



**Actions and Policies for Gender Equality**

Brussels, 3-5 December 2007

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This report of the international Forum Dynamic Cities Need Women has been published in French, Dutch, English and Spanish by the Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities of the Brussels Capital Region and has been elaborated under the direction of the Cabinet of the Secretary of State Brigitte Grouwels.

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# INTRODUCTION






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**Introduction and Welcome by Ms. Brigitte GROUWELS,**  
*Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities of the Brussels Capital Region  
 and Co-President of "Dynamic Cities Need Women"*

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According to UN figures, half the Earth's population lives in cities in 2008. By 2050 this is expected to rise to 70%. Massive urban development is one of the dominant features of modern times, especially in the developing world. Cities are thus essential to the future of the population of the world, over half of whom are women. And women are essential to the future of cities.

This basic fact was the starting point for "Dynamic Cities Need Women", an international conference to focus specifically on the questions of gender equality and the role of women in major urban centres. We invited experts, decision-makers, community organizers, etc. from cities on every continent to exchange experiences and know-how relating to the challenges and opportunities facing urban women.

The initiative came from the Metropolis Women International Network and the Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities of the Brussels Capital Region. It was launched on the occasion of the UN Conference on Gender Equality for National and Local Government in Atlanta in November 2006. Within a year we managed to bring together about 700 participants from 72 countries who met in 20 workshops with 80 speakers. Together they addressed the manifold issues confronting cities and urban women.

As capital of the European Union and a major international decision-making centre – as well as a multicultural city – Brussels was an appropriate setting for this forum. Since 2004 the Brussels Capital Region has developed an inclusive equal opportunities policy, which seeks to empower women and women's organizations and give them a greater role in all aspects of urban life. Back in December 2005, the

regional colloquium "Women Build Brussels" brought together hundreds of experts and affected citizens and provided an ideal stepping stone for the more ambitious and wide-ranging international forum "Dynamic Cities Need Women". In December 2008 we will follow up with a second edition of "Women Build Brussels", devoted to one of the major themes of our international forum: safe cities.

"Dynamic Cities Need Women" was not a one-off event. It was meant to be a starting point for a continuous international dialogue. That is why we deemed it essential to document all discussions and contributions and to provide a synthesis in this report. This report should serve as a permanent record and a tool, not just for the participants in the forum, but for all who work in the field of gender equality and urban development. It is our hope that it will find many readers and users and that it may serve as a basis for future international forums. This is also the sense of the final declaration which was adopted at the conclusion of "Dynamic Cities Need Women" and which points to the massive effort that still needs to be made to allow women to play their full and essential role in our cities. The final declaration rightly points out that gender equality is something that concerns both men and women, as well as all institutions and levels of government.

I was very proud to host "Dynamic Cities Need Women". And I am certain that the work of this forum, which is summarized in this report, will provide an inspiration for men and women in cities all over the world.

**Brigitte Grouwels**



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***Introduction and Welcome by Ms. Francine SENÉCAL,***

*Co-President of the Metropolis Women International Network, Vice-Chairwoman of the Montréal Executive Committee (Canada) and Co-President of “Dynamic Cities Need Women”*

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The international forum “Dynamic Cities Need Women : Actions and Policies for Gender Equality” which was held in Brussels last December, was a true success. This success was due to the commitment of the Brussels Capital Region and the Metropolis Women International Network, to the number and the diversity of the participating cities, to the rigour of the organizers and the quality of the speakers.

You have in your hands the Proceedings of this forum, which are the true expression of the interventions, questions, answers and debates which surrounded them. As a woman, a locally elected representative and a president of an international network, I am very proud of what was accomplished.

Equality between women and men is a recognized principle in our society. The women participating in the forum wanted to go beyond the statement of principle stage and to translate this equality into everyday life and the various spheres of activity.

Over recent years, our societies have undergone major transformations in the economic, social, cultural, institutional and political spheres. The participants wanted to make sure that women maintain their assets and continue their progression towards gender equality.

More than ever, women are being invited to take an active part in taking the decisions that concern them and also in influencing the various decision-making authorities. They are thus being encouraged to be agents of change and to create bonds of solidarity which go beyond local boundaries.

More than ever, women are concerned with local and regional development as service users, voters, contributors to development or decision-makers.

The abundance and the richness of the interventions testify to our will to let the speakers freely express themselves at the same time on the problems, approaches and recommended solutions.

These Proceedings are not addressed solely to those women who took part in the forum. They are also addressed to those women who did not have the chance to join us, as well as to men, who are our partners, and to politicians and to the experts, who have the capacity to advance the cause of gender equality.

Women must thus cut a place in this sphere in order to become true partners in development. Levelling representation is certainly one of the means of making sure that both women’s and men’s needs are taken into account.

I hope that the examples shown in this document will be sources of inspiration and records of practical solutions so that cities take more action in this field.

Once again, I reiterate my most sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the success of this forum, and in particular to Ms. Brigitte Grouwels, Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities of the Brussels Capital Region, to Mr. Guy Vanhengel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Brussels Capital Region and to their respective teams for their engagement, to the President of Metropolis, Mr. Jean-Paul Huchon, for his support as well as to my close collaborators, Ms. Rita Rachele Dandavino and Mr. Amara Ouerghi, for all their devotion. I extend my special thanks to Miss Liesbet De Keersmaecker for all her efforts in putting together this invaluable document.

I wish you all a good read!

**Francine Senécal**





## OPENING CEREMONY

Monday 3 December 2007, 09:30 – 11:30






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**Opening speech by Mr. Guy VANHENGEL,**  
*Minister of the Brussels Capital Region for External Relations*

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Madam,  
 Ministers,  
 Secretary of State,  
 VIPs,  
 Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome!

Brussels is a metropolis whose name is better known than that of the country of which it is the capital.

Brussels is a lady of culture with a rich past.

She stands at a crossroads with access to the whole of Europe and all other continents.

Her house is the capital of Europe, the seat of major institutions.

In her salon : a beautiful mix of cultures, a linguistic laboratory and of course a venue for meetings and international conferences.

Moreover, she has remained pleasant and delightful, she is open to those who wish to take a look behind the official bureaucratic facade or the very formal medieval stepped gables.

She shows you the good life, serves you tasty dishes and knows that you would like a good refreshing beer when you visit her. She spoils you with chocolate like a child. She loves children ; no other city except Brussels has an icon like the “manneken pis”, a little boy relieving himself with a mischievous look on his face....

I love Brussels, she is my wife, my mistress, my mother and my friend all rolled into one.

Have you noticed that I use the word “she”.

Well, it is completely justified.

A city can only be feminine.

No-one draws a square on a map to represent a city.

A city starts with a dot, an ovum which becomes an embryo, a living and breathing entity, a symbol of life and growth.

In a “dynamic” city, our theme for today and the next few days, the embryo will continue to develop with the female chromosome X – wow, it’s a girl.

A city is nothing if it does not pay attention to women, to all women, to female points of view in administration, to the women in administration itself.

In the best case scenario, a city must be a uterus, warm, nourishing and comforting for those who need a refuge where they feel safe.

And it is no coincidence if these are women to a large extent.

The specific functions of large cities are particularly attractive to women who are disadvantaged and isolated with children.

The dynamics of a large city are extremely important for the well-being of humanity in general but of women in particular.

Therefore, it will be particularly interesting if, during the course of the next few days, you mark out a future for the dynamic women of cities but also for the women living in dynamic cities. The nuance is not without significance.

As Minister for External Relations for the Brussels Capital Region, in other words “Foreign Affairs”, I am especially happy to open this international congress in Brussels today.

Particularly since we have been attempting to adopt these two “dynamic” routes for a long time.

You already have in common the fact that all cities in the world want to be as feminine as Brussels and I hope that we will be able to make our contribution.

I trust you will have a fruitful and productive congress and the opportunity to meet interesting people. ■




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**Opening speech by Ms. Brigitte GROUWELS,**  
*Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities of the Brussels Capital Region*

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Madam,  
 European Commissioner,  
 Ministers,  
 Under-Secretary General,  
 Guests,

It is a great honour for my colleague, Guy Vanhengel and myself to be able to welcome you today on behalf of the Government of the Brussels Capital Region.

As I am responsible for Equal Opportunities Policy in Brussels, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the challenges ahead. Challenges which justify to a large extent the why and how of this Forum.

The fact that during the last 10 years, many women have managed by their own volition and perseverance to climb the academic, economic, social and political ladders and the fact that more and more women are taking an active part in society in all its diversity must not in any way allow us to forget that equal opportunities and the fair treatment of women are far from being a reality everywhere in the world.

Indeed, women are still under-represented in decision-making bodies and are still paid much less than their male counterparts. Furthermore, they still suffer domestic violence and other forms of violence. Women's point of view, their needs and aspirations are still very often neglected in politics, whether it is at the level of human resources management in large companies, infrastructures in large cities or in economic development policies in many countries.

It is not only a matter of injustice towards women who make up about half the population of the world in any case but also a matter of lack of foresight and of stupidity, because the waste of under-exploited female talent constitutes a waste for the whole of society.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2007 published by the World Economic Forum has indicated, after conducting a comparative study in 128 countries, that a link well and truly exists between a country's prosperity and the opportunities open to women. Indeed, the more a country provides opportunities for women, the more it will prosper and increase the well-being of its inhabitants.

I also know from my experience in development co-operation that women play an essential role in the economic and social development of a country. A country which does not invest in women deliberately deprives itself of half of its human capital. And no-one can afford that.

The same applies to companies, academic and cultural circles etc.

Furthermore, I would also like to emphasise the important role played by women in the education of children, amongst other things. They are also mothers who have the ability to overturn traditional social roles by transmitting values such as respect and gender equality to their children from a very young age and enabling girls as well as boys to develop to their full potential.

If it is true that we have made some progress since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. This is not the case in all countries in the world. Especially if we wish to achieve the Millennium Objectives with regard to the equality and emancipation of women. It was, I believe, also the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Gender Equality for national and local authorities held one year ago in Atlanta.

This applies all the more so to large cities which occupy a prominent position in this Forum. Women also play an essential role in cities, whether this be in social and economic life, in the health-care sector and in education or in security and the organisation of public space. A city where women do not feel sufficiently safe to walk in the street is not a city fit to live in. This is only one example amongst many other problems which will be addressed in this forum.

Moreover, I am delighted to say that the percentage of women with seats on local councils has reached 42% since the last local elections in the Brussels Capital Region in 2006. Women are also strongly represented in the Brussels Parliament with 37 out of 89 members. As you can see, a perfect balance has not yet been achieved, especially at the executive and decision-making level. Only 3 out of 19 Brussels mayors are women.

Every time I quote these types of figures and declare that a true balance has not been achieved, I discern a certain embarrassment tinged with unease in my male colleagues. This is why I would like to reassure everybody : we women do not ask for full powers, half would be quite sufficient.

