

KARAT NEWS

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KARAT Board Meeting

On 16th and 17th of May KARAT Board and Advisory Body members are going to meet in Warsaw on its first of two annual meetings. This time the most important issues to be discussed are: KARAT's program for the years 2009-2012, and networking with members. This will be the first Board Meeting to be held in KARAT new office. Hard work and fruitful discussions are predicted.

Accepting New Members

Traditionally before the Board Meeting is coming KARAT Coalition invited gender focused organization from CEE& CIS region to apply for membership till Friday, 9th of May. To become a member the applying organization needed to provide KARAT Secretariat with the filled membership form, two recommendations from organizations already being a member and the letter of motivation. The applications will be reviewed during Karat Board meeting on 16-17 May.

For more information concerning KARAT Coalition membership please write to Kasia Staszewska at: kasia.staszewska@karat.org.pl

Call for applications for OP CEDAW training open !

KARAT Coalition together with project partners in Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine invites applications for participation in the training on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW which will take place in Warsaw, Poland, on 10-13 September 2008. The training is organized in cooperation with IRAW Asia Pacific within the project *Building towards Eastern European and Central Asia NGO Coalition on Optional Protocol to CEDAW* implemented by KARAT Coalition and supported by OXFAM Novib. The training is intended for women's rights activists recommended by women's NGOs from Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine. It will provide the participants with the improved knowledge of how to identify the discrimination against women in the local context and how to address it under the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The participants of the training will be identified on the basis of the specified criteria.

For the full text of the call and the application form please contact Ola Solik aleksandra.solik@karat.org.pl or project partners in: Belarus – PA Women's Independent Democratic Movement petina@open.by ; Georgia – Women's Political Resource Center wprc@wprc.org.ge and Ukraine – Ukrainian Women's Fund - olena@uwf.kiev.ua or wicc@public.icyb.kiev.ua

Through Their Eyes, through Ours: Meeting of project partners

On 22nd and 23rd of April, 2008 KARAT Coalition hosted the first strategic meeting of the partners, working together on the project *Through Their eyes, Through ours: Rising Publics Awareness about development problems faced by women from developing countries from EU Eastern Neighbourhood, Balkans and Central Asia* cofinanced by European Union. The representatives of the partner's organisations from Slovak Center for Communication and Development (Slovakia), Permaculture and Peacebuilding Centre Shtip (Macedonia), Gender Media Caucasus Association (Georgia), WIDE (Belgium) and Womnet (Germany) met in KARAT Secretariat's new office in order to discuss objectives

of the project, role of each partner, timetable, budget and the activities. During the meeting the first decisions have been taken regarding the activities planned for this year: the art competition and the exhibition focusing on the economic situation of women of the region. The call for art competition will be announced on 1st of June.

Please note that project will place a very strong emphasis on involving as many KARAT members as possible. For more information please contact Ewa Pintera at: ewa.pintera@karat.org.pl

Women's labour rights in supermarkets: advisory group meeting

Strategic Action Advise Body (SAAB) - experts group of *Labour right protection from gender perspective in the super/hypermarkets in Poland* project - consisting of lawyers, representatives of NGOs, Trade Unions, academics and decision makers met for the first time on May the 7th in the KARAT Secretariat office. The SAAB's role is to provide expertise during the project implementation, contribution to monitoring and assessment process of labour rights as well as developing the recommendations for legal system changes. During the meeting the draft of the report focusing on the working conditions in supermarkets in Poland was presented. The results show again that salaries in hypermarkets are extremely low and employee rights continue to be breached particularly the ones concerning the overtime work reward and work over duties. Next SAAB meeting is expected in June.

For more information please contact Joanna Pieczynska at: joanna.pieczynska@karat.org.pl

Chinese women in Warsaw

As a part of the project *Fair play in sporting goods industry*, KARAT hosted two women's advocates for workers rights from Hong Kong - Staphany Wong and Pui-Lin Sham. Staphany Wong is a researcher and campaigner involved in the Play Fair 2008 – an international campaign pursued in the lead up to the Olympic Games in Beijing. Pui-Lin Sham is an activist from Hong Kong who worked in the garment industry for over 20 years. She started working in the factory at the age of 13.

