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Dear KARAT News Readers !

I would like to draw your attention to important news about the current KARAT Board Elections. The candidates who represent our member organizations, have been nominated and the elections will start next week. I would like to thank our members for their involvement in the process of elections so far. I also deeply encourage all our members to vote in the upcoming elections.

Have a nice reading !

Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek, KARAT Networking Officer

What's new in KARAT ?

KARAT at CSW in New York

KARAT is going to hold a side event on February 28th 2012 during the 56th session of [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) in New York. The event will be based on the outcomes of project on CEDAW implemented in Central Asia and Caucasus. It will explore the impact of traditional value systems on the rural women's ability to exercise their rights. It will also focus on the interrelations between women's access to justice and their economic position in the family and society.

The panelists from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will also discuss the cultural, religious and socio-economic barriers that stop women from using legal and other means to protect their rights. The panel will provide the space for women's rights NGOs to share their experiences in challenging the harmful practices related to traditional and/or religious values that disempower women for example by decreasing their economical independence. The panelists will also present the proposals for actions aimed at improving the situation of women in rural areas that had been formulated by women's rights NGOs in their countries.

For more information please contact Aleksandra Solik at: aleksandra.solik@karat.org.pl

Women's perspective in Polish development cooperation policy

There is a chance that gender equality issue will be more visible in the Polish development cooperation policy. Two new bodies were established within the Polish development aid structures : the Foundation of International Solidarity and the Programming Council of Development Cooperation. These two bodies, and particularly the Programming Council of Development Cooperation which has four places reserved for representatives of CSOs, are the potential partners in discussion for inclusion of women's rights issue into the Polish development cooperation policy. They are to be more democratic and more open to CSOs' recommendations. The establishment of new bodies caused some personal reshuffles within the development aid structures including appointment of new Undersecretary General of State.

These changes are welcomed by KARAT Coalition which hopes that the newly appointed Undersecretary General of State will be a key person for forthcoming gender oriented advocacy activities conducted by KARAT and by Zagranica Group.

For more information please contact Marta Gontarska at: marta.gontarska@karat.org.pl

CSOs and the economic crisis

The CSOs' representatives from Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland, including KARAT are getting know-how on fundraising. The training programme "Cultivate your fundraising" focuses on how to get support from private resources, including companies and individual donors. This knowledge is especially valuable in the context of current financial crisis which has a negative impact on financial stability of many non-government organizations in the Region.



The first part of the training took place in January 2012 in Budapest, with a second session planned for March in Warsaw.

For more information please contact Pamela Wells at: pamela.wells@karat.org.pl or look at the website: <http://www.ngdofundraising.net/en>

Members' News

VERY IMPORTANT! KARAT Board Elections

Dear Members of KARAT Coalition.

Very soon elections to KARAT's Board will take place (6th – 19th of February). The candidates which represent our member organizations, have been nominated. Now four of them will be selected through a voting process to join existing members of the Board. As you know the work of the Board is a vital element of functioning of our Coalition. The Board is the key decision making body of KARAT and plays a crucial role in its governance in terms of development of long term strategy, problem solving, acceptance of new members, representing KARAT at key events etc. Thanks to your (members') involvement in the process of Board Elections so far, we have a very impressive number of candidates. Now it is very important for ALL of you to vote in the upcoming elections. You will receive more information and voting cards very soon.

But if you already have any questions about the elections please write to Agnieszka at: agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl

Albania: Social auditors check the authorities' performance in gender equality area

In four Albanian municipalities the local authorities have been assessed by the social auditors in terms of their gender sensitive policies. The auditors prepared the Monitory Report which indicates the weak points of the local governments' policies concerning such issues as domestic violence, women's economical empowerment and women's involvement in decision-making process at the local level. They also developed recommendations for the authorities on how to improve implementation of gender equality policy in the local communities.