Furthermore, I would add that men have a significant role to play with regard to the promotion of equal opportunities. I do not consider men to be adversaries ; on the contrary, I consider them to be partners in a joint attempt to build a society in which everyone is recognised. A society in which women may finally play their proper role.

This is in fact the principal message of this Forum. We have not come here to complain about what we have to endure but rather to point out what women actually do. What women achieve – from day to day in cities throughout the world and in various areas of social life. Also the many things women have the power and also the will do to. Because the future of our cities cannot be built without women. Because cities designed for women are also cities where life is good for everybody.

And this is summed up very well by the title of this Forum : “Dynamic Cities Need Women”.

I thank you for attending this Forum and wish you three very interesting days. ■




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**Address by Ms. Francine SENÉCAL,**  
*Co-President of the Metropolis Women International Network*

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Your Royal Highness, Princess Mathilde,  
 Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities,  
 Executive Director of UN Habitat,  
 Ministers,  
 Ambassadors and Members of the Consular Corps,  
 Mayors and Local Councillors,  
 Friends,

First of all, I would like to thank and congratulate the organisers of this international forum and, most of all, Ms. Brigitte Grouwels, Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities in the Brussels Capital Region, for the warm welcome accorded to all participants. I appreciate the hospitality and the generosity not only of Brussels but of the whole of Belgium.

All the participants in this international forum join with me in thanking you very warmly.

When Ms. Grouwels and I proposed this initiative in Atlanta in September 2006 we received only positive responses and a great deal of enthusiasm. Once our respective decision-making bodies supported this initiative last December, the arrangements were quickly put into execution mode. Well done to all those who enabled the realisation of this initiative and arranged it so that we can be here today.

Permit me by way of introduction to give you a brief summary of the International Women's Network of Metropolis. Most of you will already know Metropolis – The World Association of Major Metropolises, a network of 90 large cities with more than one million inhabitants, spread over all continents. Brussels Capital is an active member of Metropolis.

Metropolis places particular significance on the gender problem and on equality between men and women. This was the framework for creating the International Women's Network of which I am co-chair together with my colleague, Ms. Irini Valsamaki-Ralli, Deputy Mayor of Athens, and I would like to say hello to her now.

This network is co-ordinated by a secretariat based in Montreal and by sub-offices based in Barcelona and Athens for Europe, in Bamako, Dakar and Abidjan for Africa, Santiago de Chile and Mexico for Latin America, Mashhad and Amman for the Middle East.

This international forum fits well into the context of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. Its specificity lies in the fact that it refers to cities, hence its title, "Dynamic Cities Need Women".

Equality between men and women is a recognised principle in our society. However, it remains to be seen how it will translate into everyday life.

In many countries women make up more than half the population. However, they are still far from accounting for half the political and administrative decisions in cities.

The participation of women in municipal life is up against certain obstacles. The work-life balance is without doubt the most important, particularly for women with young children.

Cities have an important role to play in permitting women access to decision-making powers. Municipal authorities must understand what is at stake and identify the obstacles confronting women in order to give them more assistance.

Equal representation is certainly one of the means of ensuring that the needs of men and women are taken into consideration in urban planning and management.

At the same time, women are also experiencing the effects of globalisation. These are linked to the unequal position they occupy in the labour market and to the lower value attached to their work.

No-one can be unaware of the fact that women have the lowest skilled and worst paid jobs in many countries in Asia and Latin America. In Africa and other developing countries, women are confined to agriculture and the traditional economy.

In Eastern Europe, following the fall of the Communist regimes, the transition from a centralised government to a market economy has not been accomplished without consequences for women. Whilst the majority of women previously enjoyed some economic security, educated and skilled women are now thrown on the scrapheap.

Since the start of the third millennium, questions on sustainable development have been posed in the media and in society in general.

Everybody knows that sustainable development is the balance between social, economic, environmental and political aspects. In this context, women contribute significantly to sustainable development.

All of us already know the role of women in family development, children's education and caring for the sick and elderly. However, in many countries, they are victims of violence and aggression.

In the environmental sector, studies prove that women recycle and use public transport more than men. In fact, women are contributing to the protection of the Earth and to the challenges of climate change.

In the economic sphere, more and more women are in the labour market or are setting up businesses. They are therefore contributing to economic development and to prosperity.

Nevertheless, we still see inequities between men's and women's salaries. Even in some developed countries, the difference is significant.

In the political arena, more and more women are getting involved at all levels. Today, many cities are run by women. Atlanta is a good example with mayor, Shirley Franklin, who is present among us today and I would like to say hello to her now.

At the national level, in 2005, Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected first woman president of Liberia and of Africa.

At the same time, many women are fighting for democracy, rights and freedoms: examples are Ms. Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and Ms. Ingrid Betancourt detained in Colombia who deserve our total admiration and for whom we express our total solidarity.

However, despite this breakthrough, we still have not reached parity, since, in the majority of countries, the percentage of our presence at decision-making levels is less than one third; therefore, there is still a long way to go at this level.

We all know that sustainable development is not possible without equality between men and women. The integration of women and the inclusion of their concerns in policies and actions are decisive for fulfilling local, national and international commitments.

In this context, international co-operation and solidarity are essential to enable women to create links of mutual aid and collaboration outside the borders of their own countries. This international co-operation in conjunction with the development of new technologies and new possibilities is stimulating for women and contributes to the process towards equal opportunities.

This international forum will provide the opportunity for exchanging knowledge and good practice and will contribute to the fulfilment of one of the Millennium Development Objectives (to promote equality between the sexes and the empowerment of women).

Therefore, I hope that the work of this forum will be very fruitful and will produce the tangible results we all need.

Thank you for your attention. ■



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**Address by Mr. Vladimir SPIDLA,**  
*European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities*

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Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all I would like to apologise for my absence and the impersonal nature of this recording. I am aware of the importance of your forum, but last-minute commitments have prevented me from coming here today.

Equal opportunities are at the heart of the European social model and the basis for a competitive economy which enables everyone to fulfil their potential.

I recall that these economic considerations are at the root of European legislation on gender equality. The 1957 Treaty of Rome states that the Community shall promote equality between men and women in all Community policies.

European legislation enacted during the past fifty years is one of the most advanced in the world in this field.

If it is true that legislation is an essential instrument, then we need a global approach so that the gender equality policy is truly effective. It must include a legislative strand but also positive actions and take gender equality into account in other policies.

Since the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, six of the eight million jobs created by the European Union have been filled by women.

In order to maintain this progress, the European Commission has adopted a Roadmap for gender equality for the period 2006-2010. Its objective is to promote equality in all European policies and it defines priority action areas such as work-life balance.

The Commission's action has received the support of the Member States at the highest level. In March 2006, the Heads of State and Government approved the European Pact for Gender Equality.

Finally, in 2007, the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All provides us with an excellent opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of equality at all levels of society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Fifty years of European legislation and initiatives have contributed a great deal towards equality between the sexes in Europe, but to achieve equality in fact, there is still much progress remaining.

You will be able to use this forum – which I hope will be fruitful – as an opportunity to exchange good practice, to see what works and what doesn't. Today, Europe has two messages for the world: equality is a right but equality is also an engine for growth, employment and social cohesion. ■




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**Address by Ms. Sarra KANOUN JARRAYA,**  
*Minister for Women's, Family, Children's and Senior Citizens' Affairs*

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Your Royal Highness, Princess Mathilde of Belgium,  
Your Excellency, Ms. Brigitte GROUWELS,  
Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities in the Brussels Capital Region,  
Ms. Francine SENÉCAL,  
President of the Women's Network of Metropolis,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure for me to participate in the inaugural session of our conference entitled: "Dynamic cities need women: actions and policies for gender equality".

May I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the organisers for the judicious choice of the theme for this international forum where each meeting will be enhanced by the presence of eminent personalities who will not fail to enrich our ideas and debates?

Your Highness,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking of the appropriateness of "Dynamic Cities need Women", is this not a way of understanding the status of women, their role in cities and their participation in all walks of life? This is what leads me to explain to this honourable audience the constantly developing policy of my country in favour of the advancement of women.

In fact, the advancement of women's rights, with all the dimensions involved, has received very special attention in Tunisia.

The Personal Status Code, promulgated in 1956 at the dawn of independence, has opened up wide prospects of progress on the road to liberty and equality for Tunisian women. A magnificent illustration of the trail-blazing role of Tunisia in its Arab-Muslim environment in the field of modernisation and social advancement, and also the efforts of its elite in matters of reform and enlightened interpretation of religious precepts. This code has abolished polygamy and repudiation, regulated divorce and defined the legal minimum age for marriage. The 1959 Tunisian Constitution has enshrined the principle of the equal rights of men and women in all areas.

The process of the advancement of Tunisian women has been considerably strengthened after the amendment of 7 November 1987, within the framework of a reform option confirming the success of the Tunisian approach in the reconciliation of tradition and modernity and the judicious balance between socio-cultural specificities and universal values. This process has been characterised by the concern to establish women's rights as an integral part of human rights and to include the problems linked to the development of their status in an approach based on planning as a function of gender and making the integration of women in the development and realisation of equality between men and women into one of the principal objectives of the country's development.

The status of women, either within the family or in society, their role and their place in the development process, have been revised and strengthened within the framework of a policy for the advancement of women centred on the rejection of any form of discrimination and on the realisation of equal opportunities in all sectors and in all settings.

Within the family, the legislator has instituted a real partnership between husband and wife.

Also, the obligation to respect personal status principles has been elevated to Constitutional level.

These judicial gains, which have strengthened the role of women within the family, have paved the way for women and granted them equal status in society.

In other words, the partnership between husband and wife has been changed in society, where women will henceforth be equal partners in the country's development.

At the same time and as a consequence of legislative amendments, an institutional system has been implemented to monitor not only the strengthening of women's rights but also their application in order to make their impact tangible in women's actual experience.

We can cite as an example the Minister for Women, Family, Children and the Elderly who has seen her prerogatives expand during the course of the development plans and her budget take shape; the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF); the National Council for Women, Family and the Elderly which includes the "Equal Opportunities Committee" responsible for monitoring the application of, and compliance with, the laws and the "Commission for Monitoring the Image of Women in the Media". It is appropriate to also cite the Commission for "Women and Development" set up in 1992 to plan the participation of women in the dynamics of preparation, design and monitoring of five-year development plans and which gave rise to a "Women and Family" section in the five-year development plans starting in 1997. I must also mention the "National Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women in Rural Areas".

The legal arsenal in conjunction with the institutional system has given rise to a transformation in the status of women in various sectors; this is supported by the following indicators:

In the field of education, the policy in Tunisia with regard to equal opportunities between boys and girls has produced ample fruit at all levels of education, since the percentage of girls in school at the age of six has equalled that of boys at 99% in 2004. The percentage of girls attending university has reached 59% of the total number of students in 2007.

In health matters, Tunisia has an ambitious birth control policy: the synthetic measure of fertility is now 2.04.

