

CYBER DIALOGUES SUMMARIES



South African Deputy Minister of Correctional Services participated as a panellist in the in the cyber dialogues

Cyber dialogues summary one WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Date: 2 March 2005

Theme: Women's Human Rights

Panelists: Athaliah Molokomme (High Court Judge, Botswana), Gladys Mutukwa (Acting Regional Co-ordinator, WILDAF), Yifatt Susskind (Associate Director, MADRE) and Charlotte Bunch (Executive Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership)

Quote for the day: *"There are no quick fix answers and we know that we have to go on and on in order for rights to be protected. Having instruments and laws is a threshold that must be accompanied by actions in all areas? Human rights are indivisible and inalienable. WE don't get them as gifts from governments at all. The fight has to go on."* Gladys Mutukwa

1. What have been the key gains for women's rights over the last ten years?

- The Ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.
- Widespread corruption in amongst government officials in many parts of the world present obstacles.
- In Togo people can speak openly about women's rights and there are women's organisations advocating for women's human rights.
- In Southern Africa women's rights have been recognized as human rights and women are more aware of their rights.
- Gender issues have been institutionalized enhancing women's rights.
- In several countries courts of law have upheld the rights of women.
- More women in government.
- The SADC Declaration on the eradication of violence against women and children.

2. Do you think the BPFA has helped improve women's human rights?

- In Cameroon it has contributed to curbing environmental hazards for rural women.
- It provides a comprehensive list of women's basic rights.
- Beijing has become a word that is synonymous with human rights; it has put human rights on the agenda.

3. What are some of the challenges we need to address?

- Female genital mutilation.
- There are still many women who do not know their rights.
- Most information and communication on women's rights addresses macro issues not the local conditions women are in.
- People often see women's rights and religious belief systems as contradictory.
- The contradictions that exist between customary and other systems of law.
- The perceived contradictions that between cultural beliefs and women's rights.
- Women who assert their rights experience back lash.
- Women have power in women's groups but cannot exercise that power in the home.
- Few women outside organisations know about the BPFA.
- The lack of implementation of the BPFA.

- Globalisation has marginalised women further.
- Limited political commitment from government.
- The violation of women's rights in conflict areas.

4. How can we address some of these challenges? What innovative projects are happening in your country? Action points.

Education and awareness raising

- Educate women and girls about their rights.
- Educate boy children about girl's rights.
- Need to foster solidarity amongst women.
- Translate laws and declarations into local languages.

Policy and legislation

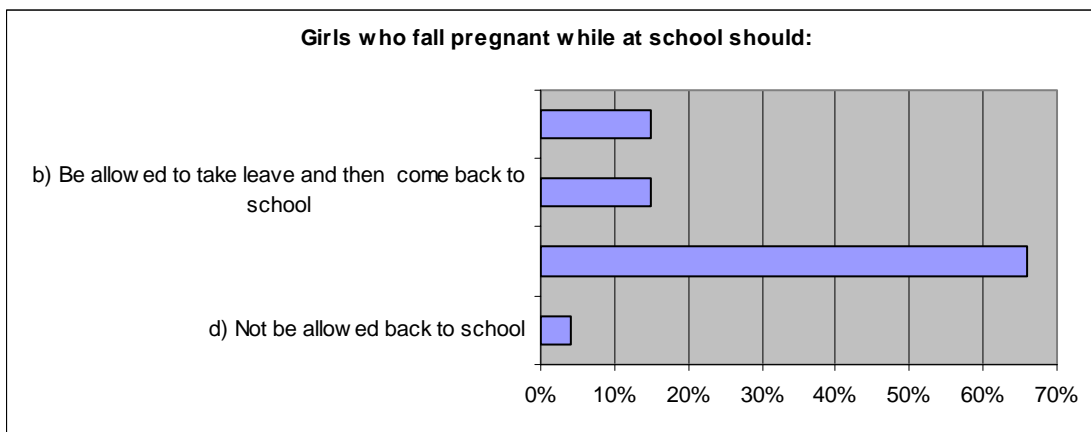
- In Cameroon there are free law clinics.
- Need to have more women in positions of power so that they can influence national, regional and international policy frameworks.
- To establish women's rights violation tribunals in conflict areas.

ICTs

- In India there is a Community Media Trust, rural women are trained in video journalism, make documentaries about issues that affect them and show them in other villages.
- Need to develop information and communication strategies that address local community needs.
- In Uzbekistan, girls have been linked to technology as way of educating girls to be leaders.

5. Results from the poll question

The majority of people who responded to the poll question believed that girls should be given a choice when they were pregnant, they should be able to choose between staying and finishing school or leave to have the baby and come back to school.



Cyber dialogues summary two ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Date: 3 March 2005

Theme: Economy and sustainable development

Panelists: Devaki Jain (a feminist economist and gender activist) and Peggy Antrobus (Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action).

Quote for the day: *"... In many ways globalisation in its current form takes away the reality of survival that is the daily concern of women." Tournesoldemort*

1. How has globalisation impacted on women?

- The domination of western states over Egypt has led to economic deterioration and an increase in poverty, income insecurity and rising costs of living.
- The Internet has been one positive outcome of globalisation.
- The privatisation of public goods has impacted on women in the deprived sectors of society.
- Local farmers cannot sustain their livelihoods because the market is flooded with cheap foods.
- Globalisation takes away the reality of survival that is still the daily concern of women.
- Globalisation further divides societies along race, class and gender lines and enforces the idea of winners and losers in the economy.

2. What does gender budgeting mean and how has it worked?

- It means ensuring that women's interests get incorporated into government budgets.
- It highlights a critical change in mindset in the way budgets are looked at.
- It is a gender audit that examines whether public expenditures are allocated in ways that promote or hinder gender equity.
- For gender budgets to work you need to know what is important to women.
- There have to be channels of communication opened up with women's groups and networks.
- The Kenyan civil society organisations are in the process of consolidating their work on gender budgeting at national level and grass root level.
- Gender budgeting needs to start in the home.
- In Zambia, 30% of all resources in the economic instruments of government must be allocated to women's economic empowerment with a key focus on rural women.

3. Accountability is a key issue, many governments are presenting reports at the Beijing review, these reports are often not accurate, how can we hold them responsible at country level?

