



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NEWS

NOUVELLES FEMINISTES INTERNATIONALES

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Feminist Activism in the UK in the digital age

An article in *The Observer* (2 June 2013) by Tracy McVeigh titled *Meet the new wave of activists making feminism thrive in a digital age* was very encouraging news. Tracy opened by saying “Madonna and Beyoncé are championing female empowerment, *Spare Rib* is to relaunch and Facebook has had to respond to pressure to tackle misogyny” and went on to state that the **F-word is back**.

Some individual young women were featured, each having achieved notable success: Kat Banyard, co-founder of *Feminista* (see IWNNews Vol 107 No 2 front page); Lucy-Anne Holmes took on *The Sun* newspaper about its page 3 models; Laura Bates, founder of the Everyday Sexism project and co-founder of the #FBrape campaign which led to social-networking Facebook promising to tackle anti-women hate pages on its site. The *Twitter Youth Feminist Army* attracts bloggers and young activists.

The article also described the work of *Daughters of Eve* co-founded by Nimko Ali which is fighting to eliminate female genital mutilation in the UK, and Yasmeeen Hassan, global director of *Equality Now* working for the empowerment of women and girls.

All this success and messages of change have been made possible by the ease of communication in the digital age. Thousands of people now blog and twitter and, while we often hear about the negative aspects of this very public form of communication, *The Observer* article highlights how it can be used positively by women and girls.

It's timely that the *International Alliance of Women* is holding its Congress in London in September this year in the heart of all this activism. *International Women's News* has a proud history, having been in publication since 1908, and it continues to reflect the beliefs and action of the Alliance and to provide a window on current feminist history. The monthly *e-newsletter* provides an informative look at what is happening today with lots of contacts and websites. As the Alliance continues to move into the digital age, new forms of communication must grow to enable its members to be in closer and constant touch and to encourage activism by current and new members around the world.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

from Natalia Kostus, IAW Representative to the UN, IAW

Status of Climate Change Negotiations before COP 19 in Warsaw

Under the UNFCCC, parties are negotiating the new and universal greenhouse gas reduction protocol, legal instrument or other outcome with legal force, applicable to all countries, not just developed countries, for the period beyond 2020 that is scheduled to be adopted at the COP 21 in Paris in 2015. Set out to raise ambition and national and international action, those are the defining years in the climate change regime and women have to be actively involved in the decision making. The negotiations on the new agreement, under ADP- Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action negotiation steam, are still in initial phrases and their development in COP 19 in Poland in 2013 and in COP 20 in Peru in 2014 will be defining.

In the most recent climate change conference in Bonn, in June, 2013, parties continued to make steady progress, except for one negotiations stream: the SBI-Subsidiary Body for Implementation, which was blocked by an agenda dispute concerning a proposal on legal and procedural issues relating to decision making under the COP brought on by Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Parties could not move forward with substantive work in SBI without first accepting the agenda by consensus and effectively lost time. This will have major implications for the work of SBI in Warsaw that will have to fit three weeks into one, affecting the issues on the agenda that have a gender dimension and were not discussed, among others national actions on adaptation and mitigation, loss and damage, and financial matters.

Tunisian Woman to be the First Boss of the Green Climate Fund

Tunisian woman and a leader in development financing: Ms. Hela Cheikhrouhou, has been selected as the inaugural Executive Director of the GCF-Green Climate Fund. Ms. Cheikhrouhou has an outstanding track record in scaling up green growth and climate change investments through an innovative blend of public and private finance at the African Development Bank. Ms. Cheikhrouhou stated that she looks forward to working together with stakeholders to “make the Fund a central contributor to the global financing of developing countries’ response to climate change, with particular attention to the most vulnerable”.

Headquartered in Songdo, Incheon City, Republic of Korea, the GCF is the operating entity of the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC.

The GCF includes gender equality commitments in the Governing Instrument, and currently women’s groups are working to ensure that gender sensitive approach and empowerment of women is included in the GCF business model framework as it moves towards operationalization. It is crucial that gender-responsive climate financing instruments and funding allocations are ensured, especially as the parties are working on mobilizing scaled up finance.

At COP 18 in Doha last year, developed countries reiterated their commitment to deliver on promises to continue long term climate finance support to developing nations, with a view to mobilizing USD 100 billion annually from a variety of sources both for adaptation and mitigation by 2020.

