diverse questions.

It's important to know the meaning of the terms used.

Above all, information and communication technologies (ICTs) refer to the tools and services used to transmit, receive, and exchange the information and to communicate via the network infrastructures (data processing and telecommunication). Example: the World Wide Web, email, discussion forums (also called 'groups' or discussion 'lists') and the Internet Relay Chat. It's important to highlight that the list presented is not exhaustive.

As tools for sharing and exchanging information, new information and communication technologies can facilitate access to necessary and useful information for the development. But ICT's themselves are not only tools. Their potential depends on how they are used.

What can women gain from using ICTs?

The question thus formulated returns to the bigger question of sharing information through ICTs. In other words, it's about knowing if these new means of communication can permit women or women's groups to participate in decision-making, influence the programs, policies, and decisions having an impact on their life to evolve the area of human rights specific to the rights of women in Africa.

Reduce distance; assure a rapid circulation of information

An example that could be cited here is the project «Good Governance and Participation of Women» that the WILDAF has implemented since January, 2006 in seven countries which are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo. Within these coalitions of organisations working on issues related to women at the central and decentralized levels, the beneficiaries can exchange their experiences in various domains in the interior of a country and between the different countries participating in the project. They will thus have the opportunity, despite the distance that separates them, to deal with the issues linked to the areas corresponding to the priorities that they identified and that are, among others: fundamental human rights of women, education, decision-making, health, economic power of women, and the integration of gender into budget.

(Continues on Page 3)

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa Twenty (20) States have ratified it and 42 have signed it as of August 9, 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	Zambie		
Guinea Bissau	SEYCHELLES	Zimbabwe		
Liberia	Somalia			
MALI	Tanzania			
MAURITANIA	Uganda			
Niger				
NIGERIA				
SENEGAL				
Sierra Leone				
TOGO				
14	11	7	6	2
Number of countries for each region				
16	13	10	9	5
Number of countries which have ratified for each region				
9	4	6	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.

How can information and communication technologies (ICT's) be used as a tool to speed up women's rights *(Continued from p. 2)*

The Forum of discussion that has just started, thanks to the opportunity given by new information and communication technologies, is going to allow people to share and discuss successes and failures with the goal of learning lessons for future actions.

It is urgent that a technology such as the internet, which is very useful, or even indispensable, in our day, in terms of access to information (notably for research, documentation and the exchange of information), for civil society organizations and especially those defending and promoting women's rights is available to all women. The interest of this tool – the internet - resides in its ability to connect people through a network and in its potential rapid circulation of information. Furthermore, the speed of action due to the use of the internet and distribution tools can constitute an undeniable advantage for women's organizations.

Put the information at the door of all who have chosen development as their goal.

Likewise, the development of ICT's carries multiple opportunities for women, who must be part of the information society and must be key actors. At the moment, among the fundamental human rights, the right to information and communication is seen as very important. And among the eight (8) millennium development objectives of the United Nations, four (4) have a direct impact on access to ICT's and training citizens of the information society. It's about reducing extreme poverty, assuring primary education for all, promoting equality of the sexes and the autonomy of women and putting in place a world-wide partnership for development by making the advantages of ICT's available to all.

In fact, during the international and national Conferences, one could see the growing role played by ICT's in the circulation of information, for example, through on-line newsletters and newspapers made to inform the participants about the development of the activities, the important decisions adopted, etc. One palpable example is the preparation for the Beijing+5 conferences and the conference itself. At this conference, a program of activities implemented in partnership with FEMNET (the initiative Flamme/Beijin+5,) facilitated the preparation and participation of the African women NGOs in the worldwide process of evaluation of Beijing+5 (June 2000). On the menu of the activities there were discussion lists, websites, and practical trainings at the preparatory African regional conference on women and the daily electronic on-line news and papers at the conference in Addis Ababa, and during the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women and during the Beijing conference+5.

The goal of this program consisted of helping the associations and women's groups to prepare the conference together by using data processing tools and to be connected to the internet. In this manner, the associations and participant groups could use ICT's to spread the information, to send emails and to obtain information relative to the conference (practical information acts, etc.)

African women also...

African women can also take the initiative to organize internet campaigns with the goal of heightening public awareness of violence towards women or on the different international or national legal instruments (CEDEF, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women, and different treaties and conventions). These actions will definitely offer a space and a tribune to women's organizations and thus will foster a relationship between people and groups that have common objectives and initiatives with regards to the promotion of human rights.

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WOMEN OF HONOR



**At the UN
Headquarters,
January 27, 2006**

**Mrs. Asha-Rose Mtengeti Migiro ,
UN Deputy Secretary General**

The new secretary general of the United Nations, appointed the foreign minister of Tanzania, Dr. Asha-Rose Mtengeti Migiro, as his Deputy Secretary General.

Mrs. Migiro has directed the diplomacy of her country since January, 2006 and is the first woman in her country to occupy the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, succeeding Jakaya Kikwete, the current President of Tanzania. Before becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Migiro was the Minister of Community Development, Parity and Child Welfare for five years. She is a lawyer and was a senior lecturer, faculty of law, University of Dar Es Salaam.