- In South Africa we have a 'perfect' constitution but what happens on the ground is a different matter.
- Women need to organise, create a high level of activism around the issues and hold government accountable.
- We need to assess whether national and local budgets are gender responsive.
- Civil society should lobby and advocate for the gender responsive budgeting.
- Many meaningless words are spoken at these global meetings.

4. What are the main priorities at this time to facilitate women's economic empowerment? Action points.

Sustainable development

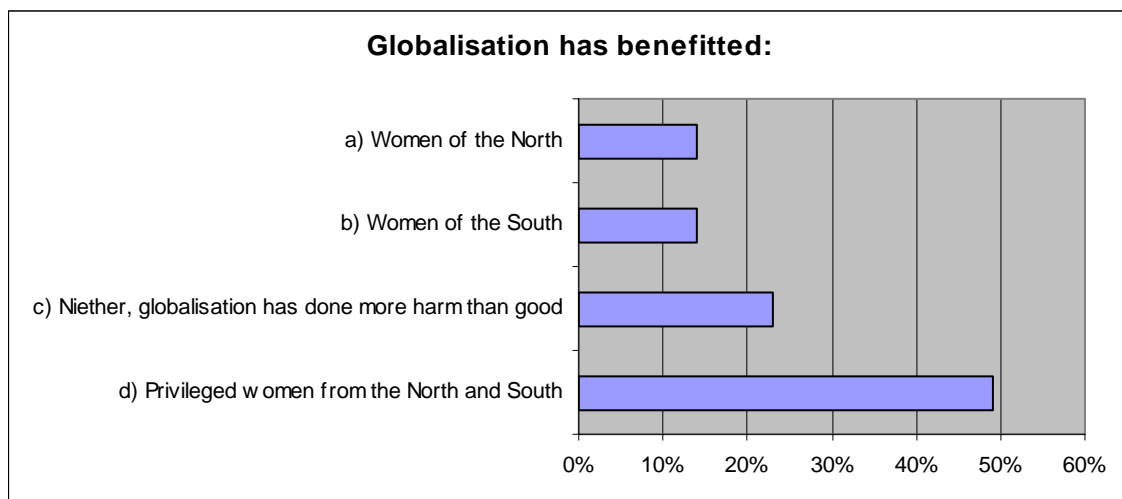
- Sustainable development for women in the south is linked to food security.
- We must invest in women's access to, ownership and control over resources such as land, income, employment, entrepreneurship, etc.
- In Cameroon sustainable development is blocked by bad governance and corruption.
- Sustainable development is the responsibilities of all sectors not just government.

Budgeting and poverty reduction

- Need to decentralise the processes developing budgets.
- To advocate for a World Labour Organisation that regulates and allows the free flow of labour.
- Need to create awareness and education amongst in communities about globalisation and terms such as economy and sustainable development.
- Women have traditionally been confined to the private sphere hence the belief that they can only manage 'home' budgets not corporate or public ones, need to change this stereotype.
- The Beijing review must place emphasis on gender budgeting as a tool to monitor CEDAW and other global commitments.
- We need to go beyond poverty reduction and move towards household capacities and resources to generate wealth.
- There is a need to link the strategies of the African and NEPAD to the BPFA.

5. Results of the poll question

The majority of the people who responded to the question felt that privileged women from the North and South have benefited most through globalisation.



Cyber dialogues summary three GENDER AND GOVERNANCE

Date: 4 March 2005

Theme: Gender and governance

Panelists: Gertrude Mongella (President of the Pan African Parliament), Ruth Kibiti (UNIFEM, Sudan), Bazma Alkhateb (UNIFEM, Iraq), Julie Ballington (Programme officer, Women in Politics, IDEAS International) and Ana Elena Obando (Human rights lawyer, Costa Rica)

Quote for the day: *"Mainstreaming women in governance needs a concerted effort from both governments and a strong women's movement which understands the interaction between structural societal factors producing inequality and specific factors for gender inequality."* Gertrude Mongella

1. Over the last ten years what have been the most important gains for women in government?

- An important development has been the increase in the numbers of women that now have access to decision-making positions in parliaments. From 11.5% in 1995, the increase to 15.7 in 2005. This has been the quickest gain in the past 100 years.
- In Africa women have gained confidence to stand for election. Women's lobbying has changed the mind set of leaders who are more accepting of the principle of sharing power with women. One of the demonstrations of that spirit is the election of Gertrude Mongella to the important post as the president of the Pan African Parliament.
- In Uganda affirmative action has helped to create structures that involve women at all levels of leadership right from the grass root level to parliament and even having a Lady Vice President. Both the number and the nature of women's political/government positions has changed.
- In Mauritius there are only 5.7% women in Parliament and until recently there was only one woman Minister.
- Latin America has seen an increase in terms of the numbers of women over the past year years. The adoption of the law on quotas in Argentina prompted a 'quota' fever in the region with a further 10 countries adopting quotas for women in the 1990s. This has resulted in a 6% increase overall in the numbers of women. And two Latin American countries reaching the Beijing target - Argentina and Cost Rica.

2. Do women in government represent the interests of women?

- In Mauritius neither the Domestic violence Act nor the Sex Discrimination Act or the Child Protection Act would have been passed without the men as there was only one woman Minister in cabinet when these Acts were discussed.
- In India the women in power are not always interested in women's issues because, except for a couple of women, they are all in power by default, belonging to a political family or as a substitute until their children grow up.
- On the issue of do women represent women, we need to be careful to not have a double standard where women are judged in a different way to their male counterparts.
- Decision-making processes in party and government policy formulation need to be looked at closely at the avenues in which women are able to have a real effect on policy and thereby represent the interests of women.