Updates on the ‘Doha Miracle’ Gender Decision and Report Launch

The most crucial aspect of the Decision 23/CP.18, the ‘Doha Miracle’ gender decision that was agreed by all parties at COP 18 last year, titled “*Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to Convention or the Kyoto Protocol*” is to realize its implementation to ensure gender equality in effective climate policy. The UNFCCC secretariat is tracking gender balance in the UNFCCC constituted bodies. The issue of gender and climate change will be added as a standing item on the COP agenda. The secretariat will organize an in-session workshop during COP 19 in Warsaw on gender-sensitive climate policy and capacity-building activities to promote the greater participation of women in the UNFCCC process. Parties and observer organizations are currently working on preparing submissions to the secretariat on options and ways to advance the goal of gender balance, due in September, 2013, that will be compiled into a miscellaneous document for consideration at COP 19. To make recommendations and inform this important submissions process, at the Bonn meetings in June, UN Women and Mary Robinson Foundation- Climate Justice launched a research report: “*The Full View: Advancing the goal of gender balance in multilateral and intergovernmental processes*,” analyzing the normative frameworks and highlighting achievements of positive outcomes in promoting the participation of women in decision-making and management processes at national and global levels of governance.

Radio in Tanzania

from Maria Hengeveld, Cape Town

It's a Friday afternoon at the studio of Radio Kwizera FM in the rural district of Kasulu, Tanzania. Sixteen year olds Letsia and Ringaniza put on their headphones as they get ready for their weekly show. The top story of the day: teenage schoolgirls who get impregnated by teachers.

<http://www.rnw.nl/africa/article/tanzania-talk-radio-teens-teachers-and-transactional-sex>



*Radio Kwizera co-hosts Ringaniza (left) and Letsia (right)
Photo: Children's Radio Foundation*

For this edition of their show, entitled **'The Voice of the Child Be Heard'**, the girls decide it is time to speak out about a sensitive topic that affects peers in their community and classrooms.

As Letsia ensures the microphone is at the right distance from her co-host's face, she takes off with the interview. "Now, Ringaniza, today's theme deals with teenage pregnancies. What do you know about this?"

"What I can say," Ringaniza replies, "is that most of these pregnancies are caused by teachers. You find teachers in our school who start befriending students and give them special treatment once they come of age. The students fall into this trap and start enjoying the preferential treatment. The teacher, having established this, then starts asking for sexual favours and offers the student to help her pass her exams. The student is promised help to get good grades that will secure her a position in good high schools. The student then gives in to the teachers' demands and ends up pregnant."

Marko Dionis Kumudyanko, a 30-year-old teacher at a secondary school in Kasulu, can confirm what Letsia and Ringaniza are talking about: transactional sex.

"It is indeed true that we have some teachers around who develop sexual relationships with female students," he says. "Some will, for example, give the girls bus fare, breakfast money, gifts or other special treatments."

According to Kumudyanko, the favours can mislead students – especially those who live in poverty – into thinking that sexual transactions have the potential to improve their educational or economic situation.

Yet he believes that teachers are responsible for only a small proportion of all teenage pregnancies. He points out that peers and even adults outside the classroom, such as businessmen who proposition schoolgirls they encounter on the street, can also be held accountable. And regardless, for those who end up pregnant, life often only gets harder. "After falling pregnant," Kumudyanko says, "government schools do not allow them to re-enrol."

Once a Kasulu high school student herself, JN elaborates on the social stigma that young women in her situation face. "At school, they expelled me when they found out I was pregnant. At home, they blamed me for the shame it brought upon our family," she recalls.

Describing how the situation began to unfold, JN says: "I was 18 years old and attending my final year in secondary school. My favourite subject was chemistry, so I asked my chemistry teacher for extra lessons. He convinced me to start a love affair with him and provided me with pocket money, clothes, school fees, and kept giving me extra chemistry lessons."

Today JN stresses the need for contraception and more openness. "We need guidance from parents," she says, "because many of us teenagers like having someone to love – this makes us vulnerable."

"When a teacher starts engaging in sexual talk with a student, the student should report the teacher to the head teacher, who should, in turn, report the teacher to the relevant authorities," says Ringaniza. "Also, very stiff penalties should be given to such teachers prying on their students so that others may fear engaging in this vice."

Radio in Tanzania

In Tanzania, 80 percent of the general population identifies radio as their most important source of news and information. Radio Kwizera works with Children's Radio Foundation, a non-profit organization that works with over 1,000 youth reporters across the continent.

Maria Hengeveld is an HR student at Columbia University in New York. Before that she worked as a volunteer in a girls' home in Cape Town.

She very kindly gave IAW President Lyda Verstegen permission to use this article.

Recent posts to IAW Melbourne Blog

The IAW Melbourne Interns and Volunteers are still at work maintaining the blog, facebook and twitter.