The social audit on a gender oriented policy of the local governments is a new practice in Albania. The auditors, members of the local communities, are trained about the community's rights to be involved in a decision-making process, women's rights, authorities' responsibility for gender sensitive policy and the techniques of social auditing by the trainers from Gender Alliance for Development Centre. The Centre plans to conduct trainings of the social auditors also in the other municipalities and communes of Albania in order to make local authorities be more sensitive to women's needs and improve cooperation between them and members of community.



For more information please contact Mirela Arqimandriti at: marqimandriti@gadc.org.al

Macedonia: Young people against ethnic violence

At the end of January in three different multiethnic municipalities of Macedonia the representatives of local governments, CSOs, and young people from local communities took part in the seminars concerning implementation of the United Nations Security Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) at the national level and its role in enhancement of a dialogue between local stakeholders and young people.

The participants gained a specific and relevant knowledge about the UNSCR 1325, and learnt how to cooperate with each other for better gender sensitive and inter-ethnic dialogue to build peace and safety in a multicultural society. They listened to the lectures and took part in the activities based on solving problems through cooperation.

The seminars were the part of the project “Young Women’s Participation in Inter-Ethnic Dialogue, Peace and Security” implemented by the Youth Centre for Equal Opportunities from Macedonia. The project focuses on promoting and enhancing a dialogue among young women and men from different ethnic groups to empower them to participate in the peace-keeping and decision-making process in the country where the acts of violence between ethnic communities still take place.



For more information please contact Dragana Drndarevska at: youth_ceo@yahoo.com

Romania: Discrimination in the toy industry



In December 2011 the Romanian viewers had a chance to watch a [TV spot](#) concerning the poor working conditions in Chinese toy companies. The spot was a part of the campaign “[Stop Toying Around](#)” which is an element of European project aiming at raising awareness among European consumers, media and decision-makers about bad situation of Chinese workers who produce the toys for European markets. In December Romanians could also express their concern about discrimination of Chinese workers in toy industry by signing a petition in support of improving their working conditions. The signatures were collected during the awareness raising campaign conducted in Bucharest by the campaign activists and project’s coordinators from the National Association of Human Resources Specialist – “AUR”. The campaign on the Bucharest’s streets initiated the second European Speakers Tour 2011.

For more information please contact Laura Panteli-Stanciu at: org.aur@gmail.com

European Union

Poland: Abortion returns to Parliament

An anti-clerical political party „Palikot’s Movement” wants to spark renewed debate in the Polish Parliament about the women’s access to legal abortion. In January the party submitted the draft legislation that allows a woman to have an abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy without having to give a reason for her decision. Although the Polish abortion law is one of the strictest in Europe the initiative to liberalise it is not supported by many members of Parliament. Most of the Polish MPs consider the current abortion law as a good compromise between the state and the church and do not take into consideration the fact that a fundamental woman’s right to decide about her own reproduction is violated.

In Poland there are not more than 500 legal abortions annually, but the women’s groups estimate that the number of illegal abortions is more than 100,000 each year. Illegal abortion is punishable by up to 2 years of imprisonment for those who perform it and aid in it, although woman who has a termination is not liable.

For more information please contact Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek at: agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl

Danish Presidency focuses on gender equality

The Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU which has just started will focus on three areas of gender equality: women and environment, women on boards and gender-based education choices .

In June 2012 the Council will publish a report on how the EU has implemented the recommendations from the Platform for Action along with a set of indicators on the unequal balance in decision-making in the area of climate change as well as the lack of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in the educational system. Further, in March 2012 the European Commission will publish its State of the Union report in relation to women on boards in public and private companies in Europe. At the end of the Danish Presidency it is planned to present the best practices and new knowledge on how to promote more girls and women into STEM. The gender-divided educational system and the lower number of boys in the system present serious problems for society as well as for the promotion of gender equality.

Read more at: <http://eu2012.dk/en/EU-and-the-Presidency/About%20EU/Politikomraader/EPSCO/Ligestilling>

PACE calls to prevent violence against women

In a resolution adopted on January 26th 2012, Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe (PACE) called on the member states which have not yet done so to sign the [Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#). The convention provides a comprehensive framework for preventing violence against women, protecting its victims and prosecuting the perpetrators.