3. Are quota systems a good way to ensure women's representation in government?

- The quota system is the most ideal way to guarantee women's opportunities in a situation where women have been marginalised for a long time. With the proper use of the quota system women with great potential can be highlighted and become role models.
- I started in a quota system in Tanzania and I am now a member of parliament representing a constituency. The women find it very difficult to get through parliament because of the long term discrimination. The quota system nurtured me before I could go to the constituency.
- In the administration the quota system will eliminate the invisibility of women. But we should consider this as a bridging strategy with the focus on one day making gender a non-issue.
- Some equality policies and laws have been launched from different governments due to women, even when discriminatory sexist values and practices are still alive, and male code of conducts still shape politics to exclude women.
- Some reforms of electoral systems for women to participate have been challenging the system itself.
- Key gender issues such as violence against women and sexual and reproductive rights appear in some governmental agenda, although they are constantly attacked by fundamentalist forces.
- The creation of national machineries has centered "a women agenda" in some countries, even when these institutions are marginalised in government structures and hampered with lack of sufficient resources, plus they have become spaces for political parties to fill their commitments with some people who contribute to their campaigns.
- Quota systems are the most effective way to increase the numbers of women in politics. They safeguard women's presence in parliament. The results in the past ten years have been extremely effective in some countries, but less so in other countries. The devil is in the detail and quotas need to be drafted with enforcement mechanisms.
- Another argument is the quota system undermines some basic rights of men and women. Let them face equal challenges. Why treat them differently?
- Quota systems are not the best way to ensure women's representation, but they do help in the initial stages to increase the number of women in power, and no one can ever underestimate the power of numbers.
- When it is just a few who have the speech, there are not able to defend the voice of all the women. There must be many to do that.
- In Latin America, many women who are in political posts due to the quota law do not have a feminist agenda... and yes, very few committed women have gained from it... at least here...
- The quota system is important for providing space for women we should not worry about the quality until we have the quantity to be able to influence the rules.
- In Somalia where the clan system is strong and only women who are deemed not powerful are selected by the clan leaders, we need to work with these women to ensure they take on board key issues of concern for women and even if they are not sensitive, they are more reachable than men , so I would recommend we continue to lobby for the quota system.

- We need to work on two prong strategy that includes quota, so long as we live in a world that is male biased and also to lobby for reform of laws and we have seen the effect of quotas work in countries such as Uganda.
- Having women in the political space is one way of changing perceptions and is an opportunity we should build on.
- Mobilisation is crucial as that will galvanise change at the top.

4. How do we ensure that women's rights are on the agenda when constitutions are being drafted in post conflict situations?

- Ensure that women's rights are on the agenda when constitutions are being drafted, women must be made aware of the process and know all the processes involved and what stages of the constitution making process are very critical.
- Women must be represented effectively as delegates and observers in the negotiations.
- Women's rights agenda must be specifically defined including draft texts for negotiating into the draft constitutions and these should be buttressed within the international instruments like CEDAW.
- The peace facilitator must have a positive commitment to women's issues
- A strong women's and human rights lobby or coalition is critical to sustain the advocacy.
- Monitoring the details in the various drafts is also essential because one can lose on the basis of detail. The experience of Somalia and Sudan is quite informative on these issues.
- We need to have more discussions so women in all spheres of life are heard - if we don't speak for ourselves, who will do it?

5. Challenges and strategies to move forward. Action points.

Education and awareness raising

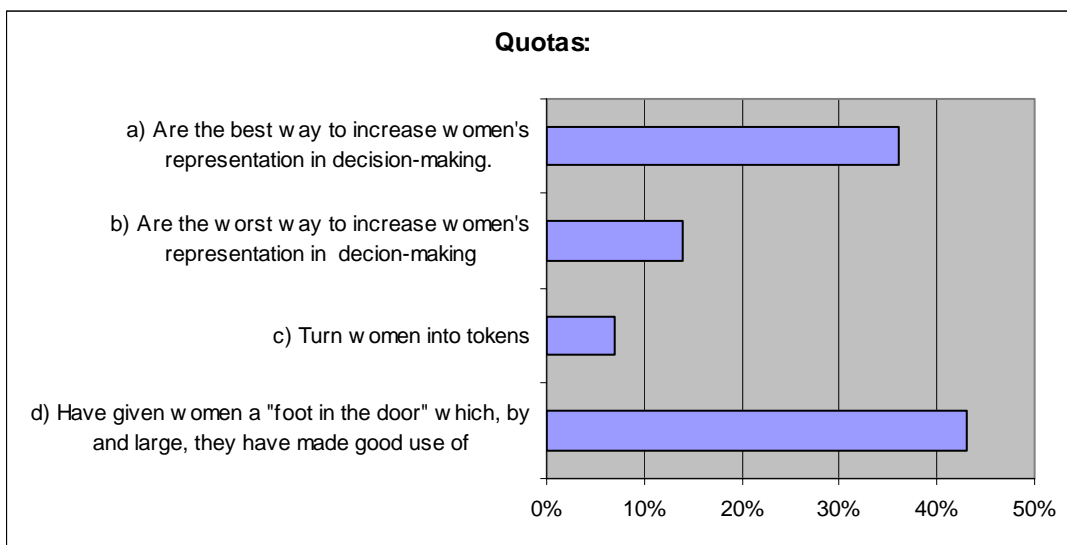
- Very few women understand the word and meaning of gender so I don't know how you start talking about gender and governance before knowing gender.
- Women must be engaged in the issues which matter in the lives of people today, which include the gender and the globalisation process.
- We need women at local, national and international level.
- Women outside power need to do advocacy work with women politicians. We must provide them with the necessary information, and with moral and logistical support to promote women's issues on the political agenda.
- We now have to mobilise those women to pay particular attention to the education of the girls. We all have to do it together. I promise you that now that Africa has taken a step towards parity as the principle, a decision which was taken by heads of states, we have an entry point.
- The greatest challenge to me as the President of PAP is to build a strong democratic parliament that really represents the voices of the people of Africa and does not exclude women.
- We have a parliamentary gender committee in the Pan African Parliament and I just wish that Gender Links comes down to SA to establish this type of talk so that we can capture your ideas for parliament. That's the way forward and that's how women can become powerful - by linking to each other and being able to exchange ideas in a very transparent manner.

Women in politics

- Mainstreaming women in governance needs a concerted effort from both governments and a strong women's movement which understands the interaction between structural societal factors producing inequality and specific factors for gender inequality.
- We need to discuss the context of politics and how to support women candidates. Work done by CHANGE has shown that women do get dented by negative and violent contexts of politics.
- Governments are most responsive to criticism from other countries. Such criticism may serve to mobilize a government which is not being attentive to gender issues.
- Resources and funding for women's effective mobilisation and participation in electoral process is critical. Women need access to political party financing and need to be included in decision-making regarding the use of funds.

