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Issue N° 25

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Dear Colleagues,

This issue will be mainly devoted to International Women’s Day (IWD) and activities organized around the world to commemorate it.

As we reflect on the importance of IWD, particularly on the reason why one day is set aside during the year to highlight the positive contributions made by women, we should not forget the daily constraints and obstacles women continue facing every day, whether sexual violence, abuse, or discrimination.

Gender equality still remains an unfulfilled goal on all fronts. Only when both men and women understand that gender equality means respecting the differences between them and sharing the benefits of a life of dignity, respect, and justice – will true equality be achieved.

We all need to join efforts to reach this goal.

Working Group on Gender Issues

THE NEW WORKING GROUP ON GENDER ISSUES FOR 2006



Back row left to right: Par Liljert, Jemini Pandya, Irena Stefanovic, Delbert Field, Kerstin Lau, William Barriga, Yagana Tandja.

Front row: Jose-Angel Oropeza, Adriana Jimenez, Dina Ionescu, Hind Kam-bal, Anita Davies, Ndiro Ndiaye, Shabnam Mosshaeb, Sylvia Ekra, Sajith Gunaratne, Denise Glasscock

Absent: Miki Berge, Lea Matheson, Hasmig Schaeffer, Theodora Suter

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY & NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

AFRICA

IOM CONAKRY

GFP Marie Louise Haba writes :

Le point culminant du 8 mars en Guinée sera la déclaration à la télévision nationale et à la radio de Mme la Ministre chargée des Affaires Sociales, de la Promotion Féminine et de l'Enfance et l'organisation d'un atelier de réflexion de deux jours à Conakry sur la problématique "Parité entre Homme et Femme dans la prise de décision". Le dit atelier sera animé par les femmes responsables et leaders.

Bien que la Mission n'ait rien prévu pour cette journée, Marie Louise partage un article qu'elle a rédigé sur le thème de cette année : "Les femmes dans la prise de décision : relever les défis et promouvoir le changement".

Portrait d'une femme Active

Mme Sidibé Mama Kandé est l'une des 9 femmes employées de la mission de l'OIM en Guinée. Mariée et mère de quatre enfants dont une fille, tantie Mama comme aiment affectueusement l'appeler ses collègues

de service porte bien sa quarantaine d'âge.

Recrutée à l'OIM comme femme de ménage en juin 2004, Mme Sidibé est agronome et n'est pas complexée de passer dans tous les bureaux les matins sourire aux lèvres avec ses outils de travail dans un panier pour le nettoyage.

" Le travail est le meilleur compagnon de la femme, grâce à ce boulot je paye la scolarité de mes enfants, je parviens à subvenir à leurs besoins. Mon mari est enseignant à la retraite".

Vu les conditions de vie à Conakry, il y a quelques années M. Sidibé est rentré au village à Madiana préfecture de la région de Kankan où il a construit sa maison.

Elle conseille à toutes les femmes de veiller à l'éducation des enfants surtout celle des filles.

De son avis le premier lieu de participation aux prises de décision de la femme est la famille :. »Une femme qui participe à l'épanouissement de sa famille, n'aura pas de problème à gérer un poste de responsabilité » a-t-elle conclu.

THE AMERICAS

MRF WASHINGTON D.C.

GFP Berta Fernandez reports that the United Nations Information Centre and the UN

family will organize a luncheon on the theme:

"Women Around the World: Recognizing Inequity, Promoting Opportunity."

with Keynote Speaker The Honorable Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

CNN will interview Ashley Garrett on child trafficking in Southeast Asia.

* * *

Berta also shares this report: HIV/AIDS public awareness campaign for youth in the English speaking Caribbean

In an effort to curb the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the AIDS Institute, and the Art Center College of Design in California partnered in conceptualizing, designing and developing a public awareness campaign using animated public service announcements. Last January 26, a workshop took place in Pasadena (CA) to discuss HIV/AIDS as it affects youth, Caribbean culture and values, the creative process as an advocacy tool, and the relationship between migration and health. The campaign targets HIV/AIDS vulnerable populations in the English-speaking Caribbean, particularly migrant and mobile populations, and its focus also includes strategic communication for influential outreach to

youth. In addition, Caribbean students from the George Washington University School of Public Health are participating in this project. The partners plan to present the campaign at the upcoming International AIDS Conference 2006.