Look at the IAW Melbourne blog -
<http://iawmelbourne.wordpress.com/> 'like' us on
facebook [International Alliance of Women Melbourne](#)
'Follow' IAW Melbourne on twitter [@IAWMelbourne](#)

Latest Tweets

- RT @CastanCentre: Activists in Saudi Arabia call on government to overturn jail terms for inciting woman to defy husband's authority [http://... 4 weeks ago](#)
- Meet the new head of UN Women tinyurl.com/lvn3g4e [4 weeks ago](#)
- RT@equalitynow: Our partners #Egyptian #Feminist Union marching to Tahrir Square 3 Jul at 5p. Read their statement: equalitynow.org/a_statement_by... [1 month ago](#)

When enough is beyond enough: Anger and frustration over sexual violence in India

Posted on June 5, 2013

A 30 year old American tourist has been gang-raped by a truck driver and two of his accomplices, on Monday night, after hitching a ride in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, police said. The incident follows the alleged rape of a 21-year-old Irish charity worker in Kolkata at the weekend and comes as the country attempts to tackle endemic sex crime with tougher anti-rape laws, reports AFP.

The death of a 5-year-old girl who was abducted and raped in late April and had been the latest distressing case in the expanding vicious sexual attacks being reported. This shocking story followed a similar abduction, rape and attempted murder of another 5-year-old in early April and is only four months on from the cruel gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old Delhi student, that fuelled an international outcry.

Whilst these high profile cases have created global speculation and outrage, reports of attacks on women and children in India are made daily. On April 26, the *Times of India* covered the following stories: an alleged rape by a Delhi cop, two separate cases of naked and mutilated female corpses being dumped in different parts of the city, and a husband who murdered his wife whom he suspected of infidelity. are made daily.

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Stand with Afghan Women Fighting for a better future

Posted on June 12, 2013

Amnesty International is calling on Australians, the international community and the Afghan Government to fight for women in Afghanistan for a better future. Amnesty International reports that while there has been significant progress in women's rights since 2001, this progress is now under threat. Deprivation of girls' education, high rates of domestic violence and inequality of pay are just a few of the issues facing women in Afghan today.

Amnesty International is looking for 20,000 signatures in Victoria and 60,000 nationally by mid July as part of its 2013 Afghan Women's Rights Campaign. This blog entry offer a link to the petition.

UN Women tweeting

Posted on July 3, 2013



Acting Head of UN Women, Ms Lakshmi Puri

Source: UN Women

The 2013 annual session of the UN Executive Board was held on the 25th – 27th June. For those interested in learning more about how UN Women seeks to engage with women worldwide go to the [UN Women recent twitter chat](#) or read about the Annual session [here](#)

The New Head of UN Women Announced

Posted on July 17, 2013

After a lengthy wait, the new Executive Director of UN Women has been chosen. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of South African politician Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as the new head last Wednesday, succeeding former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet who has returned home to face another election.

Ms Mlambo-Ngcuka's accomplishments are vast and remarkable; from 1984 to 1986 she was the Young Women's Coordinator for the World Young Women's Christian Association in Geneva and served as the first President of the Natal Organization of Women. She has gone on to have a fulfilling political career becoming a member of parliament in

Recent posts to IAW Melbourne Blog

She has risen to be the first woman to hold the position of Deputy President of South Africa from 2005 to 2008. This is only to name a few achievements, a more detailed biography of Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka can be found at the [UN Women website](#).



Ms Phumzile Mlambo
Ngcuka
Source: the tigerbrands
foundation

While we look forward to seeing what the UN Women new head's ideas and actions will be, it comes as a surprise that no information was previously released about this particular candidate. Both [Global Memo](#) and [AWID](#) have raised valuable concerns regarding the importance of transparency in such elections.

Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka - discussion on her new role can be found at [Al Jazeera website](#)

Transnational Organized Crime in East Asia and the Pacific: A Threat Assessment

UNDOC, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, based in Bangkok, Thailand released an important report on the mechanics of illicit trade, the how, where, when, who and why of selected contraband markets affecting the region, in April 2013.

This report offers a non-exhaustive list of 12 illicit flows, that for the purposes of discussion are grouped under four headings: Products (counterfeit goods, fraudulent medicines); Resources (wildlife, wood products) and e.waste & ozone depleting substances; Illicit drugs (heroin & methamphetamines); and Human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

The introductory section of the report 'Fighting Transnational Organized Crime' notes that the region has experienced rapid economic and social change during the past few decades. Criminal enterprises have developed alongside legitimate commerce over recent decades.

In monetary terms the trade in counterfeit goods across the region to Europe and the US seems most significant; however the most challenging for organizations such as IAW members

in human rights terms must be the complex flows involved in labour market trafficking, sex trafficking and migrant smuggling. Estimated migration smuggling movements from S and W Asia to Australia and Canada are shown as being worth not less than US \$97.3 million.

UNDOC notes that the preparation of this report would not have been possible the financial support of the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, and without data and information reported by governments to UNDOC and other agencies. <http://www.undoc.org/southeastasiaandpacific>

Vale Hellen Cooke

- Hellen Cooke, one of Australia's most brilliant, brave and witty peace activists, died suddenly at her home near Melbourne at the beginning of August.