6. Results of the poll questions

The majority of the people who responded to the question felt that quotas had given women a "foot in the door" which they have made good use. Many people also felt that quotas are the best way to increase women's representation in decision-making.



Cyber dialogues summary four HIV AND AIDS

Date: 7 March 2005

Theme: HIV and AIDS

Panelists: Anne Wanjiru (GROOTS, Kenya), Mary Balinkungari (Rwanda Women's Network), Rebecca Schleifer (Human Rights Watch) and Musimbi Kanyoro (YWCA)

Quote for the day: *"If AIDS is not one of the main issues at the CSW then what is the topical issue? Some of us in Africa thought the CSW will give us a strong political space for showing the nexus between poverty, gender inequality and HIV and AIDS!"*

1. HIV and AIDS is not specifically mentioned in the Beijing Paktform for Action and it has not featured significantly at the CSW Beijing +10 Review.

What is your view on this?

- HIV/AIDS is not a global concern; rather it is a concern for the global South, and Africa in particular where infection rates amongst women in many countries are high.
- HIV/AIDS is increasingly viewed as a woman's issues as women are greater risk for infection, face obstacles in accessing treatment and bear primary burden of care.
- There is a lack of recognition of the links between HIV/AIDS and rights violation.

2. Women carry the major load of care giving. How can governments recognise this work and help to ease the burden on women?

- For the majority of women, home based care has placed additional burdens on women and girls already responsible for domestic work.
- Building the capacity of women through local-to-local dialogues and peer learning.
- By supplying care givers with the information and supplies required to do this work and ensuring that policies do not make it more difficult to undertaken home based care work.
- Governments should recognise the value of women's home-based care work.
- Governments need to inscribe protections for women's rights in law and policy and recognise that this is an essential part of the response to HIV/AIDS.
- By developing laws, policies and programmes and allocating finances to ensuring that women have an equal right to property and earnings on divorce and as widows, for example, and that they have adequate protections against domestic violence.

3. What are governments doing to stop or halt the spread of HIV/AIDS? How effective is this from women's perspective?

- Unequal power relations have meant that the ABC approach adopted by many governments do not work for many women who are unable to abstain and cannot negotiate condom use as they face violent responses.
- Policies that exist are very often not gender specific and budget allocations also do not take into account specific gendered concerns. The allocation of resources is not responsive to the gendered dimensions of the epidemic.

4. What specific strategies for addressing HIV/AIDS do you want the Beijing +10 conference to take up during this week?

- Gender responsive resource allocation for HIV and AIDS.
- Increased support for basic social services such as health, education, social services, nutrition etc as a long term means of lifting the burden from women.
- Practical and strategic support to women care givers especially grandmothers, girls, women living with HIV and AIDS.
- Raising the profile of issues of gender, conflict and HIV/AIDS.

5. Action points

Responsibility of government

- Governments and donors should protect and promote women's and girls human rights as a central part of the response to HIV/AIDS.
- Governments should partner with communities and channel resources to support women's work on the ground and provide grants or subsidies to those who provide home based care.
- Mandatory provisions for anti-retrovirals and access to the drugs at all government hospitals at all levels.
- Governments should institute gender responsive resource allocation methods for HIV/AIDS.

Awareness raising

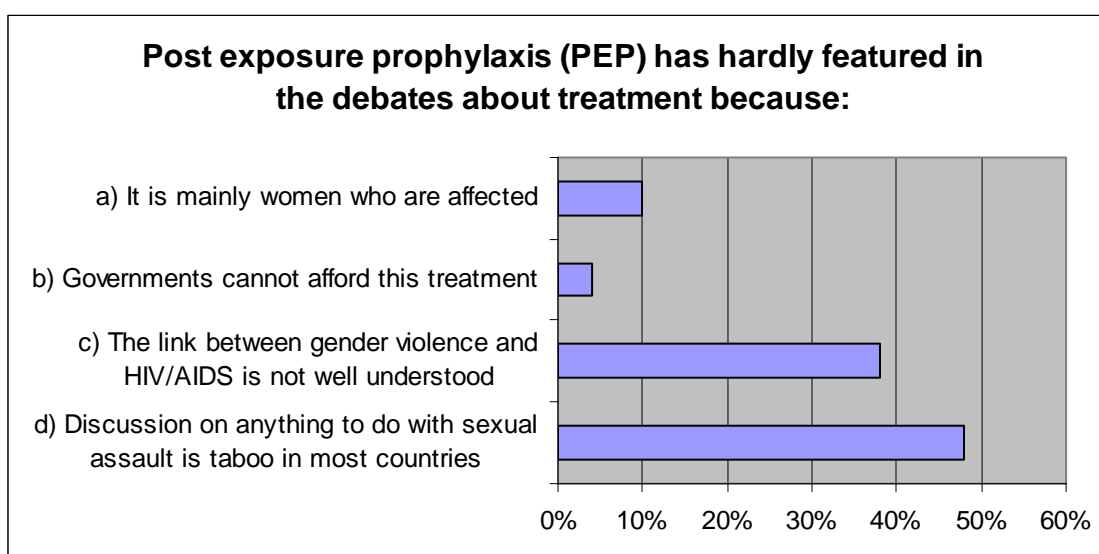
- NGOs should popularise the use and availability of PEP.
- Name and shame leaders who are in polygamous relationships.

Policy

- Arrange a policy dialogue for donors on HIV/AIDS in post-conflict areas at a regional and global level either as part of the MDG +5 review or ICASA 2005.
- Obtain and analyse gender disaggregated data and use this as a basis for policy advocacy.

6. Results of the poll question

The majority of people who responded to the poll question felt that PEP has hardly featured in debates about treatment because discussion on anything to do with sexual assault is taboo in most countries. Also, many felt that the link between gender violence and HIV/AIDS is not well understood.



Cyber dialogues summary five GENDER VIOLENCE

Date: 8th March 2005

Theme: Gender violence

Panelists: Noelene Heyzer (Executive Director, UNIFEM), Jessica B Nkuuhe (Associate Director of ISIS-WICCE, Uganda), Cheryl Gillwald (Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, South Africa) and Sara Nordstrom (16 Days Campaign Coordinator at the Centre for Women's Global Leadership)

Quote for the day: "... We need to keep reminding the world that violence against women is the most severe manifestation of gender inequality and patriarchy." Sara Nordstrom.