She is the acting chair of the Inter-Ministerial Regional Committee of the International Conference in the Great Lakes region that was held in Lusaka, Zambia in July, 2005 and presided over the Bangui meetings in the Central African Republic in February, 2006. Her mandate ended admirably in Nairobi at the 11th summit of the International Conference in the Great Lakes Region with much praise; under her mandate, numerous files, protocols, and action programs of this particular international conference were finalized.

Mrs. Migiro is a highly respected leader who defended the cause of developing countries over the years. In the different posts that she occupied she demonstrated some remarkable abilities in the area of management and therefore a vast experience and expertise in socioeconomic affairs and development issues. She is the second female UN deputy Secretary General after the former Canadian Minister of Defence, Miss Louise Frechette. At age fifty, Mrs. Migiro will succeed the British Mark Malloch Brown to the second post of the worldwide organization since April, 2006. The Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon estimates that Mrs. Migiro is "highly qualified for this post", having shown through the course of her career some "excellent managerial qualities". He announced his intention to delegate to her the major part of the direction and administration of the secretariat of the UN, like the management of the socioeconomic and development issues, when she officially takes office in February, 2007.

Women and Governance Coalitions in Togo

The "Woman and Good Governance" coalition, a key player in the implementation of the "Good Governance and participation of women in seven (7) West African countries".

The Good governance and participation of women project is being carried out in 7 West African countries since 1st January 2006. In connection with this project, WiLDAF-Togo set up a coalition at the central level in Lome in September 2006 and one second at the decentralized level in the plateaux region in November 2006.

We provide below, some information concerning the efforts of these coalitions in order to ensure that the priorities of women are taken into account by the decision-makers.

Initial capacity building of the members of the coalitions

WiLDAF-Togo whose vision is to promote the enjoyment and the respect of women's rights, organised two training sessions, one at the central level in the CIFEX Centre in Lome from 31st July to 4th August, 2006 and from 14th to 18th August, 2006 and another at the decentralized level in Kpalimé from 30th October to 3rd November, 2006 and from 14th to 18th November, 2006 within the framework of the project.

Participants to these training sessions were made up of representatives of human rights organisations or those working on the problems of women's rights such as:

- representatives of wax prints retailers;
- representatives of women teachers working for the promotion of girls in scientific careers;
- representatives of women working in the health sector;
- representatives of women entrepreneurs;
- representatives of women working with the grassroots communities;
- representatives of students' organizations;
- representatives of women working for the promotion of women's rights;
- representatives of associations working in the area of development;
- representatives of organizations working for the protection of widows and orphans etc.

The workshops were held in two 5-day sessions each during which modules such as fundamental human rights of the women, the woman and the State, planning process, programming, budgeting, budget analysis, gender-friendly budgeting, lobbying and advocacy as well as negotiation were taught.

Thus equipped with these capacities, the participants were expected to establish dialogues with their governments, to discuss their needs and priorities with them, negotiate in order to make them take these needs and priorities into account in community and national policies and programmes.

Having understood the stakes of this project, these representatives of organizations mobilised themselves to form a coalition at the central level in order to pool their efforts for concrete actions in favour of the population in general and women in particular.

Another training session for women of the northern regions is being prepared and will be held at the end of February.

The "Woman and Good Governance"

It should be emphasised that during the opening ceremony of the second training workshop in the plateaux in Kpalimé, Mrs. Pascaline KOMBATE, the technical assistant of DED invited for the occasion, touched on a peculiar weakness of women: the fact of always pointing an accusing finger at the government without seeking to approach them to initiate discussion with them, to submit specific proposals to them thereby showing proof of a participatory good governance.

The good governance project precisely aims at correcting this anomaly to provide women with the opportunity through the two main approaches above mentioned.

It is at the end of these two training sessions that two coalitions "Women and Good Governance" were formed, one in Lome at the central level and a second in Atakpamé at the decentralized level with sub-group in Kpalimé. The members of the coalition formed committee according to the priorities which they defined at the end of their training.

Organising to achieve the set objectives

As soon as they left the workshop at the central level, the coalition met at the head office of WiLDAF-Togo to finalize the platform set up at the end of the workshop.

Two plenary meetings were organized a few days later, one at the headquarters of the Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions Togo (CSTT) and the other at the former small seminar of Tokoin in Lome. This approach made it possible for all the members of the central coalition to be informed on the status of progress of the work carried out in each committee and to find the best guidance to give it.

They prepared a platform of action together on the basis of which they would have to work for the achievement of the project objectives in the next two years.

To this end, each committee organizes working meetings that make it possible to find the necessary strategies for the preparation of technical advocacy dossiers necessary for the development of technical dossiers with the public authorities.

These women who have become confident due to their awareness of their role of citizens and feeling equipped, approach those who govern them or resources persons to seek from the latter information likely to enable them have solid arguments for negotiations, discuss their needs with them in order to make them take these needs into account in the national policies and programmes.