With regard to the participation of women in economic life, national labour legislation covering the public as well as the private sector explicitly guarantees equal opportunities and treatment at work, without discrimination between the sexes at recruitment, promotion and remuneration levels. The legislator has also provided facilities for working women such as pension entitlement, part-time work in the private sector, part-time work in the public sector and redundancy. At the same time, the procreation role of working women has been taken into consideration: Tunisian women have the right to 2 months' paid maternity leave and 4 months' post-natal leave on half-pay. Also, breastfeeding mothers have the right to one hour's breastfeeding per work session and breastfeeding rooms must be allocated in companies employing 100 women or more.

On another level, supportive measures have been taken to enable women to reconcile family life with professional obligations. As part of the application of the "Presidential Programme 2004-2009", a law promulgated in 2006 and implemented on 1 January 2007 provides working women who so wish with the opportunity to work part-time at 2/3 of their salary without sacrificing any social security benefits. Likewise, a strategy aimed at an improvement in the rate of cover of the regions by services such as crèches, nurseries, school clubs and day centres for the elderly has been implemented by our department.

The impact of this policy has been the ever increasing presence of women in all professional fields and sectors.

According to the 2004 census, women make up 26.6% of the working population in Tunisia. The number of female entrepreneurs is now 18,000. The number of women employed is 46.9% in the business and service sector, 26.4% in manufacturing industry, 16.7% in agriculture and fishing.

On another level, women in rural areas are subject to a particular duty of care on the part of the decision-makers. An action plan for their advancement has been devised in order to reduce the gaps and to give them the same chances and the same opportunities as women in urban areas.

In public life, the presence of Tunisian women is advancing. In 2007, women held 24.5% of decision-making positions and this rate should reach 30% by 2009.

They make up 15% of government members and 15.2% of members of the Chamber of Councillors (Senate); in the Chamber of Deputies their quota has doubled from 11.5% to 22.7% between 1999 and 2004.

By presidential decree, they will represent at least 30% of the lists for the Democratic Constitutional Party (RCD) at the next legislative elections in 2009 and municipal elections in 2010. The other political parties are requested to do the same.

On consultative councils, they make up 20% of the Economic and Social Council and 25% of the Constitutional Council.

In regional structures, they hold 32% of the posts on regional councils and 27% on municipal councils.

Your Highness,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Urban space throughout the world is attaining proportions which have encouraged a reconsideration and a new design of this vital space for modern men and women.

Very often designed and realised by men, cities are developed as a function of needs which do not take into consideration the presence of women to the detriment of their decisive role today.

Women certainly have an important role as stay-at-home mothers. Their growing participation in the labour market and in the generation of income also increases their importance for the survival of urban households. They also play a crucial role in the organisation and management of urban communities, particularly in poor districts.

Cities today reflect some of the traditional distinctions between men and women in the way they are organised. The stereotypes of yesterday have left their mark on the ways in which cities operate.

In other respects, we find it paradoxical that, on the one hand, women make up a group particularly affected by housing conditions, public services and the urban environment in general and, on the other, they do not invest more effort in municipal work and do not participate enough in municipal councils which are working towards an improvement in city living and management conditions.

However, some indicators inspire optimism. The minister responsible for town planning and land use management is a woman and today 25% of architects and 50% of architecture students are women.

Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, the percentage of municipal councillors has risen to more than 27% and should reach 30% by 2010.

The future of economies is closely linked to good organisation and good governance of our cities and therefore they must be able to innovate and adapt in order to create more well-being and social cohesion and a better quality of life. To this end women must, at all levels of social life, add their personal touch and their own ideas which are indispensable for achieving equal opportunities.

Your Highness,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Strengthened by the political will of our President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who never ceases to affirm his conviction with regard to the necessity of involving women in the work of building modern Tunisia, female leaders, and in particular, female ministers responsible for women's advancement, have played a catalytic role in forging ahead on the road towards the improvement in the status of women and their position in all walks of life. They have several initiatives to their credit contributing to making Tunisian cities more inclusive for women. I will cite various municipal development programmes involving women, implemented during the past two decades and also the creation of a support mechanism for female production activities operating within the framework of a partnership with associations and together with national institutions such as the Banque Tunisienne de Solidarité and the National Employment Fund to ensure the advancement of small businesses run by women.

Also to their credit, I will mention the impetus of the development of local services for a better work-life balance such as crèches, nurseries, school clubs, etc.

Today, persuaded that the objective of equal opportunities is a long-term affair, for the success of which each one of us must play our part, and animated by the same enthusiasm as those women who have preceded me and of all Tunisian women eager for emancipation, my mission is to be attentive and vigilant with regard to the realisation of avant-garde measures in favour of women, to listen to women and to urge women to have not only a greater presence in all sectors but also to hold more decision-making positions. Currently, my task is certainly important in a country like Tunisia set on excellence, including everything relating to the advancement of women. My efforts and those of my colleagues and collaborators, also the associations and various components of civil society, will concentrate on the development of women's abilities. Training programmes already embarked on will be increased to reach more women with the aim of developing leadership, private initiative and management abilities and urging women to be more active in all fields and particularly in decision-making positions so that they might make their own contribution to the spread of women's advancement and



to the role of their fellow female citizens. We are working so that the benefit provided by the different mechanisms implemented in Tunisia to encourage private initiative and to create businesses – already quite significantly in favour of women – will be greater and equal to that of men. We are making efforts so that the work-life balance is more effective, and, through a greater awareness aimed at men, the sharing of the roles within households is biased in favour of women and is fairer. We are developing the network of women's associations to encourage women to make inroads into all fields of public life and in fighting against anything which could slow their momentum towards greater emancipation and a more effective partnership with men, particularly in fighting against any form of discrimination and violence against women within the framework of the recent strategy implemented in Tunisia to combat violence against women throughout the cycles of life.

Your Highness,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to end on a positive note regarding the future of women in cities and to say that the organisation of meetings such as this one today is a means of recording the changes operating in the evolution of women's lives in the 21st century who must, at any price, eradicate the constraints and difficulties impeding their full participation in working, economic, political and public life.

Likewise, I am persuaded that the work of this meeting will constitute, without doubt, a contribution to the building of a better future for cities of ours that are adapted to our way of living together, men and women.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my tributes to the organisers and my thanks to the Brussels Capital authorities for the warm welcome we have received and I trust that our work will be successful.

I thank you for your attention. ■




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**Address by Dr. Anna KAJUMULO TIBAIJUKA,**

*Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya*

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Her Royal Highness Princess Mathilde of Belgium,  
 H.E. Mr. Vladimir Spidla, European Union Commissioner for Employment,  
 Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities,  
 Hon. Sarra Kanoun Jarraya, Tunisian Minister for the Affairs of Women,  
 Family, Childhood and the Elderly,  
 Madame Brigitte Grouwels, Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities,  
 Brussels Capital Region,  
 Madame Francine Sececal, President of Metropolis Women International  
 Network,  
 Ambassadors and High Representatives,  
 Distinguished Delegates,  
 Ladies and Gentlemen :

It gives me great pleasure and honour to deliver a Keynote Address to this First International Forum on Dynamic Cities Need Women. It is indeed a privilege for me to share with you my views as a woman leader, activist and long time defender of women's rights in Africa.

First, I would like to acknowledge the efforts being made within the European Union to promote equal opportunities for women and men, especially through adoption of policies and legal frameworks necessary for promoting gender equality and addressing sex discrimination. The adoption of the Women's Charter to guide regional and country specific actions, and the declaration of the Year 2007 as a year for equal opportunities for all, are two steps in the right direction. We are indebted to the Capital Region of Belgium, the Metropolis Women International Network and other partners who have contributed in numerous ways towards organising this meeting.

This Forum is taking place at a time when there are numerous economic, political, social, demographic and environmental challenges facing the world. Climate change, poverty, terrorism, conflicts and insecurity, human mobility, and trafficking in persons, especially women and children, are critical areas, which affects most of us.

The Forum marks a milestone in raising the profile of gender equality and women's empowerment in cities, where most of the above ills take place. It is a clear indication of the importance attached to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Habitat Agenda and other relevant internationally agreed commitments in favour of women.

The topic is "Dynamic cities need women". This statement is a truism because women are part and parcel of city life. The issue however is lack of recognition of the role that women have played and can play to make city life more inclusive and liveable. Unless women are given their due recognition in terms of the positive contribution they can make and must make to the design, planning, governance and management of cities, provision of basic services and infrastructure, promotion of local economic development and safety and security, cities will not be dynamic but will face social and economic decay and long-term decline.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

The 21st Century is an Urban Millennium. The year 2007 marked the global shift in urban population, with half of humanity living in cities and towns. Every year, 70 million people join the ranks of urbanites. To-date 1 billion people are living in slums and informal settlements around the world, and this population is set to double by 2030, if no remedial action is taken immediately. Africa and South East Asia host the majority of slum dwellers. It is also in these two continents that the rate of urban growth is highest, almost 4.5 per cent.

About half of the global population is under the age of 24. Approximately, 1.2 billion people on the planet are younger than 15. While the overall proportion of children and young people in the global population is shrinking as fertility rates decline, in absolute numbers, there are more young people today than ever before. Young people aged 15-24 constitute 85 per cent of the world's working-age youth, and they live in the developing world ~ primarily in Southern Asia and Africa. The least-developed countries are younger than the rest of the world. In 2005, the global median age was 28 years, but in 10 least-developed African countries, the median age was 16 or younger.

Given this reality, there is need for evidence-based and age-sensitive information on the situation of women and girls to support advocacy and monitoring gender equality and the advancement of women in cities. Women are not a homogeneous group, so we also need data to highlight urban inequities, particularly the difference between women in the rich and poor parts of cities, and in the rural areas. This is necessary in order to demystify the belief that all is well in cities irrespective of the intra city differentials. And also for that matter inequalities between women as a

result of income and social class must also be exposed in order to promote women's solidarity and generate the political will to empower the urban poor across gender lines.

Young women and men residing in the poor parts of the city living in slums and informal settlements, for example, are more likely to have a child, be married or head a household at an early age than their counterparts living in the rich areas of the city. Girls and young women living in poverty in cities face deeper challenges than their male counterparts in gaining the knowledge and skills they need to live healthy and productive lives.

At the moment there is a dearth of information on the situation of women in cities in general and on gender and local governance in particular. Gender and local governance is a neglected area in the gender and development discourse. This results in a distortion of reality and limited responses to the range of problems posed by rapid urbanisation at the decentralisation level, especially in the developing world. Efforts to address the equal participation of women and men in decision-making have tended to focus more on women in leadership positions and political decision-making at the national level than at the local level. However, the systematic tracking of both numerical and substantive representation of women in decision-making at city and local level is necessary for promoting women in dynamic cities. Also household budget surveys at city level would help to shed more light on the situation facing women-headed households in cities with different income situations.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

Cities are drivers of climate change. They are heat islands because of their concrete asphalt and population masses. They generate 80 per cent of the greenhouse gases responsible for global warming. 75 per cent of global energy consumption takes place in cities, mainly through burning fossil fuels for urban transport as well as energy use in buildings and various appliances used for human survival in cities. Urban transport is the planet's fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions, rising in some cases exponentially in many cities in developing countries. The most important ecological result of these effects is higher temperature and concentration of greenhouse gases and the damage they do to human health and human activities.