During meeting organized in the KARAT's Karat's Secretariat's new office on 9th of May, Staphany and Pui-Lin spoke about the working conditions in Chinese clothing factories and how Polish consumers can contribute to advancing these conditions. Both activists participated also in the panel discussion that took place at the doc review festival (one of the largest documentary film festival in the region) after the screening of China Blue – film that depicts working conditions in one of the Chinese clothing factory. The panel was coorganized by KARAT.

If you would to learn more please contact Joanna Szabunko at joanna.szabunko@karat.org.pl

For more information about doc review festival go to: <http://www.docreview.pl/>

We also encourage you to visit Play Fair 2008 website: <http://playfair2008.org/>

Dinner with Margot Wallstrom, Vice-President of European Commission

During her two day visit in Poland on 17-18 April, Margot Wallstrom – EC vice-president and Commissioner for Institutional Relation and Communication Strategy met with Polish government and civil society. Representative of KARAT received an invitation for an informal dinner with Margot Wallstrom and Polish high level governmental bodies as well as Polish representation of the European Commission. In the conversation about the current women's situation in Poland, Kinga Lohmann

expressed a concern about the governmental gender equality policy and the lack of understanding among politicians that gender equality requires a professional approach, expertise, knowledge and continuity at governmental level, as well as cooperation on regular basis with civil society, namely women's NGOs. She also stressed the enormous difficulties women's NGOs are facing with the access to EU funds at the governmental level and their dramatic financial situation that seriously limited their 'watch dog' activities.

KARAT's Participation in WIDE/UNIFEM consultation on gender equality in European aid

As a regional CEE & CIS platform of WIDE KARAT Coalition joined the WIDE/UNIFEM Consultation on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Challenges and opportunities ahead in the new European aid environment, which took place in Brussels on 7th of May. Almost 60 stakeholders from civil society organizations, the European Commission, the European Parliament, United Nations and EU Member States' missions met together to exchange ideas and develop common recommendations for two most important events concerning the new aid architecture: September 2008 Accra High Level Forum III and the November 2008 Doha Review International Conference of the Monterrey Consensus. Strong point of the meeting was a presentation prepared by the representatives of UNIFEM Project Office in Kyrgyzstan showing the results of the mapping study examining how the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is working in the country. The outcomes of the Consultation will serve as a lobby and advocacy work of WIDE towards the European Commission and EU Member States particularly concerning drafting Accra Agenda for Action - the outcome document of the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, September 2008.

The consultation is part of a broader process organised by different CSOs, to ensure that the civil society perspectives, experiences and proposals are informing the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Monterrey Consensus. For more information contact Nerea Craviotto at: nerea@wide-network.org or Kasia Staszewska at: kasia.staszewska@karat.org.pl

Update from Members

Learn more about KARAT members!



We have a pleasure to introduce **Women's Issues Information Centre (WICC)** which is one of the most active women NGO in Lithuania working since February 1996. Among the greatest organization's achievements in the recent years one can find completing International Date Rape Case research, organizing 16 days awareness against gender based violence events and conducting *Let's do business* trainings. Currently WICC is implementing 3 projects focusing on its 3 main expertise areas: preventing violence against women, family and work reconciliation and economic literacy. In 2008, for a second time already, "Equal Workplace" elections are going to be organized.

We strongly encourage you to learn more about the organization and visit the website which is also available in English: <http://www.lygus.lt/>

If you have any questions you can also contact Dovilė Rūkaitė at: dovile@lygus.lt



The **Women's Alliance for Development Foundation (WAD)** is a Bulgarian NGO working to promote women's issues and gender equality and administers the National Network for Equal Opportunities. Currently WAD focuses on advancing gender responsive good local governance by *Establishing citizens councils with Sofia city district mayors* project as well as on minority women inclusion and empowerment issues within *Transfer of expertise on combating trafficking to Roma women's NGOs* and *Developing favorable intercultural environment for intercultural education* project implementation. During the last two years WAD managed to become a member of two NGOs consultative councils with municipalities and successfully contributed its advocacy efforts for parliamentary gender subcommittee establishment.