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Women and Governance Coalitions in Togo

The "Woman and Good Governance" coalition, a key player in the implementation of the "Good Governance and participation of women in seven (7) West African countries. (Continued from p. 4)

The central coalition identified several problems some of which were retained for the first two years as being of priority. These priorities cover the following fields:

- fundamental human rights (the non-application of the fundamental human rights of women);
- education of the girl child (the rare access of girls in the area of science as well as the financial difficulties that parents face in sending their children to school, particularly where it concerns girls);
- health (the high mortality of the women in labour for lack of financial resources, particularly cases of Caesarean and the high mortality of both men and women accident victims due to the same cause);
- low economic power of women (the exorbitant cost of essential goods as a result of the fall in the price of petroleum products);
- decision-making (low representativeness of women in the decision-making bodies hence the need for the government to respect the commitment it made to apply the principle of quota of women during the parliamentary elections slated for June 2007 and that of the gradual parity);
- the integration of gender into the budget (non-consideration of gender in government policies and programmes.

In the plateaux region, the problems relating to health and the education of the girl children raised are identical to those of Lome. The difference between the two platforms at the central and decentralised levels relates to the inaccessibility of women to land, the high cost of food products as a result of the high cost of transport due to extortion by the police, the insecurity of goods and women in the lorry stations for lack of adequate reception infrastructure and the fact of women not carrying identification papers on them. These problems are the five priorities identified at the decentralized level

Achievements of the coalitions

Thus organized, the coalition set to work notwithstanding the demobilization which the approach of the end-of-year festivities created. With regard to the consideration of the priorities of the coalition in the budgeting, whereas the finance bill has just left cabinet for approval by Parliament, the coalition tried to use the small opportunity left to it by the consideration of the budget in Parliament to try to make government commit some resources to some of its priorities.

A delegation of the coalition met the Speaker of Parliament on 22nd December, 2006 pursuant to a letter, which the coalition had earlier addressed to this outfit. This process made it possible to introduce the coalition and its priorities to him. The memorandum envisaged for this purpose contained inter alia, making provision to cover Caesarean operations in the 2007 national budget being prepared. The Speaker of Parliament was very influenced by the project, but at the time the meeting took place, the consideration of the finance bill had almost ended.

Fortunately, at the same time, the same request had been submitted to the parliamentarians within the framework of a project initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO). These requests were thus favourably considered by the parliamentarians and were taken into account in the budget voted for the year 2007. Thus, needy Togolese women will soon be able to enjoy Caesarean Kits thanks to this action which was taken.

This first experiment will make it possible for the coalition to better organise itself in anticipation of the next budgeting process in order to influence the 2008 budget.

The coalition at the central level seized another golden opportunity availed to it in December 2006 to put forward some of its priorities to the government and development partners.

As a matter of fact, from 13th to 15th December, 2006, a workshop of prioritisation was organised within the framework of the joint programming of the Agencies of the United Nations system.

The representative of WILDAF, member of the central coalition succeeded in including coverage of caesarean and the kits, access of women to land, integration of gender into the planning, programming and budgeting processes, building the capacities of the players involved in the preparation of government and NGOs' policies and programmes, participation of women in governance, just to mention a few of the coalition's components of the platform of at the central level, into the activities. It supported the free access to basic education suggested by a participant.

Very fortunately, these priorities have been adopted in the master plan of the United Nations for the development aid of Togo 2004 - 2012. They will surely be funded.

Within the framework of its advocacy activities, members of the coalition also approached the Former Women Ministers and Parliamentarians Network of Togo (REFAMP-T) to discuss the possibility of jointly fighting for the application of the principle of parity in favour of women in the spheres of decision-making. Finally, during meetings to revise the electoral code in December - January, the coalition teamed up with other civil society organisations to ensure the adoption of incentives for the participation of women as candidates in the upcoming parliamentary elections. To this end, it signed a written petition to which several members of associations and individuals who were sympathetic to this cause adhered. The petition was addressed to the President of the Republic, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister and some members of the Government.

The action is following the due process and will certainly lead to a more tangible emergence of women on the Togolese political scene.

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 2007 (for April 2007 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

How can information and communication technologies (ICT's) be used as a tool to advance women's rights

Thanks to the broad potential and variety of services that ICT offer to the users, they have become indispensable in the development process of African countries. They represent "today, the point of departure of human development" and are seen as a tool that is going to move development forward. In such a context, women, following the example of men and youth, must not remain on the fringes of this digital society because it is admitted that sustainable and equitable development must take into account the issues related to men and women with the goal of guaranteeing equal representation, the possibility of participation and access for all. Today, NICT's can be a solution to the issues related to men and women if they can advisedly use them in order to have access to strategic information, notably in the domains of health, education, commerce and the improvement of their status.

Unfortunately, only a minority of women have access to ICTs...

Unfortunately, only a minority of women have access to ICTs in general (mobile phone, computer, internet, etc.). As a result, in light of numerous economic, social and political sectors, female African citizens of information are disadvantaged in relation to men; this numerical break in gender can be explained by the result of different process of socialization for women and men in terms of decision-making power.