A great mentor of the young, Helen played a large part in organizing the 2012 Ending Violence Asia Pacific Regional Day as part of the IAW Board program in Melbourne, and at that time joined IAW as an individual member.

Her world view was formed in part by the experience of living in Papua New Guinea in the 1960s and 70s. Margaret Bearlin of Canberra said 'Her passion and indefatigable efforts for peace and justice will continue to inspire us, especially her passion that we understand the principles of *permanent* peace set out at the first International Congress in the Hague in 1915.' Hellen was also very involved in Women in Black, the United Nations Association of Australia, Medical Association for the Prevention of War, and also with local Human Rights and Environmental groups where she lived near Frankston. Perhaps Hellen's most important work in Victoria in recent years was as convenor of the local chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and mentor to the Young WILPF group. WILPF Australia board member Lyn Lane said "WILPF Australia has lost a true champion. Fare thee well, WILPF sister. And thank you for so much." Chris Henderson, a WILPF Queensland member and long time editor of Peace Freedom, has a tribute to Hellen on her Facebook page where you will also find a photo album of Hellen at the first Talisman Sabre Convergence near Rockhampton.

One of last prose poems Hellen wrote, dated July 22, for a YWILPF member to take to the 2013 convergence ended *What's the difference? Shouldn't Australia at least, join the dots between our own militarism and the various causes of refugees; and tracing it out, Reveal that the ANZUS treaty is empty for Australia, far too expensive and, Take IPAN and the multilateral institutions for equality, justice, freedom and democracy seriously?*

Her family can be contacted c/o Jo Cooke, 28 Seaford Road, Seaford or by email to Kate Cooke on [<kicooke4@gmail.com>](mailto:kicooke4@gmail.com)

See International Women's News Vol 107 No 3 page 30
IAW 2012 in Melbourne

Violence against Women

Foundation for ending violence against women and children

Australia has a new body to tackle primary prevention of violence against women and children:

<http://www.preventviolence.org.au/>

This was announced in Melbourne on Friday July 26.

The object of the new Foundation is to bring together government and industry, civil society and faith based groups building on the White Ribbon approach to seek cultural change, to end the rise of violence in Australian community.

The Foundation will work nationally but will be based in Victoria using "best practice prevention strategies" with schools, community forums and the media to help reduce the prevalence of violence against women and children. The Australian and Victorian governments have so far pledged about \$9.5 million to get the foundation off the ground and pay its operating costs until 2017. It will build partnerships with business, philanthropic organisations and governments across Australia and to the wider community. A national consultation process is about to begin, with workshops to be held around Australia, along with online submissions and webinars.

Journalist Natasha Stott Despoja, former Senator for South Australia, is the first chairperson of the foundation. Other directors are Alcoa head Alan Cransberg; Muriel Bamblett (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency); Rosemary Calder; Dr Phil Lambert (White Ribbon) and chair of the National Centre of Excellence, Professor Anne Edwards.

The Australian Government's commitment was outlined by Julie Collins MP, Minister for the Status of Women, who said violence against women was one of the most significant issues facing the community: domestic and family violence costs the Australian community is expected to reach \$15.6bn by 2021-22 on top of the immense personal costs involved.

Mary Wooldridge, Minister for Community Services Victoria, announcing the creation of the Foundation and appointment of Ms Stott Despoja, said "To tackle this issue we need a coordinated national voice, an obvious rallying point, the collaboration of the sector, the explicit support of the community and endorsement of government. We believe this new foundation can achieve that."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jul/26/foundation-violence-women-children-launched>

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/foundation-being-created-to-help-protect-women-and-kids-from-violence/story-fni0fit3-1226685192628>

<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/7447-new-national-foundation-to-prevent-violence-against-women.html>

Extracts from an article by Heather McRobie reporting for [openDemocracy](http://www.opendemocracy.org) 5050 6 June 2013

Heather McRobie says patriarchy, militarism and neoliberalism have created a matrix in which women and women's rights can never flourish because none of them place human values and human dignity at their core.



The Nobel Laureates (photo Judy Rand)

A recurring theme at the [Nobel Women's Initiative conference](http://www.nobelwomen.org) in Belfast has been a reflection on the last decade in terms of its global impact on women and human rights. A picture emerged of a period wherein the excuse of 'war on terror' as a justificatory narrative for exclusivist identities, state violence and violence against women gave way to official austerity narratives that, in their own way, entrench inequalities and disempower women. Central to the decade was the elevation of the sanctity of the nation state's security or perceived security, often – paradoxically – at the expense of both its citizens and those outside its borders.

Several speakers reflected on the 'war on terror' period in terms of its interrelated assault on human rights and women. The human rights violations and mass violation of human dignity enacted under the guise of the 'war on terror' runs from arbitrary detention to drone-strikes, from Guantanamo to Yemen to the encroachment of the rights of 'citizens' in the homelands that those who instigated the 'war on terror' were claiming to 'protect'.

