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### **KARAT at Open Forum's Global Assembly**

The workshop on outcomes from consultations on gender within the CSO development effectiveness process was held at the Open Forum's Global Assembly on 28-30 June, 2011 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The Global Assembly gathered more than 230 participants from over 70 countries, and brought the opinions of civil society around their own effectiveness as development actors. It also worked out the CSOs strategy towards the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (South Korea).

The workshop on gender equality, attended by 20 participants, focused on key findings from four regions: Latin America (Rosa Inez Ospina - ALOP), Africa (Lumba Syianga – Women for Change), Asia (Urna Gombosuren - APWLD) and Central and Eastern Europe and CIS (Kinga Lohmann - KARAT) „on how CSOs can ensure gender equality within their organizations as well as being accountable to international development agreements on gender equality in their programming” (see: [Gender equality and development effectiveness. Summary of Global Report](#)). The second part of the workshop, focusing on gender equality's strategy for Busan (debate opened by Youngsook Cho, South Korea), stressed a critical need to organize a gender equality group within Open Forum for/in Busan, and develop a political statement on gender equality within the Open Forum, based on the main findings from the regional thematic consultations.

To find out more, please contact Kinga at: [kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl](mailto:kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl).

### **Gender Issues in Polish Development Cooperation**

On February 2011 KARAT Secretariat announced its involvement in the consultations with civil society organizations (CSOs) on the frame of the first multi-year program of Polish Development Cooperation for 2012-2016. The consultations were initiated by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

During last five months KARAT, as a part of Polish Platform of CONCORD ([Grupa Zagranica](#)), has been actively involved in this process with an aim to contribute to elaboration of gender-sensitive program of Polish development cooperation. The representative of KARAT Secretariat joined two working groups: strategic group on mission and vision of Polish development cooperation and thematic group focusing on democracy and human rights based approach. Moreover, KARAT took part in shaping the chapter about gender equality and women's empowerment within the human rights and democracy thematic priority and consulted the global education chapter. The draft version of the multi-year program on Polish Development Cooperation prepared with wide consultations of CSOs has been submitted to MFA Undersecretary of State – Krzysztof Stanowski who is responsible for development issues. By the end of August, 2011 the CSOs involved in the process will receive feedback from the Polish MFA.

To find out more about the consultation please contact Marta at: [marta.gontarska@karat.org.pl](mailto:marta.gontarska@karat.org.pl).

### **ECOSOC Status for KARAT**

KARAT Coalition has joined the organizations holding Special Consultative Status of ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council of United Nations). This status allows the NGOs to be actively involved in UN processes. The status is a chance for further development of KARAT's work at UN level, especially within our Women's Rights program.

For more information please contact Joanna at: [joanna.szabunko@karat.org.pl](mailto:joanna.szabunko@karat.org.pl).

## Members' News

### Women's Association of Romania: New Projects

Women's Association of Romania is implementing two new international projects. The first one, "Valorizing rural women", aims to promote rural women as professional workers and entrepreneurs. The second project, "Women count", is addressed to women living in Bucharest who are discriminated at workplace. "Women Count" focuses on the phenomenon of mobbing. Its objective is to reduce the number of cases of mobbing to promote equality of chances between women and men in the professional environment and to raise awareness, especially among employers.

[More information](#)

### Women's Rights Center (Armenia): Say No To Domestic Violence



On July 14, 2011 Women's Rights Center, Armenia organized an awareness raising street action called "No domestic violence", during which 100 colored balloons signed by the passers-by invited to take part in the action were released into the air as a sign of protest against domestic violence against women and children. The action gained a significant support and raised awareness on gender-based violence.

It is a serious problem in Armenia. There is no appropriate and effective law and women applying to the court often

have to wait for a long period to have their cases considered. Most of the judges are not aware of the implications of domestic violence issues. The majority of them do not realize that there is a difference between violence in general and domestic violence. That is why WRC has initiated drafting of Law on Domestic Violence and it has been lobbying it since 2007.

To find out more, please contact Susanna Vardanyan at: [susanna@wrcorg.am](mailto:susanna@wrcorg.am).



## Call for action

### Protest Against Abortion Ban in Poland

On June 30th, the Polish Parliament (Sejm) debated a bill that would totally ban abortion in Poland, also in the cases when woman's life is in danger. Despite the objection of the left-wing party, the bill has been referred to the relevant committee for further consideration and probably Sejm will discuss it again on early September. The draft bill, named "On the protection of human life from the moment of conception", was prepared by a group of fundamentalist

opponents of abortion, known as an organizer of the macabre anti-abortion exhibitions held in the Polish cities. Poland's abortion law is one of the most restrictive in Europe and even more restrictive in practice than on paper.

Poland is currently presiding the Council of the European Union and the failure to reject this very restrictive bill on the very first day of the Presidency of the EU Council is a worrying signal to the international community.

ASTRA Network has initiated a campaign calling on supporters to send a letter to the Prime Minister of Poland. The letter is available at ASTRA's [website](#). ASTRA encourages you to send your letter opposing this law to Prime Minister Donald Tusk, [donald.tusk@sejm.pl](mailto:donald.tusk@sejm.pl). ASTRA also asks to send a cc: [federa@astra.org.pl](mailto:federa@astra.org.pl)

*Source: ASTRA Secretariat*

## Upcoming deadlines

### **CEDAW: Call for Papers on Harmful Practices**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child both contain legally binding obligations in relation to the elimination of harmful practices affecting girls under eighteen that are based on gender stereotypes and prejudices grounded in patriarchy. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have decided to elaborate a joint General Recommendation/Comment on harmful practices.

