

Promoting Access to Quality Secondary Education for Girls

IFUW, working in collaboration with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), was active in promoting secondary education for girls during the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) of the High-level Segment of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting held in Geneva at the beginning of July.

A joint IFUW/IPPF Panel Session was held during which speakers, including senior officials from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the UN in Geneva and the Executive Heads of IPPF and the World YWCA, highlighted the Underlying Causes and Impact on Development of Denying Girls Access to Secondary Education. IFUW also spoke in the General Debate, delivering a joint statement with IPPF. The links and article below give additional information.

National Federations and Associations (NFAs) should continue to advocate strongly to ensure that secondary education for girls becomes a reality. The IFUW Education Advocacy Handbook *The Multi-faceted Right to Education: A Guide to Implementing and Monitoring* - <http://www.ifuw.org/priorities/eahandbook/> - is an important resource for this purpose.

Marianne Haslegrave, IFUW President

[Click here to view the webcast](#) of IFUW/IPPF Oral Statement to ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review by Hillevi Perraudin, Coordinator of IFUW's UN Representatives in Geneva.



Additional links:

Report of the High Level-Panel on the Underlying Causes and Impact on Development of Denying Girls Access to Secondary Education
<http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/archive/2011/2011-high-level-panel.pdf>

Joint oral statement to the Annual Ministerial Review by IFUW and IPPF (PDF)
<http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/archive/2011/statements/2011-ecosoc-amr-ifuw-ippf-oralstatement.pdf>

IFUW written statement to the Annual Ministerial Review
<http://www.ifuw.org/advocacy/statements/2011-Statement-High-Level-ECOSOC.pdf>

New IFUW Blog on Girl's Access to Secondary Education

The current IFUW blog draws on issues and facts raised in the Joint High Level Panel on Underlying Causes and Impact on Development of Denying Girls Access to Secondary Education. Access to quality secondary education for girls is a human right. Excluding girls from education limits their potential and opportunities and leaves them vulnerable. Without an education, girls are denied the knowledge they need to become informed global citizens. The impact, however, stretches far beyond the individual girls. There is a definite link between education for girls, especially at the secondary level, and sustainable development. Research shows that education, especially girls' education, is a principal catalyst for sustainable growth and increases the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a nation. There is also a vital link to between girls' education and health. Recent research shows that 4.2 million fewer children under age 5 died between 1970 and 2009 because of increased education for women. Studies also show that girls with secondary education have a lower rate of HIV infection. While significant progress is being made at the primary level, it is still difficult in many countries to convince national leaders to invest in secondary education for girls. We encourage members to click on the link below to visit the IFUW blog and to share information on barriers and strategies being tried in your own countries.

<http://www.ifuw-forums.org/blog/2011/07/18/girls-access-to-secondary-education/>

Joint High Level Panel on "Afghanistan Women & Girls Today - Realities and Challenges"

In June, IFUW co-sponsored a High Level Panel on the Situation of Women and Girls in Afghanistan Today. Held in conjunction with the 17th Session of the Human Rights Council, the panel brought together experts from the United Nations and other organizations working with women and girls in that country. The speakers highlighted some of the deep problems that remain. These include harmful traditional practices which are perpetrated in all communities and in all ethnic groups, among them forced marriage, child marriage (before 15), "honour" killings, selling of girls to settle disputes, exchange marriages, female infanticide, acid attacks on girls going to school, mutilation, rape, and slavery. These practices are not restricted to poor or remote areas. It is estimated that 87% of all women face physical and/or psychological abuse. The situation is exacerbated by 30 years of insecurity.

Lack of access to education for girls is a major problem, with contributing factors ranging from a lack of female teachers, lack of training for teachers, poverty (especially problems related to access for children living in rural areas), and insecurity. Lack of access to health facilities is another major concern. Afghanistan has the worst maternal mortality rate both because of the lack of access to health care facilities and because of the high incidence of child marriage.

There are some positive signs, among them a national law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW), adopted in August 2009, but it is not yet being implemented. The panelists called for action in a number of areas, among them implementation of EVAW and CEDAW, increased accountability, greater inclusion of women in the peace-building process, and greater access to justice and security.

Morgane Desoutter, IFUW Intern

For the full report, see: http://www.ifuw.org/docs/2011_Afghanistan.pdf