For example, as far as the internet is concerned, these users are a minority and, in fact, few women actually use the internet. In relation to its usage, few women are connected and their primary use is limited to email, and less to web navigation. Few are the women's organizations who are equipped with a connection to internet and know how to research on websites.

Several factors are responsible....

Factors identified that constitute obstacles to Internet appropriation by women: the lack of material and human resources, the costs, the lack of training but also, and above all, the lack of time necessary not only for the use of the internet but for learning how the internet works, with the goal of maximizing its use.

In order for women to become full citizens of the digital era, they must also be proactive. It is admitted that women are experts in the redistribution of knowledge. It would be prejudicial and dangerous that the new society in construction, the one related to information, is made without the special knowledge of women who integrate these new technologies slowly or with difficulty.

Fortunately, there are guides published for women...

Let's point out that one can find more and more guide books published especially for women on the internet (they might include user's manuals or site note books) and certain research tools dedicated to women.

We also notice an increase in on-line information designated to women (documentation, publications, websites of women's groups, forums of discussion, etc.) and the emergence of regional or international networks (thanks to the creation of forums or websites).

A growth in online information aimed at women (publications, Websites by women's groups, discussion groups) and the emergence of regional or international networks (thanks to the creation of discussion groups and Websites) can equally be noted.

A few sites for your information's:

- <http://www.wildaf-ao.org>
- <http://www.softaid.net/-pleiades/>
- <http://www.oeh.uni-linz.ac.at:8001/-lisa/index.html>
- <http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/projects/wivc/>
- <http://www.werg.uio.no/WWW-other/sfk/>
- <http://www.igc.apac.org/vsister.html>
- <http://www.next.com.au/spyfood/geekgirl>
- <http://www.ora.com/info/research/user/charts/next-gender.html>
- <http://future.sri.com/vals/trends/gender.html>
- <http://www.nielsenmedia.com/whatsnew/execsum2.htm>
- http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/user_surveys/team.html
- <http://www.maires.co.uk/users.html>
- <http://www.cyberbabe.com>
- <http://www.voyagerco.com/gg/gg.html>
- <http://www.gnofn.org/-jbourg/grils/>
- <http://www.women.com/>
- <http://www.igc.apc.org/womensnet/>
- <http://sunsite.unc.edu/cheryb/women/wshome.html>
- <http://www.famafrique.org/regentic/accueil.html>
- <http://www.iway.fr/femmes/>

Women's Scientifiques sites

- <http://www.careermosaic.com/cm/witi> (information sur l'association professionnelle de femmes représentant diverses disciplines au sein d'organismes à vocation technologique).
- http://www.a1.mit.edu/people/ellens/gender/worm_and_min.html (les femmes et les minorités dans les sciences et les métiers de l'ingénieur).

<http://tweedledee.ucsb.edu/kris/wis.ht>

The 41st Session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights' will be held in the Republic of Ghana from May 16th to 30th, 2007.

Reports from the States on the Solemn Declaration on gender equality in Africa.

At the summit of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, July, 2004, the heads of State and Government adopted a Solemn Declaration on gender equality in Africa.

For its implementation, the ministers in charge of women's affairs adopted in Dakar (Senegal), in October, 2005, some directives to survey and account for its implementation in member countries through reports. As of today, only seven Member States have submitted their reports. They include **Algeria, Burundi, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Mauritius and Tunisia.**

These reports will be studied at the next summit of Heads of State of the African Union, which will take place in January, 2007, in Adis-Ababa.

Consult the other reports on the African Union site at www.africa-union.org/root/au/conferences/past/2006/October/WG/doc.htm

November 25- International Day for the elimination of violence against women.

Various parades were organized in the world for this occasion. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (UIP) launches a call to all parliaments in order to intensify the action against violence against women. Read the Resolution of the UIP on violence towards women and the director's official statement. Executive of the UNIFEM, Madame Noeleen Heyser www.ipu.org/conf-f/114/114-3.htm

Report on « Youth in action, state of the world population 2006 »

This report analyzes the daily life of young women and men who have ventured to foreign countries to run after their dreams or to flee oppression, war, poverty or unhappiness. The report presents the life of young women and men, from ten countries (Burkina Faso, Colombia, India, Kenya, Liberia, Moldavia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Surinam and Zambia).

Some of them have never migrated, but their lives are marked by the experiences of the wife or the husband or the members of the family who have emigrated abroad.

To consult the report, see the website: www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/656_file_name_yswp-fr.pdf

December 1st, 2006: Celebration of the National AIDS Day

Theme: "Accountability" with the slogan, "Stop AIDS, Keep the promise"!!!

The world wide campaign to celebrate the Worldwide Day on awareness-raising for HIV was celebrated on December 1st, through local and national events everywhere in the world.

The theme of the 2006 edition was chosen in consultation with civil society groups participating in the campaign in order to emphasize the urgent need to encourage the leaders to keep their promises that they made to combat the AIDS pandemic as well as respect the commitments taken to increase the worldwide response to AIDS and to encourage Universal access to treatment, to care and prevention between now and 2010.

