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Dear KARAT News Readers !

There was a little break with the news in September due to my annual leave but I am back on track now. And all the important updates are covered here.

October has been a very busy month for KARAT Secretariat. The most important – we've been to Geneva on the Beijing +15 Review. And CEDAW is celebrating its 30th birthday soon. We have no chance but commemorate it ☺

Have a nice reading,

Kasia Staszewska, KARAT Networking Officer & Project Coordinator

What's new in KARAT ?

KARAT and Beijing + 15 in Geneva



As a follow up its previous involvement in the Beijing process, KARAT took an active part in the UN-ECE Beijing + 15 Regional Review Meeting in Geneva. This involvement consisted of several elements:

The Exhibition. Despite of small number of KARAT's members present, the perspective of women from our Region was very visible at the meeting thanks to our photographic exhibition "Through Their Eyes" being presented at the conference side event in the Palais des Nations. It was combined with the reception hosted by Jan Kubis, Executive Secretary of UN ECE. KARAT was very pleased to be given this opportunity to present to the UN ECE governmental representatives, international organizations, NGOs community and other stakeholders, the problems faced by women in our Region, such as poverty, informal economy or survival strategies in refugee camps. At the same time, however, it was disappointing that the organizers of the exhibition in Geneva decided to hide the fact that several photographs from refugee camp shown at the exhibition were taken in Georgia in 2008, as well as to conceal the name of the author of these photos (Mariam Amurvelashvili who won the first price in our competition preceding the exhibition). Further we also regret that the role of KARAT and its project partners in production of the exhibition was not acknowledged.

The NGO Forum: The official Beijing + 15 Review Meeting was preceded by the NGO Interactive Roundtables: "The challenges of gender equality in the context of the economic and financial crisis" hosted by NGO CSW Geneva on October 30-31. The impact of the economic crisis on women in CEE and CIS was the particular focus of the discussion. The UNIFEM discussion paper presented at the forum highlighted the fact that "The financial crisis has had a particularly devastating effect on the CEE and CIS region, with an estimated 35 million people expected to be pushed into poverty in 2009". In the all European statements the situation of women's migrants affected by the economic crisis was emphasized. "Raising unemployment rates particularly affect migrant workers, half of whom are women. Joint initiatives between countries of origin and destination are necessary to assure protection of the rights of migrant workers...". It is important to emphasize the fact that during the drafting of the recommendations from Regional caucuses, a political will of European women (between others: EWL and KARAT) to prepare a common (pan)European statement was strongly expressed. It aimed to overcome a division of Europe into subregions and thus to make the recommendations from CIS and Balkans' women not only included but also much stronger. The disappointing was the fact that due the UN regional structure and its vision of the European region, the integration of European women was not reflected in one common European statement.

Governmental Meeting: Over 300 participants from the 56 UN ECE member States, and representatives from international and non-governmental organisations active in, Europe, Central Asia, Caucasus and North America – came together to Geneva to "take the stock of the progress made in the UN ECE region on gender equality and women's empowerment, and address the major challenges ahead". Although two days review meeting was intended to focus on crisis, there were only very few presentations on this topic (e.g Moldovian governmental gender analysis of the crisis, migration and remittances). Within this context, the review meeting seemed to be a backlash and not a progress towards implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Kinga Lohmann, speaking as KARAT and WIDE regional platform, during the session on "New partnership, networks and alliances for gender equality" presented the experience of both networks on economic literacy from a gender perspective. She underlined that the focus on basic knowledge about the economy from a gender perspective continues to be timely and urgently needed, particularly for CIS and some Eastern and Southern European countries looking for ways to deal with the gendered consequences of the crisis while even the pre-crisis situation was not sufficiently understood and addressed. She called for financial support for Economic Literacy from gender

perspective to enable women to meaningfully influence ongoing economic decision-making at the national and regional levels. To know more about KARAT in Geneva write to Kinga at: kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl

OP CEDAW: Training for Central Asia Women



Realizing the Potentials for Using the OP CEDAW as a Tool for the Protection and Promotion of Women Human Rights under CEDAW was a title of the training organized jointly by KARAT Coalition and IWRAW Asia Pacific in Warsaw in September. Participants – lawyers and women’s rights NGO leader activist from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Italy, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan - were actively involved in 4 day training session conducted by professional trainers and specialists in human right field: Donna J. Sullivan and Brenda Campbell. The aim of

the training was to strengthen knowledge of the OP CEDAW as a tool for promoting and protecting women’s right, to build capacity on technical requirements for filing a case or submitting an inquiry under the OP-CEDAW and to share effective strategies for adopting OP CEDAW- especially important for participants from the countries where the protocol has been not ratified yet. Training was a part of 2 years long project “Building towards Eastern Europe and Central Asia NGO Coalition on Optional Protocol to CEDAW”.