1. What steps is your government taking to implement laws on gender-based violence in your country? Are your country's laws adequate or appropriate?

- A key challenge is reducing the gaps between progressive legislation and policies and actual implementation on the ground.
- There is a lack of specifically allocated resources to address violence against women.
- On the ground, women's activists groups have taken a lead in efforts towards ending gender violence.
- Law reform and new legislation is undermined by implementers who are either unfamiliar with the legislation or who themselves have existing biases which prevent survivors of violence both from accessing available services as well as reporting gender violence.
- Lack of access to and ownership of land results in insecurity for women making them more vulnerable to gender violence.
- Social and cultural obstacles result in many women not speaking out and reporting incidences of gender violence.
- There is still a lack of political will in many countries to combat gender violence.
- Demands should include property rights for women, economic security and decent work for all.
- Micro finance projects for women are not the answer for women's empowerment, but rather increase women's indebtedness.

2. Does your country have programmes to deal with perpetrators of violence against women and what suggestions can you make? Do you think that resources should be spent on programmes for men?

- Men are less likely to be abused in the same way and to the same extent as women.
- Some women's organisations have programmes that assist men who are survivors of violence.

3. Can international treaties, protocols and bodies help to protect women in war zones and conflict situations? If so, how can they do this most effectively?

- There is a need for women's rights organisations in countries where there is conflict to highlight women's specific experiences.
- In situations of conflict belligerents pay little attention to international treaties and protocols.
- Women are particularly and more susceptible to sexual violence during war and conflict.
- The best way to protect women in war zones is to end impunity against violence against women.
- Despite the information from Darfur and the Sudan on the extent of rape and other forms of gender violence, this issue still remains at the margins of peace negotiations.

2. Do you think that the UN Protocols on Trafficking are adequate? What do you see as the major issues? What can countries do to stop trafficking?

- Anti-trafficking and anti-violence laws in the Philippines exist, but there are problems with implementation.
- The implementation of trafficking legislation should not be used as a pretext for anti-immigration and asylum laws.
- Despite the existence of numerous international protocols and treaties, enforcement is limited and violations continue.
- There is a need to link the issue of trafficking to that of economic security and lack of protection and rights of migrant workers.

4. Action points

Legislation, policy and implementation

- Provide gender sensitivity training to those charged with implementing legislation eg police, judges, and health workers etc to deal with existing biases.
- Use elections and the power of women's vote to challenge political leadership on what they are doing to end violence against women.
- Develop a culture of volunteerism for victim support.
- Develop and cultivate relationships with "champions" who speak out against gender violence eg the Deputy Minister of Correctional Services in South Africa. In South Africa the combination of a champion, leading male allies and strong civil society gender activism has contributed to gains made.
- Translate UN protocols into enabling domestic laws and lobby governments to domesticate protocols.
- HIV/AIDS national strategies must include concrete funded actions related to reducing violence.

Awareness raising

- Use public campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence Campaign to highlight issues.
- Raise awareness about the women's specific experience and increased vulnerability to violence during conflict.

Women in conflict situations

- Explore ways in which international instruments can be applied in peace negotiations.
- Ensure that issues of sexual violence and rape are central to peace negotiations.

- Work with the media to raise awareness about gender violence and to use radio to provide with information on their rights and where to go for help.
- Publicise and ensure that the promotion of international treaties, protocols and conventions is continuous.

Trafficking

- Lobby governments to ensure that the development and implementation of laws on trafficking is not used as a pretext for anti-immigration and asylum laws.
- Link the issue of trafficking to the problems of economic security and lack of protection and rights of migrant workers, especially those who are forced to be illegal migrants.

Media and ICTs

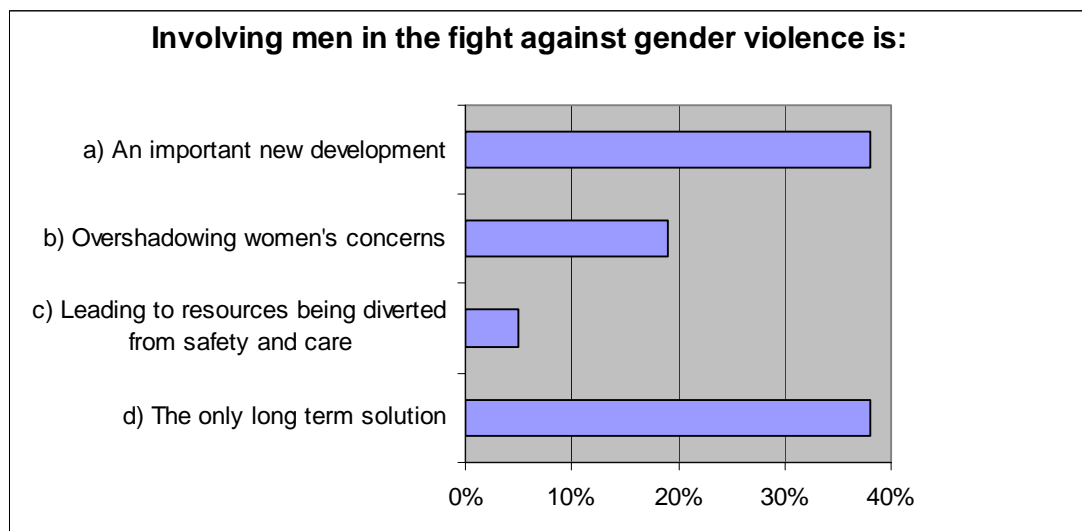
- Harness the use of ICTs for women's advocacy work.
- Initiate intergenerational discussions with young women on violence against women and find out how to use their "net savvy."

Other recommendations

- Develop strategies which create the conditions for women to overcome social and cultural obstacles and speak out about gender violence.
- Identify the root causes of women's powerlessness and tackle poverty.
- Develop a more "bottom up" approach by involving grassroots women in the identification, development and implementation of projects and programmes.
- Build legal aid clinics in remote and rural areas so that women can have access to them.