For more information, consult: www.christiantoday.com/article/world_campaign_decides_on_theme_for_aids2006/8080.htm

Burkina Faso: Young girls show interest in science subjects

40 girl school girls from Burkina-Faso were picked to participate in the "camp of excellence", a two-week program that took place in the summer and whose objective was to incite girls to turn to science subjects and careers, where they are under-represented. The girls who participated in the camp were chosen because of their excellent results at school in mathematics and in physics and chemistry.

In schools in Burkina Faso there are more boys than girls and only nine percent of the girls go to secondary school.

www.irinnews.org/FrenchReport.asp?ReportID=7228

Source: Carrefour AWID

The women of Rwanda are determined to go to University

The Rwandan government's policy incites women to accede to posts of responsibility, pushing them to study. Young or already married, usually encouraged by their husbands, they prove to be very willing and energetic. Several private universities offer various course programs to women.

Read about it at: www.wildaf-ao.org/fr/ecire/articles.php3?id_article=1080

Togo: Adoption of a legislation as regards to discrimination and sexual harassment in the work place in Togo.

The National Assembly of Togo has just passed a "labour law" which governs the working relationships between the workers and the employers working within the Togolese Republic, as well as between the employers and the apprentices placed under their authority.

Download the law (in French) at: www.wildaf-ao.org/fr/ecire/articles.php3?id_article=1029

Togo: The National Assembly adopts a law on reproductive health

A new law on reproductive health has just been added to the Togolese juridical arsenal. The Togolese parliament adopted on December 22nd, 2006, a law authorizing, in certain cases, voluntary interruption of pregnancy (abortion), when the pregnancy results from a rape or from incestuous sexual relations. The new law deals with, among other things, principles, rights and responsibilities in reproductive health, contraception, medical assistance, organization and the running of related health services and the guaranty of legal security for health-care workers at their workplace.

Download the law (in French) at: www.wildaf-ao.org/fr/ecire/articles.php3?id_article=1032

NETWORK NEWS

16 days of activism against violence towards women and girls November 25 to December 10, 2006

In the year 2006, the entire world celebrates 16 years of the campaign "16 days of activism against violence towards women and girls" that started in 1991 and tried hard to improve the visibility of violence towards women and girls as a violation of human rights.

Following the example of women's rights defence organizations throughout the world, WILDAF's national networks organized some activities through the course of these 16 days of annual campaigning in the fight against violence towards women from November 25 through December 10, 2006.

The African Women Development Fund (AWDF) based in Accra/Ghana, funded the majority of the campaign activities.

Consult the schedule of activities developed by some members of our national networks on the site www.wildaf-ao.org.

Training in the framework of the project « Good governance and participation of women in seven (7) countries in West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo"

The training sessions at the decentralized level will resume at the countries level within the framework of the project. Throughout the week of January 8 through **January 14, 2007**, the training workshops went on in three countries, **Benin, Ghana,** and **Mali**, which organized their first trainings at the **decentralized** level.

The **Benin** workshop took place at took CBDIBA at « **Bohicon** ». The Ghana workshop took place at the Stella Hotel in "**Tema**" and the Mali workshop at the youth house in "**Kati**"

We hope for much success for the national networks and organisations implicated in the work of these workshops!!!

WILDAF decided to introduce the Protocol on the African Charter of Human and People's related to the Rights of Women in Africa.

WILDAF-Togo initiated, thanks to the dynamism of its team, a plea for the ratification of the Protocol on the African charter of Human's and People's Rights relative to the rights of women in Africa. It's important to emphasize here that Togo was the 15th country to mobilize its instrument of ratification at the headquarters of the European Union. It's from that point that the Protocol entered into force on November 25th, 2006.

WILDAF-Togo, in accordance with its principles of promoting fundamental human rights of women, organized a workshop on June 12 and 13, 2006 at Tokoin séminaire (Césal). The projected objective was to introduce the protocol and thus launch its popularization on the whole territory by the members of its present network who attended this workshop.

The majority of the participants at this workshop were media representatives. The action plans were respectively worked out by the media representatives and other participant members of the network that cover the radio broadcasts throughout the country.

Following the example of those who took part in this workshop, the members of the network, like other militants of women's rights, took it upon themselves to reveal the content of the protocol to the media with the intention of appropriating it to the Togolese public.

Additionally, WILDAF-Togo had to write the shadow report on the completed progress by the States vis-à-vis the Solemn Declaration on equality between men and women.

RESSOURCES

UN INSTRAW GAINS Database

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

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

Read more at: www.uninstraw.org/en/resources/index.html

Follow-up on CEDEF

The CEDEF Committee met three times this year on the following dates:

- 37th Session: January 15th through February 2nd, 2007, in New York. Namibia will present its second and third periodical reports.
- 38th Session: May 2007, New York. Mauritania will present its initial report. Niger will present its first and second periodical reports.
- 39th Session: July 23rd to August 10th, 2007, in New York. Guinea will present its 4th, 5th, and 6th periodical reports.