MRF SAN JOSE

GFP Rosilyne Borland reports that she would be attending two events on International Women's Day in Costa Rica on behalf of IOM:

- 1) The Gender Commission of the Judicial Branch and the Technical Secretariat of Gender are holding an event to celebrate the day – including:
 - Presentation of the Government's Gender Policy.
 - Inauguration of the first ever gathering of women police of the OIJ (the national level police).
- 2) The Ministry of External Relations and Culture and the Costa Rican Commission of International Humanitarian Law are launching a book called "Women in War" which was financed in part by the Red Cross and UNHCR.

Rosilyne also writes:

Women make up half of migrants worldwide*

(This article is based on information from the CELADE, CEPAL Press Release of 22 February 2006)

The recent report *Women Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean: Human Rights, Myths, and Hard Re-*

alities (November 2005) by the Regional Program of the Demographic Population and Development Center for Latin America and the Caribbean (CELADE) of the United Nations Population Fund, within the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), describes the feminization of migration as understood by IOM. Several IOM sources were cited by the author.

In the report, the author, Patricia Cortés Castellanos, finds that nearly half of all migrants are women. Castellanos describes women migrants as autonomous actors, showing that the way women migrate is changing. The report mentions that most migrant women are not migrating with male partners, but independently, particularly in search of work opportunities. Most women migrants are young adults, and many are single women or heads of household. Preferred destinations in the region include Costa Rica (for those within Central America and the Caribbean) and Chile for those in South America. The report also identifies other destinations outside the region, including the United States, Spain, Japan, Canada and the UK. The author mentions sexual abuse and exploitation during the migration process, in particular abuses by human traffickers.

The report mentions the changing role of women, as primary providers for their families and as remittance

senders. It calls for a strengthened international agenda in promoting the human rights of women migrants, and the recognition of the double vulnerability of women migrants, as well as their importance for their countries of origin due to the remittances they send home.

For more information, please see the CEPAL website, where the full-text document is available (in Spanish):

http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/celade/agrupa_dores_xml/aes4.xml&xsl=/agrupa_dores_xml/agrupa_listado.xsl

ASIA

MRF DHAKA

GFP Samiha Huda reports the following activities for IWD:

Following a meeting last week on the observance of International Women's Day presided over by the Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, with UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, ILO and GTZ-Dhaka in attendance, it was decided to organize the following programme that was agreed by all as follows:

- 50 stalls will be set up at the Shishu Academy – *Academy for children* - for 3 days starting on 8 March. One stall will be for development partners for displaying their materials/works on women's empowerment. The Secretary MoWCA will inaugurate the exhibition on

the 8th and the Minister will conclude on 10 March.

- Posters will be printed and distributed up to district/upazila level on the day highlighting this year's theme: Women in Decision Making.
- A TV discussion will be organized on 8 March.

IOM will participate with other funding partners and display relevant materials on the issue. We are also planning to show the video on the Road March we had last year for the general audience.

Samaha also shares this article:

WHERE EMPOWERMENT BEGINS

It was not an easy task when 40-year old Rahima decided to go to Kuwait with a household worker's visa status in 1999. Leaving behind two children - one daughter (20) and one son (7) and of course the husband was not an easy decision to make on her part. Rahima remembers her three years overseas experience that was a combination of both pleasant and unpleasant memories. Poverty pushed her to work abroad in a new environment where language, culture, food, life style – everything was new for her. She knew almost nothing about modern-day house keeping techniques and skills. The livelihood she was familiar with was completely different from the one she encountered in her overseas career. Yet, Rahima was ready to face

this new challenge waiting for her. For Rahima, it was fulfilling the dream of solvency and happiness. *“....it was not easy.... I used to work for 12 hours a day on average...”* she said, *“there were about 20 family members in one of the houses of the Sheikhs in Kuwait”*. She had to take care of laundry, mopping, cleaning and the kitchen work. She returned to Bangladesh after three years in Kuwait with the dream to be with her family. She invested the savings into her husband's small business in a town called *“Tongi”* near the capital of Dhaka. Rahima's children are going to school and college as she realized that education would be the only way out of poverty and ignorance and a way to safe livelihood. Today, she owns a grocery shop which she looks after herself. *“My husband asked my opinion before investing in a new business which makes me feel proud”*. After returning from Kuwait she joined the activities of the Bangladeshi Obhobashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA - this association works for female labour migrant workers). Now Rahima is also involved in social work through a local NGO named CARE group (based in Tongi). Rahima who never knew where and how to start her day and where to stop a few years back, has become an example in her society and community of a successful migrant returnee.