Cities are not only the cause of the problem, they are also part of the solution for addressing climate change. The overall impact of this ecological catastrophe can be reduced by revising land use plans, transport modalities and building designs and retrofitting, while at the same time regulating carbon trading mechanisms and instruments. There are unique opportunities to complement global efforts in emissions control with local efforts and to improve the productivity of cities and the quality of life through reducing traffic congestion, improving air and water quality and generally reducing the ecological impact. Cities and local authorities in some countries hold tremendous power, leverage and resources to influence both the causes of climate change and the solution to advance climate protection through mitigation and adaptation.

It follows that women, young people and children should be actively involved in the climate change debate, and their perspectives should inform policy, programme design and implementation at the local level. Women's local knowledge and experience of the environment should be tapped in designing climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Women and youth climate change networks should be strengthened in order to lobby and advocate for the women, youth and children's voices to be heard in any concerted action to address climate change, which is now high up on to the global and political agendas. In this regard, I hope the recommendations of this will become an important input at the Convention of the Parties (COP-13) to take place in Bali a few days from today. All evidence points out that the poor are most at risk from climate change. Since women and the children they support dominate the ranks of the urban poor and marginalized, they are key stakeholders at the Bali meeting. I urge you strongly to keep that meeting in mind as you continue with your discussions at this conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

This Forum is taking place at a time when the world over is observing the 16 days of activism in combating violence against women and upholding women's human rights. It is therefore fitting to discuss urban safety and security and to focus on crime and violence against women in the private and urban spheres. Women, youth, children, the poor and the elderly are most vulnerable to urban crime. Crime and the fear of crime curtail women's ability to exercise their freedom of choice to live and work in certain areas. It affects their mobility, security and full participation in urban life.

Women and girls have security concerns on and off the streets, in and around their homes and neighbourhoods and at the city level. The separation between private and public spheres, especially residential, commercial and recreational areas, further complicates women's safety in public spaces. The sites for water sources and public toilets, markets, health facilities and schools, bus and train stops are a challenge to women's safety and security. Yet these are essential services in the daily chores of women.

A key message in the UN-HABIT AT 2007 Global Report on Human Settlements, titled "Enhancing Urban Safety and Security in Cities, is that "Land-use planning is a particularly effective instrument that city authorities can employ to reduce disaster risk by regulating the expansion of human settlements and infrastructure." It would be useful to critically examine the use of planning and the role of local governments in promoting women's safety in cities.

Although town planning has its origins in improving the physical, social and health aspects of urban areas in order to promote the economic prosperity and well-being of communities, quite often town planning does not take into account the realities of men and women, boys and girls. Women have been raped, assaulted, mugged, robbed and abused in subways, at dark corners of buildings, in parks and car parking lots, in public toilets and as they have left bus stops and walked towards their homes.

Urban planning policies, regulations and guidelines have been found to be gender blind. So bringing a gender perspective into urban planning theory and practice is highly recommended. This requires constructive engagement with a range of habitat professionals including architects, urban planners, transport planners, city engineers and the police. The training of urban planners and architects could be enriched by introducing a gender perspective and women's safety audits in the curriculum. Furthermore, urban planners and architects working with local authorities and other organisations involved in planning our cities and towns could benefit from training in gender analysis and the use of gender-sensitive planning tools and guidelines. As for the police, it is high time that gender sensitization became a compulsory course in their training programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

We cannot discuss women in cities without examining issues related to security of tenure, land, housing and inheritance rights for women. A number of women continue to remain in abusive relationships for lack of a place of their own they call home. It is women and children who are worst affected during forced evictions. Many women are landless and homeless sleeping rough on streets because they cannot own land and inherit property as a result of gender discrimination and the application of customary laws and traditional practices. Moreover, not every woman has the economic means to purchase their own land and property, and getting a mortgage is not easy for many women.

A UN-HABITAT urban inequities survey carried out in several cities in Africa revealed that the majority of homeless women in Lagos and Addis Ababa, for example, were widows and divorced women. Another UN-HABITAT rental study also revealed that some single women are discriminated against by landlords for fear of the women's inability to pay rents. Women have been denied credit facilities for lack of a fixed address, or collateral, which curtails their economic advancement.

However, while much attention has been paid to the development of gender responsive land policies, and law reform, less attention has been given to housing policy and law, land administration and management, land use and planning, land taxation, and land registration, and how these impact on the continuum of women's rights to land, housing and security of tenure. This is partly so because there are no women champions in these professions. Secondly, gender experts have not engaged enough with these specialised professions. The few women surveyors, architects and land taxation specialists are working in isolation and might not necessarily be gender-sensitive themselves. While there are women judges associations for example promoting women's rights in the judiciary, there are no women surveyors and women and land professional associations that I am aware of. These need to be encouraged.

In matters of access to land and property there is also the unresolved issue of lack of political will to review the laws of succession, most of which continue to discriminate against women. In many customary and faith-based tenure systems women either do not have any rights to own land and property in their matrimonial homes or have fewer rights than men in natal homes. As a result, in many communities in Africa, the only sure way for women to acquire land and become independent farmers is to buy it. This has in turn forced women to go into urban areas for prostitution to be able to raise money before they can return to their villages to buy land and become decent farmers. With the onset of HIV/AIDS, this has put women at greater risk than ever before. I call upon this august gathering to discuss this issue and see ways to assist women to avoid getting engaged in risky sexual practices and occupations as an economic survival strategy. While the rights and safety of sexual workers need to be protected, and health information be provided to them as a matter of urgency and top priority, society must also address the underlying and fundamental causes of the problem. Women's economic empowerment including education and skills training is the ultimate answer.

In other words, the question that should be addressed by this Forum is how to improve security of tenure and increase women's access to and ownership of land and housing in real terms? This means going beyond policy formulation and law reform to assisting women to land titles and houses either individually or in housing cooperatives by improving access to institutional credit that is always cheaper.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

A response to the above question brings us to a discussion on financing gender equality in cities and towns. How much money is allocated to support gender equality and women's rights work at the community, city and decentralisation levels by both central and local governments, utility companies, the private sector, civil society and other service providers, as well as the donor community? What are the expenditure patterns on women's empowerment programmes? This information will enable all actors to establish the value attached to the gender equality programmes. It will also give an indication of the extent to which cities and local governments are actually striving to fulfil their government commitments towards the gender equality duty.

I believe that through sharing best practices you will also be able to capture the lessons learned from those cities and local authorities that have adopted gender budgeting as a tool to track public expenditure and revenue collection for the benefit of women.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

As part of the implementation of the UN-HABITAT gender policy and in fulfilment of commitments to gender equality within the UN System, UN-HABITAT is supporting a range of programmes in various regions of the world. Women Land Access Trusts (WLATs) have been designed to act as financial intermediary organisations between low income women's housing cooperatives and financial institutions, governments, local authorities and other actors, to access housing finance and to acquire land and housing. The Global Land Tool Network is developing pro-poor and gender responsive land tools for use by governments, local authorities, NGOs, civil society, grassroots organisations and men and women in their efforts to address issues of land, housing and property administration. I understand some of the WLATs we are supporting, including one from Tanzania and Kenya, are participating in this meeting. They should be able to share with you the experience so far on the intricacies involved in empowering low income urban women to access mortgage finance. Without a financial intermediary, the amount of time involved of itself excludes an average woman from participating. As regards WLATs, I invite our host, Belgium, and those of you representing donor governments and agencies also to see how you can assist this new innovative mechanism to mobilize women to get land and housing, instead of just talking about it.

Awards and competition for women-friendly cities and local governments are taking place in Asia, Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean regions to encourage local governments and other partners, communities and individuals to do more for women. The recently launched strategy on safety and security in cities emphasises planning, governance and the use of women safety audits to promote women's safety in cities. UN-HABITAT supports local to local dialogues to enhance women's engagement with city and local authorities in addressing community problems and to empower women in decision-making.

Efforts are being made to mainstream gender into the activities of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, especially in relation to the Water for African and Asian Cities Programmes, as well as the Lake Victoria water and sanitation initiative. A range of resource materials will soon be published including a gender equality and equity sourcebook for training local governments, and practitioner's guides on post crisis reconstruction, post crisis governance, and land administration. A publication on best practices in gender and human settlements development is also being developed. The Medium Term Strategic and Institutional Plan, 2008-2013 addresses gender as a cross-cutting issue, and a Gender Equality Action Plan 2008-2013 will be developed in 2008 to strengthen gender mainstreaming in our normative and operational activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

As you deliberate on Dynamic Cities need Women you should consider strengthening partnerships through city-to-city cooperation involving women in the north and south, as well as south to south cooperation through peer exchanges and the use of ICTs. It is high time that critical issues of concern to women in cities were firmly placed on the agenda for the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the UN Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, especially issues such as security of tenure, land and adequate housing, decentralisation and local governance, and the delivery of basic services to the urban poor.

It is my hope that the deliberations at this Forum will lead to an invigorated women's constituency to continue to fight for women's rights in cities at the global, regional, national, city and local level.

I hope to meet you in Bali at the COP-13 negotiations that I referred to earlier. I would also like to end by inviting you all to attend the Fourth Session of the World Urban Forum in Nanjing, China in October 2008 to raise your voice and bring your knowledge to a wider urban audience on the subject. As Executive Director of UN-HABITAT I am the convener of the WUF on behalf of the General Assembly. I shall be submitting a report on the WUF outcome to the Governing Council of UN -HABITAT that will meet in Nairobi in April, 2009 and onward to ECOSOC and the GA. This way, the important recommendations you will make will be mainstreamed to higher decision making bodies of the international community. From that perspective this is a strategic meeting. I am pleased to have been able to participate and am grateful for your invitation.

I wish you very successful deliberations and I thank you all for your kind attention. ■





## WORKSHOP SUMMARY



**A** Regional workshop on “Social and demographic challenges”

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**B** Global workshop on “Economic challenges”

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**C** Global workshop on “Urban environment challenges”

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**D** Global workshop on “Access to services”

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**E** Mayor’s Panel

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## Regional workshop on “Social and demographic challenges”

Monday 3 December 2007, 14:00 – 16:30

## A1 Ageing, immigration and social cohesion (Europe and North America)



Chairperson **Ms. Michèle SABBAN**

*Vice-Chairperson of the Ile-de-France Regional Council in charge of personnel, general administration and public contracts; Vice-Chairperson of the Socialist International Women; First Vice-Chairperson of the Assembly of European Regions*

### **Social and economic challenges of ageing populations and taking account of the gender dimension in immigration policies**

A report by the United Nations has estimated that at international level the urban population will increase by more than 50% within the coming years. Inhabitants of metropolises will soon make up 20% of the world's population and 40% of the urban population at international level. The social and demographic challenges for Europe and North America will be considerable and we know that our societies are already in a state of transformation and present significant social challenges.