5. Results of the poll question

The majority of the people who responded to the poll question felt that involving men in the fight against gender violence is an important new development and the only long term solution.



Cyber dialogues summary six MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Date: 9 March 2005

Theme: Media and communications

Panelists: Colleen Lowe Morna (Executive Director, Gender Links), Jennifer Radloff (Co-coordinator, APC Africa Women), Lynn Muthoni Wanyeki (Executive Director, FEMNET), Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng (Director, ISIS-WICCE, Uganda) and Maria Suarez (Co-Director, FIRE, Costa Rica)

Quote for the day: *"Today we are dealing with the big thing - communication- your right to reason and be your self."*

1. Has there been any change in the way women are portrayed in the media since the Beijing Conference?

- The majority of participants said that there had been no change. A participant from Mexico gave the example of coverage of International Women's Day the day before. One channel showed its respects by having two women reporters covering sports - but they covered only men playing sports: "There was very little about recognising rights and nothing about the commitments that the government made towards women." Clearly, the participant said, the news content of the day was "for women- celebrating what good moms and pillars of the community they are" - not by women.
- One participant noted that there is a tendency to "portray women as without brains or just as beginners who need to be helped."
- Another said that TV lacks good family education programmes and that these are oriented towards American or Western ways of life.
- Participants agreed that the mainstream media is still largely controlled by men. "This therefore means that even when our women journalists or gender sensitive male journalists file great stories with their media houses, the same is either obliterated or given very small spaces or mention."
- One participant commented on how gender imbalances in the media cut across every geographical area: "What is interesting coming from Southern Africa and being in the US is to find they have the same problems we have; worse maybe because I don't think they have figured out how to approach the problem. So one study here found 14 % women sources in prime time news; in our region the Gender and Media Baseline Study showed 17 % sources and recent monitoring is now more like 20-25 %."
- One felt there has been improvement in access to Information and Communication Technologies as a tool for social action but that the mainstream media is still under strong corporate and male control.
- On a positive note, a participant felt that "there has been a slight shift--while the traditional women's sections remain, many of the mainstream papers have also added content addressing more feminist concerns--coverage of violence against women, for example has increased."
- Other positive developments noted include the use of radio talk shows to raise gender issues; the presence of women in community media; the development of women owned press agencies like CIMAC in Mexico; and use of new technologies e.g. in web casting (such as FIRE in Costa Rica.)
- The chat included a discussion on why there are so few women newspaper readers, with the majority blaming this not on lack of education or interest but on lack of time due to the dual role that women continue to play.

2. What are some of the ways of bringing about gender balance and sensitivity in the media?

- Give women the opportunity to become journalists by offering training.
- Women need to be represented at all levels within the media--not just be reporters on 'soft' issues.
- Having women-only media. This can help spark change in the mainstream (public and private) media.
- Having strong women's media associations.
- Research, like the GMBS: "Nothing like figures to wake up our dozy male media fraternity."
- Get gender activists cracking and thinking media. Work together with media on campaigns, like the Sixteen Days. Media is practical, no good trying to engage theoretically.
- Training: Work with media training institutions. Get to the young journalists, they are the future. With working journalists, newsroom training may be best; get them at their place of work with their decision-makers.
- Link training to policy, otherwise "change" rests on a few individuals. Get media houses to build gender into editorial guidelines, codes of ethics, human resource policies, sexual harassment policies etc.
- Monitoring: Keep showing if change taking place or not.
- Awards: Affirm good practice. An example was given of Gender Links and the Media Institute of Southern Africa that ran the first gender and media awards last year and got great response.
- Use consumer feminist power: "One case was racist sexism in Costa Rica in selling a cleaning product that portrayed a black woman as a "negrita" cleaner that is a slave. We stepped in by way of consumer choice and took the case to constitutional court afterwards. We won the case, legally and culturally, because people in general stopped buying the product!"
- The use of alternative media and community radio stations; training women to create their own media through the use of tape and video recorders, perhaps using drama as well as radio listening clubs.
- The *I Stories*: "We have worked with women to write about their personal experiences of violence, and then placed these articles in the mainstream media."
- The media pool at Beijing Plus Ten. This is an initiative joined by some 60 women's media and info/com organisations and networks to share information about the conference; to help younger journalists to be able to cover the meeting; to share strategies and to organise a lobby to governments about Women in Media. The pool shared and translated stories for each other and for the mainstream media.
- Focusing on communications as a HUMAN RIGHT according to United Nations conventions, because this focus allows women to recognise their sense of entitlement to speak, be heard, produce news and access it: "that is a monumental revolution in the case of women because we have been led to believe that our experiences and what we have to say is not important and no one cares to listen to us anyway."

3. What new challenges and opportunities have been posed by ICTs - Information and Communication Technologies?

- Developing countries are still grappling with extreme poverty and the urgent need to provide basic necessities. Access and use of ICT's is still a dream for many.
- Access and not everyone in the media is tech savvy. The opportunities have been better reach and of course the opportunity to network within the media and also outside on a global level.
- The dominant language of English excludes many.
- Many ICT programs tend to lend their voices to the women they claim to serve, instead of letting these women voice their own voices. And when they have the opportunity these women know better than anyone else how to word their problems and how to touch the responsive chord of other women.
- ICT's have in many ways been used to denigrate women. But they can equally be used to promote women's rights as we are doing now. "We need to "appropriate" things like Micosoft's cute chat software to our causes. Imagine the possibilities of this chat technology if we can really get it to take off, and get more people involved."
- Other opportunities include the fact that "ICTs enable our issues to become visible. Women have been able to use the technology to access job opportunities; stop a theft or a violation of another woman; access information about their health and their bodies."