IOM HONG KONG GFP Gloria Ko reports:

IOM Hong Kong turned into a small office some ten years ago and now has three staff members, all female.

A small office with all staff of the same sex, we have all the advantages such as being more relaxed and somewhat careless about our manner. We share the similar topics of daily life and similar concerns. In a way we are closer and do not require team building exercises as this is already part of our daily life.

This gives a good impression to the clients of our US Immigrant Visa Application Assistance programme as the norm is that females are more considerate, attentive and patient. This meets the psychological needs of applicants as most of them have worries about their new life in the new environment and they need someone to listen to them and hopefully in return can give them some moral support and ideas. We play this role well. After several years experience in serving immigrants, we notice that female applicants have more concerns than male applicants, and they are more willing to talk, telling us their worries. They worry about the schooling of their children, job opportunities in the new society, or even if they can survive in the new social setting. We do not hear much from male applicants, the other explanation could be that we do not have male staff to listen to them or that they may think female staff cannot fully understand

their problems. In future, we hope we can have the opportunity to recruit male staff for this programme to prove our assumption.

There are also shortcomings with no male staff. None of us can refill the drinking water machine by oneself, two persons are needed, so when knowing only one staff will remain in the office, we will make sure there is sufficient water left in the bottle. It is a tough task for us to get a large quantity of printing materials, such as IOM periodicals, from the post office. It is also not possible for us to move furniture as we wish.

MRF ISLAMABAD

GFP Asma Kashif reports:

Regional Conference on Human Trafficking

IOM held a regional conference on human trafficking from February 21-23 in Islamabad that brought together delegates from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asian states to strengthen cooperation among the countries, to prevent human trafficking, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators of this crime.

"Together, we studied best practices to provide protection and care to victims of trafficking, identified the gaps, and discussed policy implications and prosecution mechanisms," said IOM's regional representative in Is-

lamabad, Hassan Abdel Moneim Mostafa, in his concluding remarks. "The brainstorming sessions have shaped the Conference Statement and I hope it will be a useful tool to counter trafficking in the region."

This conference was part of an innovative process that started two years ago with the formation of the Pakistan Thematic Group on Human Trafficking that provided a forum to a variety of stakeholders, from different backgrounds and associations, to study the crime in the context of Pakistan and put forward viable and lasting solutions to combat the menace of trafficking. The conference was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency's Programme for the Advancement of Gender Equality and falls under the overall aegis of a project entitled "Development of a Conceptual Framework and Strategies to Combat Trafficking."

"The deliberations made during this conference will help all of us at a regional level in eliminating this menace from its roots" stated the Federal Minister for Interior, Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao. "IOM has been a steadfast partner with the Government of Pakistan at every step in formulating our policies and projects relating to anti-human trafficking activities."

The aims of the regional conference were to discuss the issue of trafficking and to share the findings of the

Pakistan Thematic Group with regional experts and exchange experiences, information, and good practices with a view to fostering regional linkages and initiating regional cooperation and collaboration. Regional participants presented papers on their individual country situations. In addition, issues such as policy, legislation, enforcement, networking, livelihoods, psycho-social support, care standards, health and the role of media were discussed.

A unanimous declaration was adopted at the end of a three-day multi-regional conference that called for a rights-based and gender sensitive approach to tackling the issue. Experts recommended mapping vulnerable groups and identifying trafficking routes in the region and beyond. They called for raising awareness of targeted communities by utilizing print and electronic media. Safe migration policies, alternative livelihood options for trafficking victims and vulnerable groups were also recommended.

"To reduce trafficking globally and regionally, it is essential to engage the political machinery in supporting stronger implementation of existing laws and on providing more publicity to collaborative efforts of government and civil society" said Mr. John J. Moore, Counselor Development and Head of Aid, Canadian High Commission. "I am very pleased that Canada has been able to collaborate with IOM and the Ministry of Interior to address the issue of human trafficking."