The attack on women was similarly wide-sweeping: from the neo-colonial appropriation of the discourse of 'women's rights' – toothless and sanitised in its neo-con costume – as an empty vessel to further the cause of militarism in Afghanistan and Iraq, to the ossification of rigid binary gender roles in the 'homeland' of America; rapes were committed by occupying soldiers at sites of invasion while in countries such as Yemen and Pakistan women's lives were eroded [by the chaos in their lives caused by the 'war on terror'](http://www.opendemocracy.org).

Responsibility of States for Violence against Women

GENEVA (10 June 2013) - States need to be held accountable not only for investigating all acts of violence against women but also for failing to prevent such violence, an independent United Nations human rights expert has said.

"The State has an obligation to investigate all acts of violence against women, including systemic failures to prevent violence against women," said Special Rapporteur on Violence against women Rashida Manjoo.

"There is a need to create a framework for discussing the responsibility of States to act with due diligence," she said. "States are required to hold accountable those who fail to protect and prevent, as well as those who perpetrate, violations of women's rights."

The responsibility of States is generally based on acts or omissions either committed by State actors or by actors whose actions are attributable to the State. But a State may incur responsibility where there is a failure to exercise due diligence to prevent or respond to certain acts or omissions of non-state actors.

"The due diligence standard serves as a tool for rights-holders to hold States accountable, by providing an assessment framework for ascertaining what constitutes effective fulfilment of a State's obligations, and for analysing its actions or omissions," Ms. Manjoo said. But human rights due diligence required constant investigation and evaluation to assess whether universally accepted human rights principles apply in a State's own behaviour and in a State's monitoring of third party behaviour - be they individuals or an organization, the Special Rapporteur added.

Ms. Manjoo stressed that there was a need to create a framework for discussing the responsibility of States to act with due diligence, through separating the due diligence standard into two categories: individual due diligence which States owe to individual victims of violence, and systemic due diligence which requires States' obligations to create a functioning system to eliminate violence against women.

Montevideo Consensus Urges Countries to Change Abortion Laws

Montevideo, August 16 2013 - Representatives of 38 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean meeting this week in the Uruguayan capital urged governments in the region to consider modifying their laws on abortion, which are among the most restrictive in the world.

The [Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development](#) calls on "States to consider amending their laws, regulations, strategies and public policies relating to the voluntary termination of pregnancy in order to protect the lives and health of women and adolescent girls, to improve their quality of life and to reduce the number of abortions".

By [Raúl Pierri](#) on: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/08/montevideo-consensus-urges-states-to-change-abortion-laws/>

Due diligence can include ensuring effective investigations, prosecution and sanctions; guaranteeing access to adequate and effective judicial remedies; and treating women victims and their relatives with respect and dignity throughout the legal process.

Other key factors are ensuring comprehensive reparations to victims and their relatives; identifying certain groups of women as being at particular risk; modifying the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women; and eliminating prejudices.



Ms Rashida Manjoo

Ms. Manjoo presented her fourth thematic report* on the issue of State responsibility for eliminating violence against women to the Human Rights Council on 3 June.

Ms. Rashida Manjoo (South Africa) was appointed Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences in June 2009 by the UN Human Rights Council. As Special Rapporteur, she is independent from any government or organization and serves in her individual capacity. Ms. Manjoo also holds a part-time position as a Professor in the Department of Public Law of the University of Cape Town. Learn more, visit: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/index.htm>

(* Check the full report:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A_HRC_23_49_English.pdf or <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session23/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

Commission on the Status of Women 2014

The fifty-eighth session of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 10 - 21 March 2014 (tentative date).

Themes

Priority theme: Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls

Review theme: Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work ([agreed conclusions](#) from the fifty-fifth session)

Emerging issue: To be determined

Le Mariage d'Enfants – une coutume néfaste dont chaque année des millions d'adolescentes sont victimes – Que faut-il en savoir?

Par Gudrun Haupter, Commission de la Santé

Dans de nombreux pays en plusieurs continents les jeunes-filles en dessous de 18 ans ont un risque modéré à élevé d'être données en mariage précoce.¹ Selon Article 1 de la Convention internationale des droits de l'enfant (CDE) on entend par enfant tout être humain âgé de moins de 18 ans, sauf si la majorité est atteinte plus tôt en vertu de la législation qui lui est applicable.

En m'appuyant sur des documents et enquêtes de l'UNICEF, l'OMS et le FNUAP je présenterai en bref les dimensions, les conséquences pour les adolescentes et les raisons de la persistance de la tradition, et terminerai en esquissant les remèdes.