The harmful practices covered by this General Recommendation/Comment include traditional or emerging practices, prescribed by social norms, which are often rooted in culture. As Female genital mutilation, early marriage and forced marriage will be used as key illustrative examples because they are well studied. However, the General Recommendation/Comment will provide a conceptual framework and recommendations that are applicable to all harmful practices that fall within its scope.

The CEDAW and CRC Committees welcome inputs on harmful practices affecting girls in English, French or Spanish, particularly from interested organizations and individuals who have been working on this problem. The submissions should be as concise as possible and sent by no later than 31 August 2011.

[More information](#)

## Call for participation

### **UN Women Questionnaire for Global Database of Women's Peacebuilding Organisations**

UN Women is collecting detailed information on organizations engaged at all levels of peace processes, from prevention to post-conflict peace building. Once the database will be running, it will be possible to learn about and connect with other organizations in specific field at global, regional and national levels.

If you want to contribute to this project, you are asked to fill out the [questionnaire](#).

### **CEDAW. General Recommendation: the Protection of Women's Human Rights in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations**

During its 49<sup>th</sup> session, held on 29th July 2011, the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted a general recommendation on the protection of women's human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations.

"In addition to the widely reported instances of sexual violence and mass rape in times of war, women experience widespread violation of non-derogable rights to life, torture, summary or arbitrary executions, displacement and gross violations of socio-economic rights," said Pramila Patten, the chair of CEDAW's Working Group on the human rights of women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations.

The proposed general recommendation will address diverse conflicts, including violations occurring in international and non-international armed conflicts, as well as in situations of extreme violence and other internal disturbances which may not necessarily be classified as armed conflict.

[More information](#)

### **First Woman Appointed Head of the International Monetary Fund**

France's finance minister, Christine Lagarde, has been appointed head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She is the first woman to hold this post, in a sector which is visibly dominated by men. In 2009 European Women's Lobby informed that "not one governor of the central banks of the EU Member States is a woman. Only one of the six members of the executive board of the governing council of the European Central Bank is a woman." This appointment contributes to the change of unequal gender representation in finance's world.

Lagarde takes up the position of chief of the IMF after the resignation of her compatriot Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who quit following his arrest on charges of alleged sexual assault.

*Source: EWL*

### **Women in Business: Parliament calls for quotas**

Women should make up 30% of top management in the largest listed EU companies by 2015 and 40% by 2020. This is the position of the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). They urge the European Commission to "propose legislation including quotas by 2012 for increasing female representation in corporate management bodies of enterprises to 30% by 2015 and to 40% by 2020", if voluntary measures do not manage to increase the share of women.

[More information](#)

## **EU Fundamental Rights Agency: What are the conditions faced by irregular migrants employed as domestic workers?**

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) presented its report on the rights of irregular migrants who are employed as domestic workers in the EU. Most of them are women. The report shows that their irregular immigration status, joined with challenges in regulating domestic work more generally, makes this group very vulnerable to exploitation. Typical forms of exploitation include low pay, being forced to work overtime, and usually not being able to obtain compensation for work-related accidents.

"From a fundamental rights perspective, it is key to improve the situation of all domestic workers in the EU - whether they reside regularly or irregularly in an EU Member State. This is reinforced by the ILO Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which was adopted in June 2011, and which applies to all domestic workers", says FRA director, Morten Kjaerum.

The report is based on in-depth interviews with domestic workers, civil society organizations and trade unions from across ten EU Member States.

You can find the full report [here](#).

## **Resources**

### **ASTRA: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Central and Eastern Europe**

The aim of the publication "Current status and directions for advancement of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Central and Eastern Europe" is to summarize the experience of women's rights advocates from this region and to present the current situation regarding observance in sexual and reproductive rights and its monitoring. Moreover, the publication provides the readers with up to date information on the EU's commitments in this field.

The publication is available [here](#).

### **AWID: Urgent Responses for Women Human Rights Defenders at Risk**

All over the world, women human rights defenders face a variety of threats, both as human rights activists and as women they are exposed to or targeted by gender-based violence and gender-specific risks. What are their main problems? How can we solve them? This is the topic of the research conducted by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) in collaboration with the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRD IC).

You can access the report [here](#).

### **UNHCR: The 2010 Global Trends**

The 2010 Global Trends report demonstrates the continued importance of forced displacement and statelessness issues to the international agenda. It depicts some of the major humanitarian trends which occurred last year in relation to displacement, either within or beyond international borders. The report also reviews statistical trends and patterns for populations considered to be of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - refugees, returnees, stateless persons.

What is important, in any displaced population, approximately 50 percent of the people are women and girls. They face the rigors of long and exhausting journeys into exile, official persecution or indifference and frequent sexual abuse, even after reaching a place of safety. In the last few years, UNHCR has developed a series of special programmes to ensure women have equal access to protection, basic goods and services as they attempt to rebuild their lives.

The report is available [here](#).

### **UN Women: 10 Recommendations to Make Justice Work for Women**

The report published by UN Women argues that in many regions the “infrastructure of justice - the police, the courts, and the judiciary - is failing women” and needs to be reformed to provide legal support that serves women’s needs.

The report, published in July 2011 and entitled “Progress of the World’s Women: In Pursuit of Justice”, outlines 10 recommendations that have huge potential to increase women’s access to justice and gender equality.

The full report is available [here](#).

### **WIDE: EU Donors under Women’s Watch**

The new report “EU Donors under Women’s Watch” published by WIDE focuses on gender equality and women’s rights in the aid effectiveness agenda of EU Member States. With a focus on five European countries – Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK – the report maps the degree to which these countries comply with the commitments they have made.

You can download the publication [here](#).

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## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS**

KARAT Secretariat would like to sincerely thank the following for their contributions to the News (forwarding information and providing us with 'original' information): Women’s Association of Romania, Women’s Rights Center (Armenia), ASTRA, AWID, EWL, WIDE, WUNRN.

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