4. What strategies can be used to give women greater access to and facility with ICTs?

- Tech savvy is developed by doing it...there is very little "science" to it when we harness it to do what we need to get done. Most new technologies are self taught, what we need to do for women to get into it is demystify technologies...we have to let the "girl" in us surface....she is curious, daring, valiant and accepts mistakes as part of process.
- Need to focus on what can/should be done by our governments to ensure rollout of ICTs in areas without electricity, without telecommunications infrastructure in a way that reaches women.
- We need to think long-term...where do we want African women to be in 10/20 years with respect to technology? Do we want us to continue focusing on how best to consume content and technologies generated elsewhere? Or do we want to focus on how we can produce not only content but also technologies. The real economic benefits of the so-called Information Society come not from use but from ownership...of software, hardware. How do we position ourselves, our lobbying strategies so as to ensure that the next generation of African women both accesses and controls ICTs?
- Going from access to relevance: Beyond finding ways of getting women to access the Internet, there is need to ask how relevant the content is; and how much content there is by and for women.
- For there to be good women's content WE ALL have to get our stories there, and frame them ourselves...form users to producers..that is the way. We get the voices of illiterate women into the Internet by documenting their experiences though radio and combining radio with internet, for example. And we do the other way around when we use the internet as a source of information for our radio programmes.
- We must come up with new and more aggressive means of pushing for our issues. We must be more daring, more courageous to do the unthinkable and

indeed, have fresh ideas of grasping the media attention and have also rapid response mechanisms in place to respond when issues are still hot.

- Evaluation is critical for our work as gender activists using ICTs for women's empowerment. We need to see if our use of ICTs is REALLY changing the lives of women. We also need to gather "evidence" and case studies to use as tools for our lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Examples of working with women and ICTs

- The ISIS WICCE experience working with women shows that they are always ready to take up new challenges, they are creative and with a very high sense of imaginations: "I have seen rural pick up a technology and within one hour they are ready to operate it. Actually as you say if they had the time they would use the ICTs more appropriately (for development) than their counterparts: the men."
- Gender Links has been working with women councilors on IT and this has been a revealing experience: "We found for a start that while the City of Johannesburg claims to be the e city of Africa none of the councilors had an E Mail address! Documents are delivered to them by courier. One councilor had a laptop and ISP and a phone at home but could not figure out how to get on the Internet. I find its often about the little things than the big things; helping women to make the connections literally and figuratively in safe spaces."
- Women's Mayors Link worked on getting women mayors connected throughout CEE.

5. How can we get women involved in the formulation of ICT policies? How do international policies affect policies at national level?

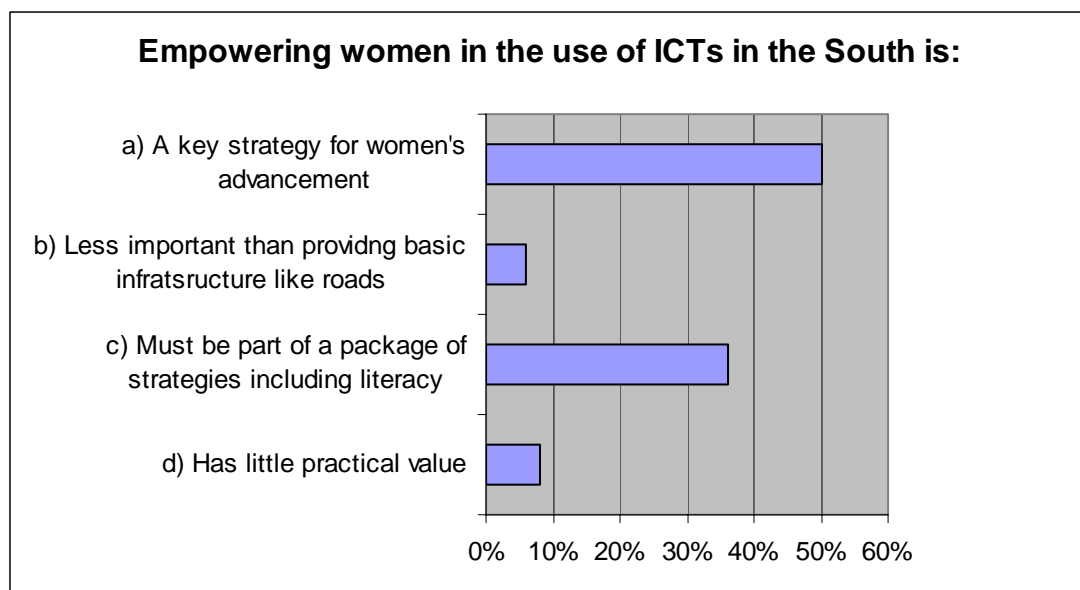
- There is a broader issue around women and policies. Often we are torn between the practical and the strategic, and err more on the side of the practical because our lives are so day to day driven. We as advocates and activists need to start putting policy (that very male of spaces) more at the forefront; to recognise that we won't win on the practical front if we don't start by creating the so called "enabling" policy environments.
- The Women's Media Pool had a meeting on this and concluded that it wasn't just about disinterest on the part of UN agencies like UNESCO (which should have taken the lead in preparing for the process) or DAW and the regional commissions (which should have included questions on Section J issues in the questionnaires governments filled out). It was also about the fact that many women's development communications, media and ICT organisations didn't jump into the review process at the national and regional levels. Even here in New York, many are busy covering the process, but not participating in it. Its only when we organise that we a) deepen our analysis of why women are where we are with respect to access to and control of ICTs and b) strategise on how to move that analysis into lobbying around relevant laws and policies.
- FIRE is convening an AMLAT women's seminar next October because we need to strengthen our involvement in policy making. Women are challenging privatization of /telecommunications in our region. Costa Rica women are challenging the law on spectrum allocation for radio, and we might win a constitutional court case these coming months, but involvement in ICT policies is still to come...

6. What strategies and action points can you suggest for advancing gender equality through the media? What would you like to see in Section J?

- Building on the gender advocacy work in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS): "Although there is not much optimism around inserting strong gender language in the final WSIS outcome, it has built networks, activities and awareness around lobbying for gender in ICT policies."
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- Linking with the women doing research on women and ICTs...how it's rolling out in the south, for example the work of IT for Change in India. APC WNSP has recently launched a gender and ICT policy portal www.genderIT.org for research, information, which is who etc and want this to be a useful tool for women's organisations to engage with ICT policy and for policy people to learn about gender.
- B+10 final recommendation/text must have strong language on using BPFA commitments and CEDAW as the gender equality benchmarks for MDGs. Use ICTs for a sustained advocacy and accountability to gender in the MDGs.
- Continue the cyber dialogues for the post event review of this Beijing + 10 and possibly incorporate it as a strategy for continued involvement of women in some of the major events like the MDG + 5 review in September. Deepa from India offered to set up a list.
- Commitment from governments, especially Ministries of Gender, Finance and Planning to actively participate in the cyber dialogues. For the Africa region, we could build this within the NEPAD programme and for UNIFEM in East Africa. Offer to mobilise IGAD, EAC and COMESA.
- Don't just use ICTs to monitor MDG's without measuring ICTs as one of the tools for women's empowerment.