Les dimensions et les conséquences

Suivant des estimations publiées par l'OMS le 7 mars 2013 dans un communiqué de presse, 39.000 jeunes-filles sont mariées chaque jour. Plus de 140 millions – dont 50 millions âgées de moins de 15 ans - seront mariées entre 2011 et 2020 si la pratique n'est pas enrayée. Parmi les 16 millions d'adolescentes qui donnent naissance chaque année environ 90 pour cents sont déjà mariées. Le chiffre ahurissant de jeunes mères mariées s'explique par le fait qu'elles ont, le plus souvent, été forcé de faire preuve de leur fertilité. Environ 50.000 jeunes-femmes meurent de complications durant la grossesse ou l'accouchement, et selon Flavia Bustreo de l'OMS, pour ce groupe d'âge les décès maternels sont la majeure cause de mort. Presque tous ces décès ont lieu dans les pays à moyen ou à bas revenu. Je cite aussi Carol Bellamy, anciennement directrice exécutive de l'UNICEF : Le passage de la vie d'enfant à la vie d'adulte sans passer par l'adolescence, les relations sexuelles forcées, le non-droit à la liberté et l'absence de développement de leur personnalité, laisseront de profondes séquelles psychologiques et émotionnelles aux jeunes filles. Quant à la maltraitance Claudia Moreno-Garcia, experte de l'OMS en matière de violence contre les femmes, écrit : Il manque aux jeunes-filles le pouvoir de refuser le rapport sexuel, ainsi que les ressources ou le support légal et social nécessaires pour quitter un mariage abusif.

La tragédie de ces adolescentes peut aller jusqu'à l'extrême, rencontré au Nigéria et rapporté dans une étude réalisée à l'Institut Innocenti pour l'UNICEF: une jeune fille mariée de force à 12 ans avait essayé plusieurs fois de fuir le domicile conjugal, et le mari finit par lui couper les deux jambes. Elle en est morte.

Malgré le fait que 158 pays, donc une vaste minorité, a fixé l'âge légal de mariage pour les deux sexes à 18 ans, la pratique bat son plein en Afrique sub-saharienne et en Asie du Sud, des taux de plus de 20 pour cents sont documentés en Amérique Latine et l'OMS/Europe signale l'existence du mariage d'enfants dans plusieurs pays de la Région. Dans de nombreux pays, le mariage précoce relève d'un ordre de sanctions incertain, sans effet de dissuasion. Il peut être interdit par le droit civil ou commun, mais largement toléré par les règles et les pratiques traditionnelles et religieuses. Cela est fréquent dans les régions où les mariages sont généralement célébrés selon les rites en usage et ne sont pas enregistrés².

Plusieurs pays revoient l'âge minimum à la baisse lorsque le consentement parental est fourni. Souvent, cet âge minimum adapté est plus bas chez les filles que chez les garçons, ce qui perpétue encore l'inégalité des sexes et le mépris des droits de la femme.

Tout ceci est en contradiction avec la **Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes (CEDAW)** dont l'Article 16.1 constate sous a) Le même droit de contracter mariage; sous b) Le même droit de choisir librement son conjoint et de ne contracter mariage que de son libre et plein consentement; Et l'article 16.2. dit : Les fiançailles et les mariages d'enfants n'ont pas d'effets juridiques et toutes les mesures nécessaires, y compris des dispositions législatives, sont prises afin de fixer un âge minimal pour le mariage et de rendre obligatoire l'inscription du mariage sur un registre officiel.

Les adolescentes en milieu rural sont les plus touchées par le mariage d'enfants et ce qu'il y a de progrès est dû à des changements de comportement dans les villes. Une enquête de l'UNICEF confirme cet écart. Elle confirme aussi le lien qui existe dans presque tous les pays où le mariage d'enfants est pratiqué, entre la fréquence et les conditions économiques des parents.³

Les principaux motifs de pratiquer le mariage précoce

- Les familles pauvres marient leurs filles jeunes afin de réduire le nombre d'enfants à nourrir, habiller et éduquer.
- Il y a des milieux culturels où le motif principal est le prix que le prétendant paiera pour une mariée très jeune.
- Les jeunes filles de certains pays d'Asie centrale doivent se plier à la pratique encore courante du kalyam, un paiement effectué à la famille de l'épouse-enfant par le mari et sa famille.⁴ Ces derniers se sentent autorisés à placer la jeune fille dans une position de servante et à l'exploiter à des fins domestiques, physiques et sexuelles.
- Parmi les mythes qui jouent un rôle il y a la conviction que le mariage des filles avant la puberté portera bonheur aux familles. Un autre mythe veut qu'une jeune vierge guérisse l'homme du VIH/SIDA.
- La crainte de la pandémie du sida a fortement poussé les hommes dans certains pays d'Afrique à rechercher des épouses très jeunes et vierges.
- Un autre motif du mariage précoce est qu'il est censé protéger contre les atteintes sexuelles et les violences. C'est comme une assurance que leurs filles ne tomberont pas enceintes en dehors du mariage déshonorant ainsi sa famille. Il va sans dire que, dans ces conditions, l'adolescente n'a guère l'autonomie de demander l'usage du condom ou de se protéger contre le VIH/SIDA et la grossesse.
- Finalement: trop de familles marient leurs filles jeunes parce qu'elles ne connaissent pas d'autres options.