The matter of immigration is central to this context. The latest report by the United Nations has noted that half of migrants today are women. In fact, we need to consolidate our efforts regarding equality and compliance with the commitments made at the Millennium Summit by our countries in order to proceed in the direction of progress and development. Furthermore, we must take into account the analysis made by the International Organisation for Migration, which stipulates that the most significant populations with regard to international migrants are in Europe, North America and Asia.

In this context, we know that, at the economic level, migrants take jobs which are perceived to be less desirable by the indigenous inhabitants of the host countries but we also know that all reports agree that they also stimulate demand, globally improve economic results in these countries and contribute to funding pension schemes in countries with an ageing population. Therefore, we can say that this favours social cohesion and combats demographic decline in such a way as to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Social equilibrium and social cohesion have to be maintained in the light of the risks of imbalances caused by the problems of ageing in its economic and societal context.

These matters are taken very seriously at present by numerous experts and politicians with regard to the problems of ageing populations and the fall in the birth rate at the demographic level.

The various reports highlight the necessity of taking account of ageing populations in order to integrate all social and economic parameters into government policies.

In this context, immigration may be a factor of economic dynamics by including migrants in future demographic forecasts.

Since we know that in the two cases of ageing and immigration it will be up to the inhabitants of cities to ensure the progress of humanity and to maintain social cohesion in cities and major metropolises, the great economic, social and political developments, which have determined progress throughout the world and in our societies, have originated in the metropolises of the North.

You can also give us your expert opinion on these demographic challenges by taking account of the gender dimension which is of necessity a development factor and a symbol of the degree of political maturity of our societies and also give us examples of good practice to enable us to better understand by means of your expertise, Ladies, very important subjects such as ageing, immigration and social cohesion within the gender dimension.

Our round table conference with experts and our speakers will enlighten us on the social challenges, the economic challenges due to ageing populations and the inclusion of the gender dimension in immigration policies.

We can start by asking ourselves the following questions :

- ‘Can immigration be an answer to the challenge of ageing populations?’
- ‘In the context of a globalised economy, can economic immigration be a policy to promote integration and social cohesion?’ ■

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Expert **Ms. Karine HENROTTE FORSBERG**

*Senior Advisor on Women's Issues (Sweden)*

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### ***The European situation of Women and Gender Equality***

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In respect of the European situation of women and gender equality, considerable progress has been made since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, though much remains to be done. Three areas need to be seriously addressed – namely the economic sphere, dealing with violence against women, and women in decision-making.

Starting with **the economic sphere**, Europe is undergoing an important demographic change with declining birth rates and an ageing population. At the same time, many European countries suffer from slow economic growth, the creation of fewer jobs and a persistent gender gap which persists. To counter the shrinking working population, which remains a major challenge in Europe, increasing female labour-force participation and achieving gender equality are fundamental. European heads of states and governments have committed themselves to the Lisbon Strategy to achieve the participation of 60% of women in the labour market by 2010. Women should also receive equal pay for work of equal value and equal pensions. Today, European women face discrimination with an average wage gap of 15%. Women also face discrimination in hiring and job advancement which keep many at low wage levels. There has been a growing feminisation of poverty even in richer countries due to more divorce and inequitable pension systems. In Europe today, it is usually men who occupy high government financial positions where laws that impact women are made. It is important that we achieve a fair distribution of means between women and men by introducing gender budgeting based on good-quality sex-disaggregated statistics. This is vital in order to target resources in an efficient way. By identifying the differences between men and women it provides a basis for gender-sensitive planning.

The second area of lack of progress has been in dealing with **violence against women**. One in every five European women is regularly maltreated and 95% of such violence takes place in the home. Gender violence is the main cause of death for women between 15 and 45 years of age throughout the world (WHO). The Council of Europe is at present carrying out an awareness-raising campaign until 2008 on Violence against Women in all of its 47 member states. Particular attention needs to be given to targeted groups like migrant women, disabled and Roma women, elderly but also very young women, not forgetting women in rural areas. The Council of Europe has also led the way in combating trafficking in human beings by setting up a Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings which has recently come into force. The lack of security measures in cities is the cause of growing violence towards women in the streets or in car parks and also while using public transport. An increasing problem is the violence towards the elderly,

whether in their homes or in institutions. Due to longer life expectancy, the majority of the elderly are women who are totally dependent on the minimum benefits paid by the social security system. They are faced with hardships like low incomes, substandard housing and lack of access to information and communication technologies – a state of affairs that contributes to a degree of social exclusion that is further accentuated by their less well remunerated jobs, interruptions in their careers or failure to pay into a pension system. It should be noted that it is women who continue to assume the responsibilities in caring for their families or partners and that this work goes unpaid. Migrant women are increasingly employed as domestic workers in order to overcome the lack of care services in Europe. They are often under-paid and undocumented which makes them vulnerable to abuse. Women elderly migrants are particularly exposed to poverty and may face triple discrimination. Many do not qualify for pensions and rely exclusively on family support. Transfer of pension and social security rights is vital to elderly migrants who would like to return to their countries of origin.

Concrete changes are also needed in **decision-making**. Women's under-representation in the key jobs undermines the democratic values in society. As women have traditionally been seen as belonging to the private sphere (home and family), women have been excluded from the decision-making process and continue to find it hard to enter the public sphere. Progress has been made in this area but stereotyping in, for instance, the media causes much harm. Stereotypes, however, in children's books and schoolbooks have now begun to be eliminated in many countries. A better balance is needed: for men to have access to the private sphere (children, family matters) and for women to be able to hold office and be present in the public sphere. The reconciliation of family and work obligations demands the development of supporting structures and services. In 2002, European Member States set up the Barcelona target to install structures by 2010 for 90% of children from 3 years of age up till the schooling age and for 33% of children younger than 3. Supporting structures are essential to encourage young women to pursue more ambitious careers and senior positions in research. ■



Speaker **Ms. Francine SENÉCAL**

*Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal (Canada);  
Co-President of the Metropolis Women International Network*

### **The draft policy for gender equality of the City of Montreal**

Montreal is one of the cities in the world where the status of women is best. The Montreal Summit took place in 2002 when the City committed itself to the setting-up of a *Conseil des Montréalaises* ('Montreal Women's Council') and to the development of a policy of gender equality. The symposium, *Montréal, une ville à la mesure des femmes* ('Montreal, a city for women'), was held in 2005 and enabled the launching of the five strands of this draft equality policy.

#### **Strand 1 : Governance**

The City of Montreal is a major employer in the metropolitan area. Even if women are well represented at all levels of power, additional initiatives need to be agreed in order to achieve a level of representation equal to the social and demographic weight of Montreal women. The objectives are to achieve parity of men and women within government departments by the end of a maximum period of ten years and to do away with any form of discrimination.

#### **Strand 2 : The City as an employer**

Montreal is one of the largest public sector employers in Quebec. For the last 12 years, 48% of the people employed by the City have been women. In 2004 the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal adopted an *Equal Employment Opportunities Programme* which aims to implement measures to promote the recruitment of women, visible and ethnic minorities and also indigenous and disabled people. The objectives are to regulate equal pay, to apply the *Equal Employment Opportunities Programme* and to innovate, particularly in order to promote the advancement of women executives and to improve work-family conciliation measures.

#### **Strand 3 : Services for female citizens**

The realities experienced by the female citizens of Montreal differ greatly from those of the male citizens of Montreal and municipal services are not in proportion to their needs. The assessment of the needs and services offered to female citizens is included in the analysis differentiated according to the sexes. Contrary to a persistent presumption, an offer of service cannot be neutral. The objective is to improve the entire range of services provided by the City in order to respond better to women's needs.

#### **Strand 4 : Economic development**

The actual participation of women in the economic development of Montreal is little known. Women play a predominant role in the temporary employment sectors. At university level, women currently make up 70% of the staff but are still little represented in the sectors of the new economy. The objective is to support the development of female Montreal entrepreneurs, to support the participation of women in the development of know-how and economic strategies in Montreal and to increase the presence of women within business organisations.

#### **Strand 5 : International development**

The City is already assuming international leadership with regard to questions relating to the place of women in local and metropolitan governance. Montreal is actively in favour of improving the representation of women in local government and in decision-making processes.

Montreal has taken a stance in favour of the *Millennium Development Goals* of the United Nations, of which several directly affect women. The goal is that male and female elected representatives and officials demonstrate the importance of gender equality as reflected in the *Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities* in all international representation activities of the City.

#### **Conclusion**

In 2008, the Municipal Council adopted the gender equality policy of the City of Montreal and drew up an action plan to cover the next 3 to 10 years. The remit of the chief executive officer is to make an annual assessment and to integrate this into the City's annual report. The remit of the *Conseil des Montréalaises* will be to monitor this, to produce an annual statement on the progress of the work and to submit it to the City Council. The support of Montreal men and women for the principles of equality is an historical achievement which has been gaining in strength for more than 30 years. The equal participation of female Montreal citizens is a powerful lever for progress and development. ■



Speaker **Ms. Emine BOZKURT**

*Member of the European Parliament since 2005*

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### **Problems and opportunities of young women with a migrant background in European Cities**

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Inequality of opportunities, lack of role models and double discrimination as both women and migrants are obstacles for girls in Europe. Opportunities, because slowly but surely Europe is waking up to the fact that it needs these women. The Lisbon Strategy says we need them in order to be more productive and competitive as a society. The European Commission says we need them in order to have better political representation in diverse institutions. I say we need them because there is strength in diversity.

It starts when a girl wants to go to school in Amsterdam. All parents and future parents in Amsterdam know that the waiting lists for good schools are horrendous. You have to register children as soon as they are born. Often migrant families don't know about this. Lack of information, lack of a network with other parents who *do* know about this and sometimes a lack of knowledge of the language prevents many parents from learning about this. That is why many children with a migrant background in the big cities end up in schools of lesser quality. Fortunately, Amsterdam will now make it impossible to register children in primary schools before they are two or three years old. But this example also shows us that besides discrimination, women, and women with a migrant background especially, are often not part of the important networks in society.

Migrant women must get more organised in their own networks but must also be taken up by existing networks. In The Netherlands I am doing this as Chairwoman of the Multi-Ethnic Women's Network of the Social Democratic Party. There are also private initiatives.

There are still too few women with a migrant background visible in politics, the media and as business leaders. But this starts in school. Most teachers are white, middle-aged men. No wonder that they will not be surprised later in life to see mostly white, middle-aged men in the European Parliament. If we are to have more women and especially more women with a migrant background in the trade unions, in political functions and as religious leaders than I think we should start by having more women teachers with a bi- or multicultural background at the front of the classroom. This will also help the other children in the classroom get to know more about different cultures and that, in turn, could prevent discrimination later in life.