To learn more about the project write to Ola: aleksandra.solik@karat.org.pl

Fair Play: “Made by Women”



The garment industry is a feminized branch – more than 80% of its workers are women. This fact do have its implications. During the seminar organized by KARAT (17th-18th of October) the workers’ problems were analyzed from the gender perspective. The participants – Clean Clothes Campaign activists from Poland,

Austria and Germany found out why it is important to include gender issues into the activities promoting labour rights. They also planned public actions that take gender equality into account. The seminar took place in Łódź which is often called “the city of women” largely because Polish garment industry center. Participants had a chance to meet with the practitioners: trade unionist and the clothes’ designer who shared their experience on working conditions in the garment industry now. If you would like to know more about the seminar or a project itself, write to Joanna at: joanna.szabunko@karat.org.pl

Women in Supermarkets: the end of the project



With the end of October we finished the project “Labour Rights Protection from Gender Perspective in Super/Hypermarkets in Poland”. As part of the evaluation our partners, experts and project supporters have underlined 2 important project achievements: building dialogue and cooperation with trade unions operating in super and hypermarkets as well as gaining understanding of National Labour Inspectorate in relation to our recommendations regarding

changes in the way inspections in shops are done. We are very happy that all collaborators have declared their support for future activities aiming at strengthening the protection of labour rights of women employed in super and hypermarket chains. The platform which was built and coordinated by KARAT for last two years consisting of trade unions’ women leaders, representatives of NGOs, lawyers, experts dealing with working conditions issues and state institutions representatives will try continue being active.

The project was supported by the Open Society Institute and Friedrich Ebert Foundation. To know more write to Agnieszka at: agnieszka.chmielecka@karat.org.pl

Istiqbolli Avlod (KARAT partner in Uzbekistan): OP CEDAW TOT



On 9th of October 2009 Istiqbolli Avlod (Generation of Future) – KARAT partner organization from Uzbekistan - organized in Tashkent one day training for trainers on Optional Protocol to CEDAW. Training session was conducted by three beneficiaries of September training session in Warsaw. Participants (9 women and 1 man) were very thoroughly involved in the training. The aim of the activity was to disseminate in most effective way knowledge about using OP CEDAW as human rights mechanism, and its potentials and procedures. The unified training module that would be used for grass-root events was

introduced and discussed with the participating NGO partners. A special focus was made on strengthening the capacity of NGO partners in conducting OP-CEDAW trainings at the local level, for local women's committees. All the TOT participants received handouts prepared by Istiqbolli Avlod on the basis of materials prepared by KARAT and IRAW Asia-Pacific - e-toolkits translated into Uzbek and books containing the CEDAW Convention and OP.

The event had a follow-up. After participating in the training in Tashkent two NGO partners in the region held 2 local seminars on OP CEDAW for local community leaders dealing with women's issues. Further, this is not the end of activities in Uzbekistan. Next local seminars are planned to take place in the cities of Bukhara, Urgench, Gulistan, Samarkand, Andijan and Djizak.

For more information about the training, please contact Lilya: lkhamzayeva@mail.ru

Women's Right Center (Armenia): OP CEDAW toolkit



Women's Right Center, KARAT member in Armenia, and partner in the OP CEDAW project has published an on-line toolkit on OP CEDAW in Armenian. You can view it on: http://www.wrcorg.am/am/activities/act_45.htm

The toolkit provides the basic information on CEDAW and its Optional Protocol with the primary aim to advance women's rights and gender equality.

To know more about the actions around OP CEDAW in Armenia contact Suzanna at: wrcarm@arminco.com

New paper on women, peace and security

Mirjana Dokmanovic, individual member of KARAT from Serbia and active women of IANSA Network (International Action Network on Small Arms) has produced a briefing paper 'Women peace and security: The role of an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)'. Launched by IANSA the paper argues that global standards for the international import, export and transfer of conventional arms and ammunition should prohibit transfers where there is a significant risk that the transfer will be in used to violate women's human rights or perpetuate a pattern of gender-based violence. It argues that international law demands linking the norms of an Arms Trade Treaty with UN Security Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889, and obligations under international human rights and international humanitarian law. Publication is available online at: <http://www.iansa.org/women/documents/ATT-IANSAWomen.pdf>

GEAR Campaign continues!

On September 14 2009 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the historic resolution that would enable the creation of the new UN agency for women's rights. This is an extraordinary success of women's rights activists united inter alia in the global Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign. Importantly once the

resolution has passed, the work has only started. The most important objective right now is to set up without further delay the gender equality body with an operational power.

The GEAR Campaign is now calling on the UN Secretary-General to make a concrete funding commitment for the new entity and immediately begin consideration of qualified candidates for the Executive Board able to meet the demands of this important post.

You can support these demands by signing in the letter to the UN Secretary General. For the letter and more information go to: <http://www.un-gear.eu/takeaction.shtml>

Asia Floor Wage

Seeking an end to the severe poverty that garment workers currently endure, a campaign to push for implementation of a concrete minimum living wage across Asia was launched on the 7th of October. The Asia Floor Wage (AFW) Alliance is calling upon companies sourcing garment production in Asia to implement an Asia Floor Wage.