The Assembly also asked member states to take a series of measures to promote the convention and facilitate its signature and ratification. PACE stressed that the national parliaments should urge their governments to sign and ratify the convention and conduct activities to raise awareness amongst the general public, practitioners and NGOs.

The source: [Council of Europe](#)

World

UN: Women and new climate agreement

A new climate agreement “Durban Platform” developed during the UN climate talks in South Africa, has increased the gender equality commitments of the states. The Platform highlights 11 commitments to gender equality, including a new agreement to create an international Green Climate Fund to help protect underprivileged nations from weather disasters and transition to cleaner energy systems. The creation of the Green Climate Fund means that for the first time a climate finance mechanism will be established with gender aspects integrated right from the beginning.

The results of the UN climate talks are important especially for women in developing countries since they comprise 43 percent of the agricultural workforce there. The women are more prone to suffer the consequences of the natural disasters and other effects of climate change, because due to the discriminatory practices they have fewer social and economic resources than men.

Read more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/2012/01/new-climate-agreement-increases-gender-equality-commitments/>

Resources

CONNECT! Briefings on climate change and decent work from gender perspective

KARAT has published two briefings about gender and climate change, and gender and decent work. The publications provides a gender perspective on how decent work and climate changes influence poverty reduction. The briefings are based on the international research and statistical data showing that both of these issues are strongly connected to gender inequalities and gender stereotypes. The briefings are available in English and Polish and soon will be also available in Bulgarian, Czech, Romanian and Slovak. The briefings will be available on KARAT's new website in February.

For more information please contact Marta Gontarska at: marta.gontarska@karat.org.pl

IACHR – Report: The Work, Education and Resources of Women: The Road to Equality in Guaranteeing Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has published the report “The Work, Education and Resources of Women: The Road to Equality in Guaranteeing Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”. The IACHR has observed that, where economic, social and cultural rights are concerned, the discrimination against women continues to be evident in the labour market, in women’s limited access to social security, in the high rates of illiteracy among women and girls as compared to men, in the extreme poverty and social exclusion which affects women, and in the little opportunities of political participation for indigenous and Afro-descendent women, among other relevant issues.

Read the Report [here](#)

UNFPA - Delivering as One on Gender-Based Violence

This report summarizes the proceedings and recommendations of the November 2010 global consultation on violence against women that brought together various stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, NGOs and representatives of the 10 pilot countries selected under the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

The Report can be downloaded from [UNFPA website](#)

Upcoming events

Learn about women’s human rights and CEDAW

The Women's Human Rights Education Institutes is now accepting applications for the 6-week “Women’s Human Rights Education Institute” running from May 21 till June 28, 2012. The final application deadline for international applicants is February 28, 2012. The rolling applications will be accepted until the WHRI is full.

The Women's Human Rights Education Institutes is also accepting applications for the 1-week CEDAW for Change module offered in collaboration with IWRAW-AP Malaysia, held from May 28 till June 1, 2012. The participants will have a unique chance to learn about the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against

Women (CEDAW) and how to integrate it into your work and activism. Details at the website <http://learnwhr.org/> or at: info@learnwhr.org

World Congress on Sex Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Forced Labour

The Global Social Health Foundation (CSEC) will hold the World Congress against Sex Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Forced Labour (WCSEHTFL) 2012. The theme of this conference is: New Dimensions of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Combating Human and Sex Trafficking Worldwide.

The Congress will take place from 16th till 18th April in New York and from 20th till 25th April 2012 in Madrid Spain.

For more information contact the congress organizing committee via e-mail: wc_secretary@mail.com

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): Gender Alliance for Development Centre (Albania), Youth Centre for Equal Opportunities (Macedonia), National Association of Human Resources Specialist – “AUR” (Romania), European Women’s Lobby.

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