Unfortunately, discrimination in the labour market is still a problem in European cities. There are, of course, many ways of combating discrimination. Education, quotas, building networks are but a few of them. To tackle discrimination in the labour market, all groups who are discriminated against – women, migrants, gays and old and young people – should work together. Policy should take into account the specific

problems of each group, but should also not be limited to trying to solve the problems of only one group. Secondly, the regional, national and European levels should work together more efficiently.

I am happy to announce that the European Commission will be launching a legislative proposal in 2008 to also tackle discrimination beyond the labour market. In my opinion, if discrimination is not allowed in the labour market it should not be allowed in any sector of society. I will be involved in the legislative process for this proposal and will do my best to make sure it will be to the benefit of all!

We all know it is difficult to combine working and private life, not only for women with a migrant background but for all women. The European Commission and European Parliament both stated their goals to improve the balance between working and private life for women, both in the European Gender Roadmap and various reports on the issue. If we really want women with children to take part in the labour market and have a fulfilling private life, we need to create better and more affordable childcare, we need to stop punishing them career-wise and we need to get men to accept their share of the responsibilities as well. It is a matter of negotiations between both partners, but policy-makers can make sure both parents have an equal position when it comes to these negotiations. By making sure there is sufficient paternity leave for instance. We should make it *possible* for both parents to take care of their child or children, we can never force them to. ■

## Debate and conclusions

### DEBATE

In Europe, **elderly women** are particularly affected by poverty as the cost of health care has increased. Improving the lives of ageing women must become a priority (see Strategy and action plan currently being drawn up in Quebec, debate on pensions in France).

If the content of the speeches has been centred on Europe, the specific topics have obvious links with the problem of migrant flows and the development of integration policies. In fact, resolving the problems linked to ageing populations in Europe involves recognising the positive impact of **immigration**: migrant women are necessary in the job market.

However, **racism** makes it harder for them to integrate and is experienced, moreover, more acutely by women, young or older, who have trouble finding work (and/or housing), even if they are graduates. Therefore, it is necessary to support these women to help them to integrate by taking account of cultural elements, facilitating the legal process, promoting successful examples of integration, encouraging them to join indigenous women's networks, developing childcare for small children, etc. These policies must be applicable at local level, which requires co-operation between different power and decision-making levels (see diversity plans in Brussels, field work by multicultural associations).

However, it is not always easy to penetrate strange environments and to find good communication channels. The **Canadian Inclusive Immigration Policy** facilitates finding a job, housing, health care, cultural mediation, etc. (Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities). Women who are in a position of power should contribute to the development of **mentoring and networking** in order to share their experiences (to explain how they managed, the obstacles they overcame, etc.) and to respond to the obligation to remember. In some sectors, there are few women able to stand as examples. Therefore, it is also necessary to make young men aware by showing them what they have to gain (e.g. : by taking part in the education of their children and watching them grow). Metropolis can contribute international networking to support women who are looking to access economic means in their country of origin.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

- a lot of progress has already been made ;
- the theme of this workshop is the theme of a lot of conferences and studies nowadays

#### Problems

- elderly women are often victims of poverty ;
- migration plays an important role (positive and negative) which has not always been understood ;
- the integration of immigrants is complicated by racism ;
- a situation of violence makes women even more vulnerable ;

#### Recommendations

- particular attention must be paid to the living conditions of elderly women ;
- women must develop networking ;
- we must see the positive aspects of immigration ;
- a better balance is needed between women and men in the private and public sphere. The two spheres belong to both of them.
- Migrants should be better informed about working, going to school, living in Western societies. ■

## A2 Women in the Arab world



Chairperson **Ms. Hiam KALIMAT TUGUZ**  
 Member of the Greater Amman Municipality Council (Jordan)

### *The situation in the Arab World and in Jordan*

Arab Women are affected negatively by the international and regional conditions caused by war, armed domestic conflicts and occupation such as in Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon and Somalia. This creates a great challenge for women and children especially.

It is necessary to treat women as an essential element for the enhancement of Arab Societies. Their enhancement is an essential requirement for the renaissance of the Arab Societies. International monitoring indicators still put Arab countries at the lowest level in relation to women's contribution to the workforce. Female workers do not exceed 33% and women are the poorest segment of the population.

Despite the development of health services, pregnant women in the least-developed countries still suffer high rates of morbidity and mortality and, despite the notable achievements of women and girls in education, they still lack suitable opportunities to acquire knowledge and involvement in public life as compared to men.

Most Arab countries have women's ministries, which enables women to be part of the decision-making process, but not equally with men.

The Arab Human Development Report of the United Nations mentions three main obstacles for women :

- lack of freedom and good governance in the region
- lack of knowledge
- lack of women's empowerment

There is a deep relationship between equality and freedom in the Arab World. The assurance of female citizenship is an essential requirement for human development. In this regard, there are some controversial issues, imposing foreign agendas for the enhancement of the position of women being one of them. There is a belief that reform of the position of women should come from within the societies and not from outside. Despite the achievements of women in formal economic activities during the last three years, we still witness low participation by women because of male domination, discrimination, lack of opportunities, high rates of fertility and lack of supporting activities.

Despite the high rates of involvement of women in education and their achievements in some countries being even better than men, the illiteracy rates remain high. About 70 million Arab women cannot read or write. Jordan is the country with the lowest illiteracy rates. Women also still receive lower salaries for the same work and the unemployment rates among women are higher in some countries. In Jordan it is twice the rate for men and in Egypt it is four times higher. People continue to believe that men and not women are the bread-winners.

Laws are still the main obstacle to equality between men and women. Women's participation in elected parliaments or local councils is less than 10% in the Arab World, which raises the necessity of the adjustment and enforcement of laws. In Jordan there is a quota of 20% among the municipality councils and if this quota cannot be achieved with elected women, the remainder are appointed. In the month of November 2007, 200 women were elected to the municipality councils. Only 6 women sit in the Jordanian Parliament, as opposed to 110 men ; in the Upper House another 6 women have a seat and the Prime Minister's Cabinet comprises 3 female ministers.

One of the main obstacles in family law is the fact that traditional culture is hard on women, believes in their family and motherhood roles and expresses their lower status. It is the responsibility of societies to provide a full citizenship for women that is able to protect their rights, their laws and their physical and psychological integrity. ■

Speaker **Ms. Nawal EL SAADAWI***Novelist and writer (Egypt)*


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### ***Dynamic cities need women and democracy***

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Problems in countries are connected to global, local and family politics. There is no separation – whatsoever – between global and local politics, for which reason the term 'glocal' politics is used in English. In the same way, social and demographic, political and economic challenges and problems cannot be separated.

Nawal El Saadawi had to go to prison, not only because she criticizes female or male circumcision, but because there is a connection between the body, the mind, the spirit and society (political, economic and social problems at the global and local level). The human being must be seen as a whole.

The conception of social problems has to be broadened to political, economic, sexual, religious problems. Religion is a political ideology that cannot be separated from politics. We cannot separate sexuality from politics, from religion. That is why women's problems must be understood in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary way. The oppression of women cannot be understood without connecting everything: medicine to health, to poverty, to fear, to malnourishment, to exhaustion, fear to political or religious authority, psychological to physical problems.

In that way there is a connection between female circumcision, male circumcision and neo-colonial, imperialist, capitalist, post-modern and global society headed by George Bush. There is a relationship between military power, nuclear power, double standards, patriarchal and male domination in societies and the act of circumcision.

When a country is invaded by a foreign power, you can and have to resist. Resistance is one of the basic human rights, not terrorism. Furthermore, women's resistance against the patriarchy, the oppression by the father, the husband, religion or state law is a basic human right.

The fundamentalist religious movement is universal. There is, in the US, a growing geo-Christian movement that is oppressing women in the same way as the Islamic and Jewish fundamentalist movements. Fundamentalist movements are the other face of post-modern neo-colonial powers who need God to justify injustices. All wars in human history were for economic reasons (land, water, rivers, oil, slaves,...) disguised by reasons of religion, spiritual reasons, civilization, humanity or democracy.

The three monotheist religions are very similar and often full of contradictions. They are similar when it comes to the inferiority and oppression of women, monogamy for women and more sexual freedom for men. The handing-on of the father's name and the bearing of the husband's name. The mother's name must also be given to a child and it must have the same honour as the father's name, since if the name of the mother has no honour, her children are illegitimate. According to Egyptian state law and the sharia, a child who is not carrying the name of the father is illegitimate, stigmatized and with no human rights.

This problem is universal because the patriarchal system and the patriarchal values of monogamy and virginity for women are universal. All religions are undemocratic – because they are based on the complete obedience of God, who cannot be questioned – and in that way can be called dictatorships.

All the fundamentalist movements are a product of the neo-colonial, international capitalist system now. The revival of religions is a backward step to the oppression of the poor, of women, of blacks,... and that is why poverty and unemployment is increasing all over the world because of the economic genocide that often accompanies military genocide or that appears alone.

The veil is very visible and therefore seen by a lot of people as the proof of oppression. There are, however, many types of veil. One of them is the invisible veil of the mind. There is also the post-modern veil of women who think they are liberated according to post-modern fashion and profess nakedness. Nakedness and covering up are two faces of the same coin of oppression. The fashion of nakedness, of plastic surgery and make-up is oppression of women, a false liberation. Also the veiled woman is a slave because she thinks that she must hide her body from men. Men on the other hand are not veiled and not naked. Women must not just be seen as bodies, as sex objects. They must become proud of their minds.

Accordingly, George Bush and Bin Laden are twins, like nakedness and veiling. Bin Laden, Al Qaeda and the Taliban were encouraged and financed by the US Government to fight in Afghanistan in the eighties against the Soviet Union and Communism. At the collapse of the Soviet Union, those young people went to their countries to put creative people on the death list because they were trained by the neo-colonial, capitalist powers to be fanatic and to kill. ■



Speaker **Ms. Arwa BALKER**

*Director of the Arab Regional Office for the Metropolis Women International Network (Amman, Jordan)*

### ***Involvement of Women in Local Authorities***

Gender equality in all policies and programmes is an important tool for the advancement of women and the emphasis on active participation in all spheres of life. Millennium Development Goals should be fought for our cities with pro-poor policies and global commitments.

It is important to recognize, support and monitor the role of municipalities and local authorities in promoting gender equality and the advancement of women. National strategies to promote gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes should also target municipal planning and development. Increasing women's participation in decision-making at the local level, capacity building, and improving the knowledge and skills of local municipal officials are essential for promoting inclusiveness and transparency at the local level. The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) INITIATIVE started its own Arab Women Network for Metropolis in 2005 to ensure these steps following the introduction of a new policy of implementing a 20% quota system for women in the municipalities.

Urbanization in Jordan continues rapidly for a number of economic, social and political reasons, and political conflicts and the hardships of the Palestinian and Iraqi people tend to accelerate migration to Jordanian cities, especially Amman. Unfortunately, little is done to promote adequate planning and management systems.

