



DEADLINE FOR IFUW PROGRAMME CONSULTATION EXTENDED TO 27 JUNE 2009

Several national federations and associations (NFAs) have asked for additional time to respond to the IFUW Programme Consultation. NFAs and individual members will now have until 27 June to give preliminary feedback on the issues of most importance to their national and local work. Share your views by using the online form <http://www.ifuw.org/consultation/phase1.shtml> or filling out the short questionnaire <http://www.ifuw.org/consultation/phase1.doc> attached to this message and submitting your reply by email or fax. Regular updates on the consultation process will be posted at: <http://www.ifuw.org/consultation/>.

DURBAN REVIEW OUTCOME DOCUMENT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Government delegates from more than 100 countries and 470 NGO representatives gathered in Geneva to assess progress achieved since the first World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. Despite a highly inflammatory speech by the Iranian president that marred the opening and a boycott by a small number of countries, the outcome of the Durban Review provides a basis for multilateral relations and international cooperation for the future. IFUW was one of the NGOs participating in the pre-Conference sessions that helped prepare the draft Outcome Document. It emphasizes the need for setting up effective national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, calls for the sharing of best practices, and highlights the importance of partnerships with human rights institutions and civil groups. In their oral statement to the Conference, IFUW's representatives Conchita Poncini and Arielle Wagenknecht emphasized the challenges of the intersectionality of gender with race, ethnicity, nationality, cultural and religion and highlighted the importance of education, notably human rights education, in teaching tolerance.

For the outcome document:

http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/pdf/Durban_Review_outcome_document_En.pdf

For Conchita Poncini and Arielle Wagenknecht's full report:

http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/reports/2009_durban_review_conf_report.pdf

For IFUW's oral statement:

http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/statements/Durban_Review_Statement_0409.pdf

IFUW PROMOTES GENDER EQUALITY AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC)

IFUW presented a joint statement to the 10th Session of the HRC (March 2009) calling for the continued systematic review of gender equality and women's rights in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and in reports to treaty bodies, notably the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Further, it asked for closer co-operation between the Human Rights Council bodies and financial institutions to exchange best practices and identify gender equality gaps. At the same session, IFUW co-organized one of five NGO parallel panels, on "Safe School Environment for the Girl Child through a Human Rights Education Perspective". The workshop advocated that education in a safe environment is a human right for every girl.

For the statement: http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/statements/2009_hrc_session10.pdf

For more information on the panel:

http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/reports/2009-HRC_NGO_Human_Rights_Education_Panels.pdf

COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

Catherine E. Moore, Coordinator of IFUW's UN Team in New York, represented IFUW at the International Conference on Violence Against the Girl Child in The Hague (March 2009). The conference called on all governments to take a leading role in combating violence against girls and urged multi-stakeholder partnerships between government, civil society, international organizations, media and corporate businesses to work together. Best practices were discussed with innovative ideas such as

creating child help lines and safe spaces where girls can learn about their rights. The conference “poster-child”, Nujood Mohammed Ali, illustrated perfectly the need for action. Ten years of age and aware of her rights, she went to court and filed for divorce after repeated abuse and rape by her husband. The Dutch Minister announced a grant to enable the UN to establish a database for information on Violence Against Women (VAW) including the Girl Child, and examples of best practices in tackling the problems.

For Catherine E. Moore’s full report and additional information:

<http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/news/girls0309.shtml>

AFGHAN PRESIDENT REVERSES POSITION ON NEW LAW

The Afghan president Hamid Karzai has announced in a press conference that the controversial Shia Family law legalizing rape within marriage will be reviewed and that the human rights of women and girls will be respected by the law. He reportedly signed the law without being aware of all of its provisions. Women's groups and human rights organizations around the world have brought tremendous pressure, calling for the law's repeal. The Canadian Federation of University Women, for example, called on their government to take action and encouraged members and supporters to participate in a national petition drive carried out by one of their partners, CARE Canada. It is important that this support continue. Afghanistan is scheduled to report this month on its human rights record to the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review. IFUW's representatives attending will lobby strongly for the promised repeal and for Afghani women's rights in general.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE53P1J620090426?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

IWRAP ASIA PACIFIC SEEKS CEDAW OPTIONAL PROTOCOL EXAMPLES

The International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific is asking women's groups around the world to share their experiences lobbying their governments to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Whether you have been successful or are still trying, they would like to learn about your approach. They would also welcome experiences of successful lobbying for ratification of other instruments relating to women's rights including CEDAW, experiences lobbying for the removal of reservations to CEDAW, or references to any studies or papers on these.

For more information and the survey:

http://www.ifuw.org/docs/temp/2009_iwraw_cedaw_questionnaire.pdf

SWISS ASSOCIATION HELPS STUDENTS INTEGRATE INTO THE JOB MARKET

The Swiss Association of University Women (SVA/ASFDU/ASL) was one of three women’s organizations offering a series of career advice workshops “Approaching the beginning of your career in full knowledge of all the facts” to students and postgraduate students at the University of Zurich. The workshops addressed difficulties young women face starting their careers and entering the job market. Sessions covered topics ranging from wages (“earning, what I am worth”), job applications, active networking, employment law and work contracts, to balancing career and family. Around 60 students took part. The exercise was so successful that it will be repeated in Basel and Lucerne.

Submitted by Verena Welti, President, Swiss Association; translated by IFUW staff

EGYPTIAN YOUNG MEMBERS TO LEAD ILLITERACY ERADICATION PROJECT

The Cairo Association has announced that illiteracy eradication classes are to be offered at the Cairo Headquarters beginning the first of October. The project, which will be supervised by a new group of young members, addresses a critical national problem. According to official estimates, 17 million of Egypt’s population of 80 million are illiterate.

Submitted by Aliaa El-Erian, CIR, Egyptian Association and Member of IFUW’s Status of Women Committee