continué page 9

Le Mariage d'Enfants

Par Gudrun Haupter, Commission de la Santé

.....page 8 **Les remèdes**

Je n'aimerais pas terminer sur cette note décourageante mais citer deux exemples qui laissent entrevoir un peu de lumière.

En juillet 2013 la présidente-fondatrice de The Wellbeing Foundation Africa, WBFA, Mrs Oluwatoyin Saraki, a appelé à modifier d'urgence la section de la Constitution du Nigeria légalisant le mariage d'enfants. Elle s'est servie de deux arguments pour plaider contre le maintien de certaines provisions de la section en question, dans une résolution du Sénat: Tout manque de clarté qui puisse promouvoir l'abus continu des jeunes filles à travers le mariage d'enfants, doit être éliminé. De plus la ratification par le Nigeria, de conventions internationales contredit la Constitution à ce sujet.⁵

Le Malawi, où au moins la moitié des jeunes filles est mariée avant 18 ans, s'applique à en finir avec la pratique. Suivant la Ministre de la Santé, Mme Cathérine Gotani Hara, il faut permettre à la jeune fille de continuer sa carrière scolaire et de devenir une citoyenne éduquée capable de contribuer au développement et à la vie économique du pays. Sa recette:

- L'accès universel à une éducation primaire non payante;
- L'implication des chefs de village afin de sensibiliser leur commune à l'importance d'envoyer les enfants et particulièrement les filles, à l'école;
- L'implémentation d'une politique qui permette aux adolescentes tombées enceintes de retourner à l'école après l'accouchement;
- Coopérer avec les parlementaires pour fixer, dès 2014, l'âge de mariage à 18 ans;
- Rendre les services de santé accueillants vis à vis des adolescent(e)s ce qui les mettrait en mesure de faire des choix avisés quant à leur santé reproductive.⁶

A cela il n'y a qu'à ajouter: Dans le programme du développement international de l'après 2015, la réalisation des droits égaux pour femmes et hommes, y compris en santé sexuelle et reproductive, doivent constituer un objectif indépendant. La fragmentation parmi des principes généraux doit être évitée car elle nuit à la visibilité des problèmes qui touchent particulièrement les femmes.

¹ Il y a aussi des garçons qui sont mariés, mais c'est plutôt rare, et pour eux c'est moins difficile de s'évader.

² http://www.childinfo.org/files/childmarriage_digest7french.pdf Cet excellent *digest* réunit aussi les mesures les plus importantes à prendre pour avancer dans ce terrain longtemps négligé.

³ http://www.childinfo.org/marriage_countrydata.php

⁴ <http://www.euro.who.int/fr/what-we-do/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/mental-health/news/news/2012/12/child-marriage-a-threat-to-health/those-most-at-risk-roma-girls-of-eastern-europe-and-child-brides-in-central-asia>

L'enregistrement des naissances

par Lyda Verstegen

.....page 10 Les conséquences liées au non enregistrement des enfants passent avant l'âge de 5 ans, si les enfants survivent, ils n'ont pas le droit aux soins de santé ou l'éducation. Ils sont sujettes à des abus: le travail des enfants, les infractions sexuelles, le mariage des enfants parce que leur âge ne peut être établi. Quand ils sont adultes, ils ne peuvent pas ouvrir un compte bancaire, obtenir certificat de mariage, ils ne peuvent pas voter.

Donc, si nous prenons la raison pour laquelle nous avons été fondé au sérieux, nous avons du pain sur la planche. Plan International a lancé une campagne de collecte des signatures dans le cadre d'une pétition à l'ONU pour obtenir que chaque enfant ait droit à un anniversaire. Signez-la (www.plan-international.org) et envoyez une e-carte à vos amis.

Lorsque j'ai visité notre association affiliée en Suisse lors de leur réunion annuelle le mois dernier, j'ai acheté un crayon à la fille de la co-présidente. Partout là-dessus il était écrit: 'Chaque jour est un anniversaire'.

Innocenti Digest No 9.March 2002

Le Parlement européen qui sortira des élections de 2014 peut-il être plus féminisé?

Ce sera la huitième fois depuis 1979 que les Européens éliront leurs représentant(e)s au niveau de l'Union européenne (UE) au suffrage universel direct. A l'heure actuelle moins de 35 pour cents des députés sont des femmes.