In addition, gender equality and women's empowerment were facing obstacles due to the persisting conservative trends in the society and the wave of growing fundamentalism that hit women's progress hard. In 2007, Jordan finally ratified the CEDAW Treaty, which encouraged civil society and women to appeal for the abandonment of the reservations adopted in 1992 and for the Protocol of the Convention to be signed.

235 women members of Municipal Councils are now at work. Among the other achievements we can mention is the fact that women are networking in local councils (in Jordan and in the Arab countries), in the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) council, with women employees from all levels and with NGO's in Jordan. Networking raises both men's and women's awareness of women's rights, gender equality and the importance of public participation. Programmes are conducted for women employees in GAM, to raise awareness of women's rights and to develop their capacities for effective participation in local management and decision-making. A databank for women in local councils and the implementation of programmes and seminars were an answer to their needs.

Some recommendations can be formulated :

1. Marking indicators for gender equality are necessary in order to achieve equal rights for women. The impact of globalization and liberalization on working women must be monitored.
2. Affirmative actions are needed to increase the representation of women in all fields and at all levels with a view to removal of the issues that hinder the achievement of justice for women.
3. Awareness of women's rights to equality must be raised and the intention to remove the issues that hinder the achievement of justice for women is necessary.
4. Women must benefit equally from all development efforts, and the integration of topics relating to women in every sector of national development plans must be ensured.
5. Within GAM and Amman City, programmes must be developed to encourage and facilitate the process of equality between men and women in shouldering family responsibilities.
6. Jordan and the Arab countries need to focus on strengthening opportunities for post-primary education for girls, guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights, investing in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens, guaranteeing women's property and inheritance rights and women's access to land in both rural and urban areas, reducing gender inequality in employment, increasing women's representation in political bodies, combating violence against women, and improving data and indicators for monitoring progress.

For all this, it is very important also to involve men and to keep in mind the need for a good relationship with the media in order to facilitate networking with other organisations. ■

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## Debate and conclusions

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### What do we mean by femininity ?

Femininity is our own personality ; it is something that is felt. Femininity is not having make-up, putting on high heels, but femininity is faith. Femininity is a woman who has a brain. Women are not aware enough of the beauty of their minds.

### What would happen to the world if we disobeyed ?

People believe that religion is a guideline, without religion it would be chaos. Creativity does not mean chaos ; it means discipline and organization. Creativity destroys bad laws and creates better laws.

### How are women related to dynamic cities and demographic changes ?

Can we have real DYNAMISM in countries where there is no democracy, freedom of movement, of thinking, of writing and producing their own agriculture ? How can a person without a job and food be dynamic ? The word "dynamic" has no meaning. According to Nawal El Saadawi, we need norms and laws based on justice and equality and not on power. How can there be peace without justice in the world ? How can there be peace if a husband takes his wife's salary, goes to another woman, rapes his wife and beats her ? Family laws are based on male domination. One should be critical and not accept injustice. People need to create new laws and a new order. Mubarak's regime considers, for example, that Egypt is poor because women have too many children, but Nawal El Saadawi disagrees with what she considers a neo-colonial point of view. She considers that poverty will not be cured by fertility. The development programme in Egypt leads to the development of poverty ; it prevents Egypt from growing its own food under the so-called US Aid. Egypt cannot develop nuclear energy and have trade with African countries.

### Iraq's invasion by Bush is a terrorist act and the real reason is oil. Can we make the same link with Islamic terrorists ?

The Islamic terrorist Bin Laden who crashed planes into the WTC twin towers is using the media, which is part of power. The Islamic fundamentalist movement is a political movement that has nothing to do with religion. Bin Laden and the Jewish movement use the word of Islam and Judaism politically.

### How do you start to shift patriarchy to bring about a balance between women and men ? How do we challenge the imbalance ?

Nawal tells the story of her cousin, Zinabe El Saadawi, who was born in the same village as her. She was cut off from school at an early age and kept at home. She was married when she was 10 years old to a poor peasant man who beat her very badly. She stayed with him until he died. Ms. El Saadawi, on the other hand, has her own money and divorced two men because they wanted her to stay at home. The new generation is also born rebellious. Ms. El Saadawi believes in the power of the individual and the collective level to bring change. In order to do so, we need to unveil the mind and to organise. We are all dissidents ; we are all born to refuse injustice.

## CONCLUSIONS

### STRENGTHS

Women should become conscious of the "glocal" connection amongst women. The expression "glocal" means both the global and the local. Women face different problems at different political levels at the global, local and family level. Political willingness for a political change that concerns, among other things, taking measures with regard to positive action and quotas.

### DIFFICULTIES

The lack of amendments and implementation of laws. Women face educational and cultural obstacles. The mentality has to change. Women are oppressed because of fear. Arab society faces Americanization and Islamization.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Women should be encouraged to work collectively in order to change their lives. Laws should be based on justice, equality and equity. A critical mind frees people, especially women. Assure female citizenship as an essential requirement for human development. The increasing equality of women will lead to freedom. Freedom comes from a critical mind. ■

## A3 Status of African women (Sub-Saharan Africa)



Chairperson **Ms. Mame BOUSSO SAMB DIACK**

*Member of the National Assembly and Deputy Mayor of the City of Dakar (Senegal);  
Responsible of the Regional Antenna of Dakar of the Metropolis Women International Network*



Expert **Ms. Albertine TSHIBILONDI NGOYI**

*Coordinator for the Centre for African Studies and Intercultural Research – Belgium*

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### **Gender and the socio-legal situation of African women**

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To tackle the subject of gender and the socio-legal situation of African women, the talk will be illustrated by the case of Congolese women. The remarks are of a general nature but Africa is vast and there are differences between East and West.

How to improve the status of Congolese women? How to promote a synergy between Congolese men and women with regard to equality in order not to create a continent paralysed down one side? How to change mentalities?

#### **Gender in Africa**

The regional gender action plan is part of the action plan for the social development of the region and sub-regions. The plan coordinators are fully aware of the significance of gender. So, for example, the province of Africa has conducted a large number of analytical and operational studies on this subject. An entire series of strategic objectives must be implemented:

- To invest in the economic capacities and in the agricultural production of women;
- To strengthen women's access to health and education;
- To reduce the heavy time constraint to which women are subject;
- To support women more in order to avoid their under-representation in institutions at local and national level.

#### **The social aspect**

- In Africa, women are greatly appreciated in their reproductive and maternal roles. Women are productive in numerous important areas, but these are not sufficiently taken into account. It is still said, moreover, that women generate an informal economy, that they are invisible players from a social point of view.
- The situation of women's employment is a real problem. There are insufficient up-to-date statistics. The majority of women are either employed part-time, unemployed or looking after children.

There are not enough women in public service or in companies. This may be explained by cultural elements, but today African girls also want to participate in the construction of their countries. Too often they are still only assistants. Therefore, the challenge will be for girls to be able to improve their skills and knowledge. Women have to set up networks in order to liberate themselves and learn. An entire awareness campaign in order to make free time must be implemented.

#### **The socio-legal aspect**

Do laws permit married women to sign contracts and to work like men? The authorisation of husband to wife under the family code still applies to enable women to work and travel. There are still problems with the application of laws which give the same rights to men and women (e.g. laws on inheritance, access to land, etc.). Women are still not full citizens in all areas.

Men and women must be genuine partners in order to advance the cause of equality. Things have developed positively. For example, equality is enshrined in the Constitution, but in practice electoral law is sometimes biased. Mentalities still need to change.

The women's struggle is not to reverse roles but to restore the balance as partners. This must start right from the very beginning, education from an equal perspective is important from a very young age. ■



Speaker **Ms. Salimata KOUYATÉ**  
Councillor for the City of Bamako (Mali)

### *The situation of women in Mali*

Malian women make up 51.2% of the population and constitute a significant political and economic profile. The African platform for action, defined by an increased participation of women in the development process, is clearly specified in 12 priority areas :

#### **1. Women and poverty**

Women are affected most by poverty. The CSLP wishes to reduce poverty and that of women in particular by strengthening their economic capacities and by facilitating women's access to loans, land and production equipment.

#### **2. Women and education**

The rate of schooling for girls increased from 33.4% in 1995-1996 to 53.6 % in 2001-2002. The analysis highlights the low participation of women in literacy schemes, but significant progress has been made in this area.

#### **3. Women and health**

The health situation in Mali remains critical. Women are more at risk by reason of socio-cultural or economic factors.

#### **4. Violence towards women**

All women in Mali are victims of at least one of the following forms of violence : sexual, psychological, psycho-physiological, institutional, etc.

#### **5. Women and armed conflicts**

A policy with the objective of bringing the army closer to the people has been defined. The commitment of Malian women to the search for peace and conflict management is a reality.

#### **6. Women and the economy**

Mali has been engaged in structural reforms since 1982. Tax reform accompanied by integration of the informal sector into the tax system has been supported by the implementation of a Support Project for the Mobilisation of Interior Resources. As far as privatisation is concerned, men and women have been affected by job losses, and redundancy packages have been negotiated at every level.

#### **7. Women and decision-making**

There is a noticeable trend towards maintaining and strengthening the position of Malian women in everyday life and their occupation of certain posts previously reserved for men.

#### **8. Women and the media**

Only 4% of women compared with 11% of men have access at least once a week to the following three types of media : radio, television and newspapers. These rates are explained by the lack of resources and by illiteracy but also by the times of broadcasts linked to the extra work carried out by women. Women are present in the press and audiovisual media where they nevertheless occupy all spheres (reporting, editing etc.). Organisations have been created by women in the media with a view to their advancement.

#### **9. Women's fundamental rights**

The principle of non-discrimination is proclaimed in all basic documents. Despite the ban on sex discrimination, humiliating and degrading practices are found with regard to widowhood, for example, where the woman becomes part of the inheritance on the death of her husband, etc.

#### **10. Women and protection of the environment**

Priority has been given to women as part of the creation of a department responsible for the Environment, and women's civil society has been restructured with a view to implementing a technical coalition to manage the Environment.

#### **11. Girlhood**

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Dakar Platform, girlhood is between 0 and 18 years of age. Girls have the status of children and women. Therefore, they benefit from the rights of the CRC and the CEDAW ('Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women'), but they are victims of the same violations of rights as women.

#### **12. Women and the exploitation of prostitution**

International instruments and provisions of the Penal Code provide a legal framework to combat the trafficking of women and the exploitation of prostitution by others. But Mali does not escape from these evils.

#### **Conclusion**

The conditions of women have improved, but much remains to be done because Mali is a country where culture and customs severely impede the application of the contents of certain national and international documents approved by this country. ■



Speaker **Ms. Nomasomi MPOFU**

*Board Member of the Women's Resource Centre and Network (Zimbabwe)*

### ***Responding to Women's Human Rights : the Status of African Women in Southern Africa : Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network Responding to Women's Human Rights and Empowerment through Gender Budgeting***

Zimbabwe is a party to major regional and international human rights treaties and declarations or others that bind the country as of customary international law ; all aimed at creating an enabling environment for the attainment of equity between men and women. The National Gender Policy also prioritises women and the economy as one of the five critical areas, and the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for equality and non-discrimination, which is specifically mentioned in relation to land.