Eighth Ordinary Session of the AU Conference

The eighth ordinary session of the African Union Conference took place from January 29th to the 30th, 2007, in Addis Ababa.

S.E. Mr. John KUFUOR, president of Ghana was named current president of the AU.

www.africa-union.org/root/ua/index/index.htm

January 28th, 2007- New Partnership for the Development of Africa (NEPAD), Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia

www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Conferences/2007/janvier/SUMMIT/Doc/NEPAD/Proje%20de%20programme%20NEPAD.doc

January 26th to 28th, 2007- MEETING OF THE AFRICAN MECHANISM FOR PEER EVALUATION (MAIP), Addis-Abeba, Ethiopia

www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Conferences/2007/janvier/SUMMIT/Doc/APRM/Programme.doc

The 9th women's consultative meeting in Addis Ababa, January 25th and 26th, 2006.



African women assess the commitments made by Heads of State About forty representatives from women's rights networks and civil society organizations, including WILDAF,

met in Addis Ababa on January 24th and 25th, 2007, during the summit of the Heads of State of the African Union. It came out that the progress related to the implementation of the aforementioned declaration is very slow. Moreover, the enthusiasm and the commitment that accompanied the adoption of the declaration diminished considerably. Only 9 out of 53 countries in the African Union submitted their reports to the conference of the Heads of State and government.

We will come back to the event in our next publication.

NEPAD WATCH

The Pan-African Parliament wishes to be an associate to the election supervision in Africa

This 6th session of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) was consecrated with the presentation of the reports by the different commissions.

The members of the International Relations commission formulated to the African Union (JA) a demand to be associated to the supervision missions for African elections "to better account for the role of the PAP in the area of election observation missions". They pointed out "the dominating role of the AU in the area of elections observation missions to the detriment of the Pan-African Parliament".

The African observation mission for the recent general elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was under the leadership of the Beninese, Theophile Nata, the 4th vice-president of the PAP, but the Parliament was not actually associated to this mission. They underlined "the need to proceed to the evaluation of the impact of setting up the PAP on the running of the AU", adding that such an evaluation "must help determine adequate actions for more visibility and effectiveness of the PAP".

Emphasizing "the importance of free and fair elections", the human rights Commission also recommended that "the observation of the elections should be one of the subjects to be examined during the next PAP session".

For more information, visit the website:

www.nepad.org/2005/news_fr/wmview.php?ArtID=51

"A chance for newborns in Africa »

A study entitled "A chance for the youth of Africa » was carried out by 60 professionals and nine international organizations under the aegis of Partnership for the Mother, the Newborn and the Child's Health (PMNCH).

The study's report mentioned the improvement in the fight against infant mortality in 6 low income African countries. Dr. Joy Lawn, co-writer of the report, born herself in very difficult conditions in Uganda, returns to the most important ideas of the report. According to her, with inexpensive health interventions such as vaccinations against tetanus, nearly 800,000 babies could be saved each year.

For his part, the President of the Pan African Parliament (PAP), Madame Gertrude Mongella, declared that the PAP would make its priority the fight against maternal and infant mortality. In fact, "If Sub-Saharan Africa remains to be the most dangerous region for an infant to be born; a reduction in newborn deaths was noted in six low income countries". When progress is made, it must be shared and above all, when it is about the lives of newborns saved in sub-Saharan Africa, the most dangerous region in the world for an infant to be born. Of course, there is no question to conceal the fact that 1.16 million babies die each year in their first 28 days of life. But the fact that Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Madagascar, Malawi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania succeeded in reducing the deaths among newborns must also be highlighted because it can serve as an example for other states.

For more information, visit the site:

www.nepad.org/2005/news_fr/wmview.php?ArtID=47



The launching of the CEDAW Commission for the acceleration of integration and development

The Conference welcomed the transformation of the Executive Secretariat of CEDAW in Commission as well as the Restructuring of the CEDAW Institutions to render them more effective with the goal of permitting them to fill their role in the integration and development processes and to better adapt themselves to the international environment.

The Conference adopted reports that essentially apply to integration and regional cooperation programs and the institutional, peace and regional security issues.

The Heads of State and Government adopted the CEDAW anthem words.

The Summit elected President Blaise Compaoré, President of Faso and incumbent President of CEDAW, on January 19, 2007.

<http://news.ecowas.int/fr/presseshow.php?nb=2&lang=fr&annee=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 has been in force since 14 December 2003.

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

No change (40 ratifications). 50 States are signatories. It has been in force since 26 December 2003.

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

Tanzania ratified February 10th, 2006 for a total of 23 States which have deposited their instrument. 47 countries are signatories. It has been into force since 25 January 2004.

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

Tanzania ratified February 10th 2006. Only 10 out of 53 States have ratified it and 38 countries signed it.

African Union: www.africa-union.org

4th Annual FOSCAO forum: recommendations for the success of West African integration

The fourth general assembly of the West African civil society forum (FOSCAO) took place in Ouaga, Burkina Faso, from December 15 to 17, 2006. The representatives of West African civil society made recommendations to make sub-regional integration a reality in the field.