If you understand Bulgarian monthly bulletins about WAD activities are available on the organization website: www.women-bg.org , which also has its English section

In case of any question you can also contact Sevdalina Voynova at: svoynova@gmail.com

National/Members' News

AZERBAIJAN: Women's rights

The meeting between deputy Minister of Justice of Azerbaijan, Togrul Musayev, and member of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Pramila Patten was held. Ms Patten welcomed the fact that the country adopted law on gender equality and voiced hope that in the nearest future Azerbaijan will also introduce legal regulations and mechanisms aimed at combating gender-based violence that remains to be serious problem. The deputy Minister elaborated on how the country is implementing CEDAW Convention and other relevant international documents. He also expressed his concern about the violations of rights of refugee women.

More information is available at:

<http://www.today.az/news/society/44406.html>

BULGARIA: Domestic violence law

The Advocates for Human Rights and the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF) have just issued a new report titled *Implementation of the Bulgarian Law on Protection against Domestic Violence: A Human Rights Report*. This publication examines the functioning of the law on domestic violence that has been in force in Bulgaria since March 2005. It is based on monitoring of law implementation of by all actors, including the state, police, judges, prosecutors, media and NGOs. There are some improvements. In 2006 alone, there were over 6000 lawsuits that were carried out under the newly adopted law. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done to combat gender-based violence in Bulgaria. The report lists concrete steps to be done and provides recommendation to all actors involved. The full text of the report is available at:

http://stopvaw.org/sites/3f6d15f4-c12d-4515-8544-26b7a3a5a41e/uploads/FINAL_REPORT.pdf

GEORGIA: Women urge the state to introduce quota system

Women's Coalition of Georgia forwarded to the parliament 32 thousand signatures in support of amendments to the country's elections legislation. The Coalition member, women's NGOs urge the authorities to amend legislation so that the country's parliament introduces temporary measures (quotas) to bring the number of women to 50%. According to the existing regulations, the parliament now is obliged to study and discuss the Women's Coalition's legislative initiative. "We hope that the new parliament, elected on May 21, will support activation of women's participation in decision-making processes," the Coalition members stressed talking to the media on May 2 press-conference.

POLAND: Women's rights activists meet Commissioner Spidla

The meeting was held in Brussels where women's organizations' delegation voiced their postulate regarding women's rights in Poland. Vladimir Spidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities expressed his concern about the difficulties in implementation of equality policies in Poland and confirmed that he is aware that the country is late with putting into practice adequate gender equality mechanisms. It was even stated that if Poland is not going to comply with EU equality policies the country might be sued to European Court of Justice in Luxemburg. The most urgent need for Poland is to adopt act on equal treatment of women and men as well as establishing monitoring mechanisms.

To read more on this topic go to:

<http://www.neww.org.pl/en.php/news/news/1.html?&nw=4259&re=3>

EU News

Decreased commitment for development?

Last month, OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) presented figures on the EU development aid in 2007 that indicate a significant decrease for the first time since 2000. The cuts are mostly remarkable in case of the richest European countries from the Group of eight (G8): United Kingdom (decrease by 29%), Germany and France. The president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barosso, expressed his concern and pointed out that this trend in Europe is 'dangerous'. Civil society organizations united in CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) also raise alarm that this is a serious step backward that stays in stark contrast with the declared commitment of European governments to development assistance.

If you would like to learn more about this issue go to CONCORD's press release:

<http://www.concordeurope.org/Public/Page.php?ID=4>

Gender equality and development cooperation

KARAT welcomes the resolution of the European Parliament that calls upon the European Union to strengthen its commitment to gender equality within the context of the development cooperation. The resolution on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment gives especially severe critique of the mechanism called Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). Moreover, the European Parliaments notes that only 5% of the funding available under the thematic programme called 'Investing in People' is allocated to women. What is also upsetting is that there are no gender – specific targets and activities in the Country Strategy Papers.