The conference participants debated on providing justice to trafficking victims; understanding the scope and complexities of human trafficking to develop improved referral systems; the development of a regional protocol for repatriating trafficked victims and "behaviour change" campaigns to address social misperceptions concerning victims in origin, transit and destination communities.

As regards bringing traffickers to trial, the experts discussed extradition treaties; setting up a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) police unit; establishing a regionally shared database with information on victims, traffickers, and the status of prosecution; writing a code of conduct for licensed labour recruiting agencies and travel agents and standard guidelines and capacity-building of law enforcement and judicial officials.

Addressing the conference participants at the closing ceremony, Federal Minister for Social Welfare and Special Education Mrs. Zubaida Jalal said "without the joint efforts of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, humans trafficking cannot be checked in the region."

As part of counter-trafficking activities in Pakistan, IOM conducted first-ever nationwide trainings of law enforcement officials and also trained staff of newly established Anti Trafficking Units of the Federal Investigation

Agency. In addition, IOM has set up a shelter home and providing direct assistance to victims of trafficking.



EUROPE

MRF BUDAPEST

GFP Agnes Novoszel reports:

In Hungary in the early 1980s, most companies celebrated Women's Day which was organized by Trade Unions and Staff Associations. Later on, as female employees were becoming more and more equal in status/position with men (and have been more appreciated all through the year!), this habit was slowly being forgotten. Nowadays, women usually receive a flower or a small bouquet of snowflakes from colleagues (although the latter not any more as it is a protected plant in Hungary), a nice card on the desk, or an e-card on the computer (the same in IOM Budapest office). Some shopkeepers give flowers to each woman customer who enters the shop.

MRF Budapest has not planned any institutional and official commemoration of International Women's Day, apart from the traditional nice

treatment within the office environment (flowers, homemade biscuits baked by male colleagues and a small informal celebration).

International Women's Day is commemorated and announced on most TV stations, and the TV programmes/films are sometimes arranged so that women's roles in society are highlighted.

NEWS FROM THE WGGI

The WGGI decided to take an innovative approach in commemorating IWD by addressing two international schools in Geneva and giving presentations to several groups of 8-16 year old students. The students were asked to illustrate through art work what 'gender', 'migration' and 'International Women's Day' meant to them. Their artwork will be exhibited in HQs and will be auctioned off to IOM colleagues and parents of the students in attendance. The proceeds of this sale will go to a Geneva-based NGO, Camarada that deals with integration issues of migrant women and their children.

At the same time, a pamphlet was produced compiling stories, articles and interviews of different migrant women – whether refugees, IDPs, victims of trafficking, or returnees. Each woman had an important story to tell relating to her life after she took the decision to migrate, what happened during her mobility and

what she was able to achieve thanks to her mobility.

WGGI QUIZ

The answer to the question in the last issue of who said:

“Whether women are better than men I cannot say – but I can say they are certainly no worse”.

Golda Meir

This issue’s question is, who said:

“Women have always struggled with their menfolk for the abolition of slavery, the liberation of countries from colonialism, the dismantling of apartheid and the attainment of peace. It is now the turn of men to join women in their struggle for equality”.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3 - 14 April Turin, Italy
Title: International Labour Standards and Equality in Employment with a Focus on Gender Issues: Tools and Practice

15 May - 2 June 2006, UNHQ, New York, USA
Title: CEDAW 35th Session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

The Gender and Peace Studies Department at the University for Peace is proud to invite you to attend the Master of Arts in Gender and Peace Building. The programme will take place on the University’s main campus in San José, Costa Rica from August 2006 to July 2007.

Primary attention will be given to the study of gender and peace through a multi-disciplinary framework on the following topics:

- Foundation Course in Peace and Conflict Studies
- Gender Studies and Peace Building
- Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods
- Gender Security and Peace Building
- Cultures and Learning from Violence Towards Peace
- Human Rights Before During and After Conflict
 - Gender Mainstreaming During Peacekeeping Operations and Humanitarian Assistance
- Gender and Nonviolent Transformation of Conflict
- A Gender Analysis of the Environment and Sustainable Development
- Peace Processes - Conflict Analysis, Resolution and Transformation

Due to the international nature of the Programme, English is the language of study.

Please find more information and the online application at the UPEACE website:

<http://www.upeace.org>