Concerning gender, the civil society recommended that the carriers, border authorities and security agencies of all of the member states treat women with dignity and that the CEDAW policy related to gender as well as the ratification of the protocol to the African charter on women's rights be implemented. The forum also recommended that member states take measures to implement the charter on African youth, a charter that must resolve the problems of employment and access to education and health care.

The outgoing executive secretary, Mrs. Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson, emphasized that the linguistic barrier is a challenge to bring up in order to successfully plead as well as to influence the policies and to accelerate the regional integration processes. The forum has also proceeded to the election of its first executive board.

Source : www.lefaso.net/article.php3?id_article=18044

LIBRARY

A Study by the United Nations on violence against children carried out in New York

A Study by the United Nations on violence with regards to children that started four years ago was presented in New York in front of the General Assembly within the context of the debate of the committee dealing with social, humanitarian and cultural issues, dedicated to the protection of children. The study that was presented in front of the press at the UN provided some alarming statistics. According to this study, 53,000 children were victims of infanticides in 2002. The same year, 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 years old had forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual violence, also stated in the document.

In 2004, 218 million children worked, of which 126 million were in dangerous conditions. The investigation also provides some information on the frequency of different types of violence undergone by the children in the home, at school, in the non-conventional care establishments, in the detention centers, in the workplace, and within the communities. The study shows that physical vulnerability is usually relative to the age of the children.

The youngest children are usually the victims of physical violence, whereas sexual abuse usually occurs once the child becomes an adolescent. Girls are more often victims than boys and are also more often abandoned. The study adds that the social status is also a factor that contributes to render certain children more vulnerable than others.

Established under the direction of Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, an independent expert appointed by the Secretary General, the study presents not only a global state of violence against children, but also some recommendations on how to prevent and fight this plague.

Source: *Centre de nouvelles ONU*

NEWS-NEWS-NEWS

The Secretary General of the United Nations published a report on *“a thorough study of all violence with regard to women”*. Consult on: www.wildaf-ao.org

Call to the Halde projects: « 2007 : European year of equal chances for all »

The High Authority on the Fight against Discrimination and Equality (HALDE) launched, last August 24th, a call to projects: “2007: European Year of Equal Chances for All” for the implementation of national, regional, or local projects of awareness for the fight against discrimination and to promote equality will take place between February 1st and November 1st, 2007.

For more detailed information, see:

www.halde.fr/haute-autorite-1/recrutement-marches-publics-28/marches-publics-76/2007-annee-9507.html

Source: Carrefour AWID

Amnesty International actively fights against violence

Amnesty International fights actively against violence between partners, who constitute a veritable violation of fundamental women's rights. The Organization presents a fourteen-point program for the prevention of domestic violence.

For more details, visit:

www.amnestyinternational.be/doc/rubrique649.html

The practice of Female Genital Mutilation will soon be illegal in Guinea-Bissau.

The practice of fanado or female genital mutilation (MGF) could soon become illegal in Guinea-Bissau, following the proposal of a new law that will soon be presented to the parliament.

Read the article at www.wildaf-ao.org/fr/ecriture/articles.php3?id_article=1070&statut_nouv=publie&Modifier=Modifier

The French socialist **SÉGOLÈNE ROYAL**, the candidate at the presidential election in France, an example of the participation of women in governance.

Source : Agence France-Presse

Burkina Faso: a Congolese Gynecologist “repairs” excisions

The « reparation » of an excised clitoris is a success in Burkina.

According to an article presented by Mr. Habibou Bangré, the Congolese obstetric gynaecologist Dr. Sebastian Madzou, who works in Angers, operated with success under general anesthesia or epidural on twenty excised women with help from Burkinabe doctors in the country's capital. He practiced a technique of clitoral reconstruction the French urological Pierre Foldges, inventor of the method, had taught him.

Read Dr Sebastian Madzou's interview, addressed in Afrik.com on the subject at: www.wildaf-ao.org/fr/ecriture/articles.php3?id_article=1072

Source: Afrik.com

Women's Initiative « Nobel Peace Prize »

The Laureates of the Nobel Peace Prize **Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadji, Wangari Maathai, Rigoberta Menchu Tum and Betty Williams**, have launched an initiative in 2006 aiming to unite their efforts for the promotion of peace, justice, and equality, as well as to support to the reinforcement of women's rights in the entire world.

The women's initiative relies on the fight against violence towards women, the exchange of information, the sponsorship of international meetings and networking.

For more information on the mission and the goal of the Initiative, visit:

www.noblewomensinitiative.org/about.php

Source: Carrefour AWID

The Administrative Counsel of the Bill Clinton Foundation for Peace (BCFP in English) organized on **December 18, 2006, in Kinshasa**, (Democratic Republic du Congo (RDC), an **Annual Awards Ceremony of for the Day of Merit**.

The prizes were attributed to individuals and to NGO's who excelled in the promotion of peace, of democracy, and of human rights in the world.

Source: E-CIVICUS

Report on the workshop « Equality of women and men, religions, traditions: what are the relationships? »

The report made in Echirolles in June 2006 by the delegates of the workshop which analyzed some practices under the subject « Equality of women and men, religions, traditions: what are the relationships? » is available.