The resolution is available at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0103+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

Other News

New director of UNIFEM

New executive director of UNIFEM has been appointed - Inés Alberdi from Spain. Election has been coordinated by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the UNIFEM Consultative Committee. Women's groups are highly concerned about the election process. In general, the most important part of the recruitment procedure is interview panel, after which six short listed candidates have been reviewed. One candidate has been identified as most competent and suitable for the position – Gita Sen. However, due to a pressures exerted by the Spanish government Mrs Alberdi has been taken once more for consideration. Women's rights advocates are highly alert by the politicization of the whole process and the final decision making.

For the official UN press release go to:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26238&Cr=unifem&Cr1=>

To get familiar with the critical DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for New Era) analysis of the process go to:

http://www.dawnnet.org/ARCHIVE/NOTICE_BOARD.html#dsun

UN ECOSOC: Gender missing in FfD

Women's group are rather disappointed with the special high-level meeting of the ECOSOC that took place on 14th of April, at which such topics as rising commodity prices, declining development aid and the devastating impact of climate change on developing countries have been discussed. The meeting was meant to be a preparation for the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) scheduled to take place in November, 2008 in Qatari.

However, what was obviously missing in the agenda is gender-sensitivity. Some governments, however, claimed that there is a need to incorporate gender equality into development cooperation strategies, the issue was not sufficiently reflected in the general discussion. Women's rights community claims that FfD process (that started in Mexico in 2002) downgrades the gender perspective in development financing. For instance, there is no single reference to gender equality in the chapter addressing official development assistance (ODA) in the Monterrey Consensus (adopted in Mexico). NGOs (Eurostep, Social Watch) report that in fact only 0,1% of ODA is spent on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Without achieving gender equality, sustainable development also cannot be achieved. Thus aid assistance must be directed at women, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Women's movement, including such organization like AWID or WIDE will further intensify their lobby to recognize gender aspects of development before the conference in Qatari.

To read more about this issue go to:

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42035>

Information Sharing

EU Free Trade Agreements

New manual for civil society groups on agreements between European Union and developing countries is now available. Apart from academic research, this tool reviews case studies. The manual has been jointly released by ActionAid, Christian Aid and Oxfam International.

It is available online at:

http://www.bilaterals.org/article.php3?id_article=11840

Resource book on migrant domestic workers

MIGS (The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies) has just release new book titled: *Integration of Female Migrant Domestic Workers: Strategies for Employment and Civic Participation* that includes the best practice examples and integration models, as well as recommendations for national governments and the European Union.

To receive a copy of the resource book please contact Josie Christodoulou at:

josie@medinstgenderstudies.org

Euromed – a region on a move, June, 2-3, Bonn, Germany

Organized by WOMENT, the conference will focus on gender equality in the context of Euromed Partnership. The so called Istanbul Conclusions will be also put under discussion. These are commitments made by the ministers of the EU states and the Mediterranean neighbouring countries in Istanbul in 2006 to strengthen the role of women in society.

For more information see:

http://www.womnet.de/content/2008/EUROMED_Programm.englkl.pdf

Call for papers: Gender and Citizenship, Novemeber, 7-9, Cortona, Italy

The Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation, in cooperation with the Centre for Study and Research on Women and Gender Differences of the University of Milan, invites doctoral candidates and young PhD recipients or independent researchers to submit proposals for participation at the Cortona Colloquium 2008 – Gender and Citizenship: New and Old Dilemmas, Between Equality and Difference.

There is only a limited number of scholarship available for participants from outside of Europe.

For more information, please contact Sara Benjamin at

International@fondazionefeltrinelli.it.

Job Vacancy at Human Rights Watch: Women's Rights Advocate/Researcher for Europe and Central Asia

Human Rights Watch seeks an experienced professional to undertake advocacy on global women's human rights issues with European institutions and countries and conduct research and advocacy on women's rights in Europe and Central Asia.

The Advocate/Researcher will report to the Executive Director of the Women's Rights Division of HRW and will work closely with the Division's Advocacy Director and other HRW advocates. She or he will be based in our Brussels or London office. This is a three-year position. The deadline for applications is May, 31, 2008.

Detailed information is available at:

<http://www.hrw.org/jobs/docs/2008/03/07/eca18231.htm>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

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