7. Responses to the poll question

The majority of people who responded to the poll question felt that empowering women in the use of ICTs in the South is a key strategy in a package of strategies for women's advancement.



Cyber dialogues summary seven LOOKING AHEAD: STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Date: 10th March 2005

Theme: Looking ahead: structures and processes

Panelists: Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda (Regional Programme Director for UNIFEM, East and the Horn of Africa), Leticia Shahani (Secretary General of the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi), Barbara Adams (Chief of Strategic Partnerships and Communication for UNIFEM) and Elsie Alexander (Botswana National Council of Women).

Quote of the day: *"As a collective we need to appreciate difference and diversity amongst women as we are positioned in society at different levels based on age, class ethnicity etc. We need to collectively empower each other using our different experiences and knowledge... using a human rights perspective based on respect and recognition of our differences..."*

1. How can grassroots women, community based women's organisations and NGOs get involved in reviving and building the women's movement?

- NGOs should assist grassroots women's organisations to organise and sustain their efforts.
- Grassroots women need to be provided with up-to-date information on the key priority areas that are being focused on nationally; be helped to develop their own local priorities, agendas, tools and tactics of implementing their local agendas.
- Potential leaders at the grassroots level need to be nurtured and supported.
- NGOs face challenges such as outreach capacity, resources to persistently mobilise and disseminate information and engage rural women.
- Funding is a critical issue for involving grassroots women.
- National policies and documents that affect women need to be translated into local languages so that grassroots women are able to use and benefit from the information.
- Sustainable transformation for women's rights and empowerment lies in women's agency at the household and community level
- Women's different experiences and contexts require specific responses

2. What is the role of young women and how can they be mobilised around gender issues?

- Feminism means something different to today's young women which may not be the same understanding that older feminists have.
- The women's movement has to an extent been dominated by older women and many young women feel they do not have a role in the women's movement
- The feminisation of poverty is a major issue for the women's movement which requires collective mobilisation
- Young women's participation in women's organisations will encourage others to take up the struggle for women's rights
- Involving young women in the women's movement is critical for capacity building and succession and requires innovative strategies to get them involved.

3. How can your organisation work better with donor agencies in furthering gender equality? What suggestions would you make to donors?

- Resources and the role of donors are critical issues for women's empowerment and gender equality
- Global partnerships and agreements such as the International Conference on Financing for Developments' commitments to gender equality as well as the Millennium Development Goal 8 should include financial resources towards achieving women's equality.
- The sustainability of activities – economic and social – is an important question for women who are committed to social mobilisation and transformation
- Very little of the total aid is going toward gender equality. The manner in which the "aid architecture" is developing suggests that it will be increasingly difficult to track where aid is going unless "gender markers" are developed.
- While there are donors that have supported the women's movement over the years, this is not sustainable as their priorities change and these priorities are informed by global neo liberal policies and policies.
- Funding women's organisations, groups, associations and networks is as important as supporting public institutions and machineries for gender
- In some countries like Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Tanzania there are gender donor forums. These nascent spaces for dialogue must be strengthened and greater space created for engagement with civil society.

4. How can women from your country engage with the Millennium Summit in September 2005 when the UN General Assembly reviews the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

- Women's NGOs must engage with the media well before the Summit and provide them with information on the targets and goals so that discussions can take place.
- The cyber dialogues can also be used to get women to engage with the Millennium Summit.
- Community based organizations can organize small forums within their localities where women, local authorities, civil society and the private sector can discuss the Millennium Development Goals.

5. What is the best way for us to put gender firmly on the agenda of the MDGs being discussed in September?

- Gender should be mainstreamed in the MDGs. An assessment of the national machineries to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality needs to facilitate gender mainstreaming and women's rights throughout the MDGs
- Determine who is responsible for developing the agenda, who are the influential persons and /or organisations and what their position on gender is.
- Borrow from the experience of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and organise working groups at national, regional and international levels to carry out independent reviews and consultations that can feed into the main summit.

6. Action points

Grassroots women

- Translate policies into local languages to make them more accessible to grassroots women
- Strengthen the connection between women's community grassroots movements and actions and policy reform

Young women

- Work with young women at schools, educating them about the women's movement and its importance and relevance to their own lives
- Allow young women to participate in decision-making processes and structures in existing women's organisations so that they feel more involved and valued

Donors

- The application and implementation of international and institutional commitments must be translated to funding support at the national and community level to actions that promote gender equality
- Conduct gender budgeting audits on development aid
- Women's organisations, national machineries for gender and institutions such as UNIFEM must be actively engaged in government donor coordination forums
- Start an international e-group to stay in touch and share information
- Donors need to support NGOs separately and not through their bilateral programmes with governments
- NGOs should collectively dialogue with donors to influence their priorities as donors global priorities are not always relevant to specific situations
- Develop resource and financing strategies which support accountability to women's agendas, invests directly in women's organising and in institutions that monitor implementation.
- Regional women's networks must organise a donor dialogue once a year so that a common agenda can be developed specific to each region. This will give NGOs the opportunity to influence donor priorities. The donor dialogue must have a strong south-south component and should be planned as part of the review of the Millennium Summit +5, making direct linkages between the CSW Beijing +10 review.
- The relationship between NGOs and UN agencies needs to go beyond fundraising. It should be about partnership, information, sharing expert knowledge and joint fundraising

MDG Summit

- Borrow from the experience of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and organise working groups at national, regional and international levels to carry out independent reviews and consultations that can feed into the main summit.
- Organise a civil society parallel event so that the views of civil society are heard during the review
- Run a set of cyber dialogues to get women to engage with the Millennium Summit

7. Responses to the poll question

The majority of people who responded to the poll question felt that the women's movement needs to be revived if gains made since Beijing Plus Five are to be cemented.