This workshop, that brought together professionals of different areas and associations, included two speakers, Jacque Barou, anthropologist, and Hassan Amghar, expert on Islam, and covered the analysis of concrete, real-life situations by professionals. Because of the preponderance of questions related to Islam in the proposed situations, it is around this religion that our exchanges were concentrated. The report is proposed in a thematic form, with the presentation of cases, analysis, and proposals for action plans.

You can download the report at:

http://www.ville-echirolles.fr/citoyennete/espace_ressources/maison_egalite_debats/debats_egalite_fh_religions.pdf

Adoption of the Daphne III Program by the European Parliament

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mademoiselle Lissy Gröner (PSE, DE) on the community program aiming to combat and to prevent violence towards children, adolescents and women.

Read:

www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5290062

Source: LEF

HIV/AIDS: Women pay the heaviest price

The AIDS pandemic affects women more and more. In viewing this phenomenon, it's the Central and West African Region that pays the heaviest price. In reaction to this disastrous situation of women, the protection of their health rights is needed now more than ever.

Read the whole article: www.wildaf-ao.org/fr/ecriture/articles.php3?id_article=1078&statut_nouv=publie&Modifier=Modifier

Issa NIANG

Source:

www.walf/sn/societe/suite.php?rub=4&id_art=32728

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World wide report on human development 2006 by Elise Bogey and Khalid Elamrani (November, 2006)



« On Thursday, November 9, 2006, the PNUD published its worldwide report on human development in 2006, entitled

“Beyond the shortage: power, poverty and a worldwide water crisis”. The report studies the underlying causes and consequences of a crisis that deprives 1.1 million individuals of access to a healthy water source and 2.6 million people of access to purification methods; it defends the deployment of a concerted effort that will permit everyone access to water and purification methods by means of national strategies and a world-wide plan of action; it examines the social and economic forces at the origin of the shortage of water and of the marginalization of poor people in agriculture; it presents the possibility of turning to international cooperation in order to resolve the trans-border tensions engendered by the management of water; it includes some special contributions by Gordon Brown and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, President Lula, President Carter, and Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan.”

The Report of the Millenium Goals for Development-2006

The report is based on a series of original information compiled by a group of representatives of various organizations and a group of experts on the Indicators of the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) directed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs by the Secretary of the United Nations. The group includes representatives of the international organizations whose activities include the preparation of several series of statistical indicators identified as appropriate for monitoring the progress towards the Millenium Development Goals.

To see the report, go to the following site:
<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2006/MDGReport2006.pdf>

Source: INSTRAW

NEWS-NEWS-NEWS

Extreme Poverty: a violation of Human Rights?

At the Second Session of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, which took place in October in Geneva, special reporter, Ariun Sengupta proposed that the lack assistance to the most underprivileged could one day be liable to sanctions.

The Indian economist proposes an approach that permits, he affirms, a rapid response to the needs of the most deprived. He insists that an extreme form of poverty must be considered as an attack on human rights. The lack of assistance to the most underprivileged would be liable to sanctions in that case.

See on-line: Report by Arjun Sengupta, Human Rights and Extreme Poverty: www.humanrights-geneva.info/article.php?id_article=597)

Source: Carrefour AWID

Professional life and Birth: the responsibility of reconciling the two essentially lies on women

The report developed by Ariane Pailhé and Anne Solaz was published by the National Institute of demographic studies. It measures the gap that separates the implication of women and men in terms of adjusting their professional life at the birth of a child. The report shows that fathers reduce their working activity twenty times less often than mothers.

See the report at:

www.ined.fr/fr/ressources_documentation/publications/pop_soc/bdd/publications/1207/

Gender and Disabilities- Intersection of Analyses / Handicap International

Handicap International published an article on Gender and Disabilities. The article shows that a person lives differently with a handicap depending on whether the person is a man or a woman. The perception surrounding disabilities and their impact are also different, which implicates a particular treatment.

The question of handicapped women is directly linked to their recognition and place in the community, a place that will never improve or change without a change in our judgements and behaviours towards them.

You can read the article on the Handicap International site at: www.handicap-international.org/le-handicap-dans-le-monde/dossiers/femme-et-handicap/index.html?cHash=a5efd95a3f

Source : Carrefour AWID

WILDAF WEST AFRICA

Newsletter

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New Web Site: Training Wiki on gender by INSTRAW

August 28, 2006, the UN-INSTRAW launched a new training tool on its website, the first gender “Wiki”, with the intention of facilitating and increasing idea-exchange for training activities and resources in the entire world. This type of website was conceived with wiki software for free and, with easy downloading, it permits its users to cancel, correct and change rapidly and easily the information that is available.

To continue with these efforts, with the intention of embracing new technologies for women's independence, the UN-INSTRAW developed its first « wiki », dedicated to questions of gender to be used by NGOs, popular organizations, universities and United Nations agencies.

www.un-instraw.org/wiki/training/index.php/Main_page_