The ground-breaking AFW benchmark, developed by a growing Asian-based alliance of labour rights organisations, has a concrete calculation for a minimum living wage that activists believe companies sourcing in the region should implement. Currently the poverty wages garment workers earn do not cover basic needs and fall far short of a living wage. More than 80% of garment workers are women.

The Asia Floor Wage Alliance comprises over 70 trade unions, labour and human rights organisations, development NGOs, women's rights groups, and academics in 17 countries across Asia, Europe and North America. It is supported by Clean Clothes Campaign and by KARAT.

To know more visit: www.asiafloorwage.org.

Special

30 Years CEDAW



8th December 2009 is already the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. But for these three decades, progress on CEDAW has been disappointingly slow. Less than 20% of parliamentarians worldwide are women. More than 1 billion women in the world suffer because of poverty. This is not the world we want to live in. This is also not the world the UN Member States committed

themselves to 30 years ago.

On the occasion of the CEDAW 30th anniversary KARAT joined the WIDE Network campaign to remind the European Union about the importance and timeliness of CEDAW for women's human rights and about the EU's commitments to advance gender equality. KARAT would like to emphasise the need to call for pan-European conference organised at the high level of the government to start the dialogue between women's NGO's, governments, CEDAW committee and other important stake holders on emphasise the importance of CEDAW and its implementation.

On the occasion of the 30th CEDAW anniversary the UN has launched a special website they invite you to visit:

<http://www.unifem.org/cedaw30/> So did the women's groups. Check the new WIDE Blog for CEDAW with the

KARAT input at: <http://cedaw30.wordpress.com>

Funding

International Human Rights Training Program

EQuitas International Centre for Human Rights Education in Canada is announcing its next annual International Human Rights Training Program, that will take place in Montreal, Canada from 6th to 25th June 2010. The goal of the IHRTF is to strengthen the capacity of human rights organizations to undertake human rights education aimed at

building a global culture of human rights. The deadline to apply is November 21st. More information and applying documents are available at: <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/venezuela/highlights-faits/ihrtp.aspx?lang=eng>

Indigenous Women's Fund: Call for Proposals

The International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI) is opening its first call for proposals with the application deadline to 15 January 2010. The Fund will provide long-term and flexible funding for Indigenous women's organizations, including support for core administrative costs, travel, and capital expenditures in the 7 geo-cultural regions defined by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Africa, Arctic, Asia, Eastern Europe/Central Asia/the Caucasus, Latin America/Caribbean, North America, and the Pacific. For more information go to: <http://indigenouswomensforum.org/iwfund/grantmaking.html>

Resources

KARAT OP CEDAW Toolkit

KARAT is happy to announce that e- toolkit on OP CEDAW in English is already available at http://www.karat.org/op_cedaw/. This is a preliminary version: toolkit will be successfully developed and extended. Russian version will be published soon. All suggestions and commentaries are most welcomed. Toolkit was prepared by KARAT Coalition thanks to support of OXFAM Novib.

Biedronka (supermarket) document

As part of the project "Labour Rights Protection from Gender Perspective in Super/Hypermarkets in Poland" KARAT has published an essay "Women organizing for changes in working conditions – Biedronka case". The case study shows the ways women workers organize themselves in the supermarkets for better working conditions. The essay analyzes the story of the first female employee that won the case in court against the supermarket chains owner, the process of the trade union building and the strike. The essay is available in English at: <http://www.karat.org/userfiles/biedronka%20case.pdf>

People First: Social Watch Report 2009

The report comprises of over 60 country reports and calls on Governments to retool the stimulus packages they received to face the global crisis so they increase wages, expand social security coverage for the most vulnerable, strengthen local enterprises, and assist family farmers. The report looks critically on governmental responses to the global multidimensional crises, including human rights, food security and environmental crises.

For more information go to: <http://socialwatch.org/node/799>

MakeITfair new resources

The makeITfair report "Fair Phones: it's your call" argues that, although, some of the mobile network operators take some degree of responsibility for the working conditions in their supply chain on paper, they remain passive in pressing for improvements. KARAT reminds that majority of the workers in electronic industry are women and due to the low labour costs many of the factories are located in the CEE region. The full report is available on: http://makeitfair.org/the-facts/reports?set_language=en

We also encourage you to sign petition to Nokia. Nokia has been asked to become the trailblazer in developing more ethical mobile phones by the Finnish makeITfair campaign. The petition has over 5,000 signatures already, but there is still time to add yours. You can support it on: <http://www.makeitfair.fi/petition>

New Human Development Report

The Report, 'Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development,' demonstrates that migration can enhance human development for the people who move, for destination communities and for those who remain at home. Being able to decide where to live is a key element of human freedom, according to the Report, which also argues that large gains in human development can be achieved by lowering barriers and other constraints to movement and by improving policies towards those who move.

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): Istiqbolli Avlod (Uzbekistan), Women's Rights Center (Armenia), Mirjana Dokmanovic, WIDE, AWID, WUNRN, TRIALOG, ASTRA, VAW Monitor, EC/UN, BSCDN, EWL,

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