Le 4 juillet 2013 la plénière du Parlement a rejeté, avec 314 contre 310 voix, la demande d'amendement suivante: Le Parlement européen fait appel aux Etats Membres et aux partis politiques d'œuvrer pour un taux plus élevé de femmes sur les listes de candidats et d'encourager la présentation de listes qui assurent une représentation paritaire.

Par la défaite le texte original encore moins fort est confirmé qui disait: Le Parlement européen fait appel aux Etats Membres et aux partis politiques d'œuvrer pour un taux plus élevé de femmes sur les listes de candidats et d'encourager, **tant que possible**, la présentation de listes qui assurent une représentation paritaire.

⁵ http://allafrica.com/stories/201307210014.html?aa_source=useful-column

⁶ http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/child_marriage_20130307/en/

L'enregistrement des naissances

par Lyda Verstegen

L'Alliance Internationale pour le Suffrage des Femmes, précurseur de notre Alliance Internationale des Femmes (AIF), a été fondée pour obtenir le droit de vote pour les femmes. Les femmes qui s'étaient investies dans cette lutte supposaient que certaines choses allaient de soi notamment: qu'il y avait un système pour savoir qui pourrait voter et que les électeurs seraient suffisamment instruits. Leur point de départ avait été le contexte européen ou nord-américain dans lequel chaque naissance était enregistrée, et donc les gens pouvaient prouver leur existence, et où il y avait un système scolaire universel, au moins pour l'enseignement primaire.

Les fondateurs de AISF n'étaient pas au courant qu'il y avait des millions et des millions de personnes qui n'avaient pas été enregistrées à la naissance et par conséquent ne pouvaient donc pas être identifiées au cas où elles étaient admissibles à voter.

Au début de cette année ci, j'ai reçu un courriel de la CESAP, la Commission économique et sociale des Nations Unies pour l'Asie et le Pacifique. J'ai lu que les pays s'étaient rencontrés et avaient promis de faire un plan pour l'enregistrement des naissances. Puis un autre e-mail a annoncé une Résolution du Conseil des droits de l'homme (A/HRC/22/L.14/Rw.1) sur l'enregistrement des naissances, évidemment une préoccupation récurrente. Cette Résolution mentionnait un certain nombre d'instruments internationaux qui ont intimé aux Etats parties l'obligation d'enregistrer tous les enfants

immédiatement après la naissance, comme par exemple le Pacte International relatif aux Droits Civils et Politiques, la Convention relative aux Droits de l'Enfant, la Convention internationale sur les Droits de tous les Travailleurs Migrants et des Membres de leur Famille et d'autres instruments internationaux pertinents auxquels ces Etats sont parties.

Du coup, j'ai décidé d'approfondir mes recherches à ce sujet; après tout, cela ne sonnait pas comme si beaucoup de progrès avaient été réalisés. Et en effet, l'UNICEF a mené des enquêtes) "afin d'estimer les niveaux d'enregistrement dans 64 pays et à comprendre les facteurs qui sont associés aux enfants qui obtiennent un certificat de naissance et réalisent leur droit à un nom et à une identité juridique."

L'enregistrement des naissances est un droit humain fondamental qui ouvre la porte à d'autres droits, y compris l'éducation et les soins de santé, la participation et la protection. Et plus de cinquante millions d'enfants ne sont pas enregistrés chaque année, les deux cinquièmes des enfants nés!

Les causes de cette situation sont entre autres la pauvreté, le manque d'éducation ou encore la vie dans les zones rurales où les populations en général ne savent pas que les enfants doivent être enregistrés, ou encore ne connaissent pas où se rendre.

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NEWS / NOUVELLES FEMINISTES INTERNATIONALES

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La cotisation à l'AIF comprend l'abonnement annuel aux NFI. Vous êtes prié d'envoyer 20,- € à la Barclay's Bank, Westminster Branch, 2 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ND IBAN: GB04BARC20944850123048 BIC Code: BARCGB22 Compte 50123048 ou 20 euros à **Alliance Internationale des Femmes: Droits égaux-Responsabilités égales NL-Den Haag, BANK: Swiss Post, Post Finance, CH-3030, Bern, Switzerland. IBAN: CH96 09000000918249694 BIC/SWIFT Code: POFICHBEXXX** ou l'équivalent en monnaie convertible. Veuillez s'il vous plaît renseigner vos nom/adresse/et adresse email et le détail de votre paiement à la Trésorière de l'AIF et à l'Officier des adhérents dont les adresses sont indiquées ci-dessus. Pour des informations concernant l'adhésion à l'AIF, pour informer des changements d'adresse, ou pour se procurer des vieux numéros particuliers, contacter l'Officier des adhérents, **Pat Richardson** (adresse ci-dessus). Tel.: +612 6568 6239