Despite the ratification of all these instruments a lot of disparities remain, particularly in the area of decision making, access to economic resources and sexual and reproductive health. This is due to the patriarchy that prevails in a lot of societies and a result of globalization and an increase of gender-based violence, and an exclusion of women from trade and decision making is seen in this critical area. At both local and national levels, women's participation is limited to voting, paying rates, taxes and levies in return frequently for poor quality or non-existent services as housing, water, education and health, to name but a few.

The economic empowerment of women calls therefore for the revisiting of resource targeting and ensuring that all sections of the population receive consideration in matters pertaining to the budget at both local and national levels. Boys and girls, indeed, benefit differently from budgets because their needs and socially determined roles are different.

The Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) is a gender and development NGO, founded in 1990, focusing on information gathering, analysis, processing and disseminating. The organization's strategic interventions aim at empowering women through policy advocacy, strengthening inter-organizational networking in particular, and promotion of the women's movement in general. ZWRCN's mission is to enable women to make informed decisions about selected aspects of their lives (political, economic, social, in both public and private spheres) and act accordingly.

ZWRCN also seeks, through its gender budget initiative started in 1999, to ensure that the concerns of women are taken into consideration in matters related to resource allocation. It concerns both the process that leads to the allocation of resources (pre- and post-budget analysis in consultative workshops with various stakeholders to try and make inputs from the women's perspective) and monitoring how the resources are utilized. The allies in this process were South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda – countries in which gender budget initiatives exist and the process only started to have a meaningful impact from the moment they began to engage directly with the government.

#### **Rationale for Gender Budgeting**

Zimbabwe is ranked at 109 on the global gender-related development index, which reflects the low status of women with respect to access, control and ownership of economic resources and positions in decision-making. However, women constitute 52% of the population and females head 39.9% of households.

The second Poverty Assessment Survey Study<sup>1</sup> has shown that female-headed households have the highest poverty prevalence and a lower human development index as compared to males. The national budget ignores the socially determined roles of women (unpaid and care economy, health and education sector) and men. The SADC region is suffering from perennial poverty, the colonial legacy and gender paradigms, with women being doubly disadvantaged (Mhloyi<sup>2</sup>).

Women's ability to access, own and control the means of production (land, livestock, markets, credit, modern technology) is severely limited by cultural practices and customary laws. (Lopi, <sup>3</sup>) This has devastating impacts on their economic independence and ability to move out of poverty and has consequences for women as social and political actors. According to Mutangadura<sup>4</sup> more than 60% of women in Southern Africa are dependent on land for their livelihoods. They provide 70% of the agricultural labour, but only own and control 20% of the land and have to leave control of the fruits of their work to men.

<sup>1</sup> Poverty Assessment Survey Study PASS 11

<sup>2</sup> Mhloyi Marvelous (Professor) Women's Economic Empowerment presentation at the SADC Consultative Conference on Gender and Development Gaborone December 2005 Reflecting and Re-strategising for Gender Based Regional Integration

<sup>3</sup> Lopi Barbara Women's Land Ownership Critical for Economic Independence Gender Links Commentaries 10 Sept 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Mutangadura Gladys Land in Africa : Market Asset or Secure Livelihood Women and Land Tenure Rights in Southern Africa : A human rights approach November 2004

ZWRCN has selected three priority national MDG goals i.e. the eradication of extreme poverty, the promotion of gender equality and combating HIV and AIDS. These goals are largely dependent on the appropriate allocation and targeting of resources. Gender sensitive budgeting would enable efficiency in expenditure allocation through effective targeting, particularly within the context of results-based budgeting.

Other issues like HIV and AIDS come into play and impact the role and responsibilities of women. Women are about 60% of those who are infected, but they are not receiving treatment proportionately, are not well informed, they experience unequal sexual relationships and are unable to negotiate for safer sex.

#### Challenges Experienced in Implementing the Programme

The ZWRCN has, since 2001, retroactively commissioned gender analyses of the national budget including sectorial analysis of the budgets of the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Child Welfare, Public Service Labour and Social Welfare and Youth Gender and Employment Creation. Mate<sup>5</sup> explains the need for gender analysis of the budget as "national budgets are indicators of state priorities and major preoccupations in national development e.g. defence and state security, social development. As budgets and their preparation are national responsibilities, the processes related to budgets can only be institutionalised if they are owned and driven by Government. The leadership of the Ministries of Finance and Economic Development is critical and has to be ensured at the outset otherwise delays will be encountered.

The ZWRCN discovered a mismatch between government budgets and the needs of the people, particularly women, and revised its strategy by advocating the inclusion of gender in the budget formulation process (guided by male technocrats and policy makers) because not only there is a need for information, but also for financial resources.

#### Results

The gender budgeting initiative has now come to be recognised at all levels in Zimbabwe as one of the key strategies that can be applied in the mainstreaming of gender in development. One of the ways in which the initiative is going to ensure that women claim their positions is by working with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and other portfolio committees that have already been sensitized on gender budgeting, HIV and AIDS, domestic violence and reproductive health issues. By so doing the female parliamentarians will be able to scrutinise bills coming before parliament from a gender perspective.

The gender budgeting coalition, which has both female and male members drawn from a variety of stakeholders is another strategy for ensuring the involvement of women and men.

ZWRCN has also been working in collaboration with the National Association of NGOs and the Poverty Reduction Forum in pre-budget workshops. The findings are shared with the Ministry of Finance that is responsible for the national budget as well as sectorial ministries. Stakeholders highlighted the need for adequate resources to be made available in the areas of health, agriculture, education and social welfare.

The advocacy undertaken by the ZWRCN has resulted in the inclusion of gender into the budget call circular for the 2008 national budget and the training of Directors of Finance in all Ministries to enable them to coordinate the budget preparation process supported by gender focal persons likewise trained.

Women's participation, economic and social rights are still not enshrined in the constitution, and the fact that international human rights instruments that have been ratified do not automatically become national law. This continues to leave the cause for women's rights to the individual goodwill of patriarchal gatekeepers. A glaring feature of Zimbabwe's Constitution is its limitation in addressing key issues of concern to women but also its failure to take an integrated approach to human rights which focuses on both political rights and socio-economic and cultural rights.

The work on gender budgeting has reinforced the importance of the availability of gender statistics and data for planning purposes and has resulted in the inclusion of the Central Statistical Office as a key partner in the initiative. ■

<sup>5</sup> Mate Rekopantswe Gender Analysis of the National Budget in Zimbabwe, the Case of the 2001 Budget November 2001

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Speakers **Ms. Jeanne Françoise LECKOMBA LOUMETO**

*Minister for the Advancement of Women and the Integration of Women in the Development of Congo Brazzaville;  
Chairperson of the National Network of Women Ministers and Members of Parliament;  
Municipal Councillor for the Municipality of Brazzaville and Department Councillor;  
Chairperson of the National Committee of Women Department Councillors*

and



**Ms. Yvonne Adélaïde MOUNDELE-NGOLLO**

*Minister for Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Supplies for the Congo;  
Chairperson of the Conference of Ministers of Commerce of the African Union*

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**Ms. Jeanne Françoise LECKOMBA LOUMETO : Future perspectives**

Equal education is important to overcome gender disparities. Girls frequently have more problems than boys. Upon reaching maturity, girls should be informed about their sexuality and their reproductive health. In some communities, there are exchanges between parents on this subject in order to overcome these taboos. This sharing of experiences is important.

The problem of gender equality is more a problem for men, who need to be educated and trained so that they understand that the women's struggle is not directed against them but rather to collaborate with them in order to attain sustainable development. In this regard, the Congolese Ministry has just organised training for members of parliament on the concept of gender.

Opinion leaders, the traditional heads of districts and communities, are another problem. They need to be made aware of the subject of gender.

Functional literacy (linked to its function in daily life) is essential. Therefore, the Ministry of Commerce has implemented a programme to enable women to pass from the informal to the formal work sector. They often pay too much tax as a result of their illiteracy. Another question is to know how to deal with specific socio-cultural problems.

Solidarity between women is necessary above all. Women elected representatives should appoint women who will remain at their posts. Respective resolutions cannot remain a dead letter.

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**Ms. Yvonne Adélaïde MOUNDELE-NGOLLO : No development without peace**

Regarding the problems of over-indebtedness and repayment, Ms. Moundele-Ngollo makes the connection with the talk which she will give in the workshop on women and entrepreneurship by stating that these two problems constitute a brake on female entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, Ms. Moundele-Ngollo maintains that the culture of gender promotion demands actions, studies and concrete proposals.

Ms. Moundele-Ngollo cites an experience during the war in the Congo, a war which lasted such a long time that a march was organised to the President's Palace to claim the rights of the people to liberty, peace and education. It was from this moment that weapons were silenced and steps were taken to implement the means for living in peace.

There is no development without peace. That is why it is necessary to make an effort. That is why it is necessary to be brave. ■

## Debate and conclusions

### DEBATE

There is a **need to fully understand the actual situation of African women in cities**. 72% of African habitants live in slums. All recommendations must keep in mind the slum inhabitants.

When talking about women and decision-making, two aspects must be considered. The first one is the number of women in decision-making, either in politics or in public services. The second aspect is the way in which the decisions taken affect women. Those two aspects are linked. **The numerical side of decision-making is important**. Studies on women in local government in Southern Africa show that when women make up more than 30% of local government, the more they take decisions that influence gender equality. At the local level, we work on what affects women's every day life. A holistic approach is necessary to promote women in decision-making. Why, for example, not create a fund since politics is expensive and women do not have the money for a campaign?

If a woman is the key player in development and if her rights are not applied, we could ask ourselves if **this woman knows her rights**. Do female elected representatives at the heart of a political party, representing its people, who leave their party because of an issue regarding posts, **wish to see their rights applied?**

In the Ivory Coast, the Constitution has covered everything with regard to gender equality (education, monogamy, etc.). Unfortunately, it has been found that these rights are not applied in practice. Is this not because **women** have decided to be the **sounding-board for men** rather than making concrete proposals for their emancipation?

In Africa, **politics and the economy are strongly connected**. It is impossible to conduct a campaign without any money. Male candidates travel in order to collect these funds, but the women stay at home. Consequently, it is necessary to help women at national level to access these various posts.

In Spain, a law does exist which makes the presentation of electoral lists **containing an equal number of male and female candidates** compulsory. This is being achieved in councils and ministries. It is still not so in other bodies that are not formed by direct voting, nor for senior posts in big companies. All states should have corrective measures in their laws to achieve equality in the lists that make up governments. Women have much more capacity to speak about social issues, such as peace and poverty.

In Africa, **gender** is often seen as a **Western notion** that is superimposed. The challenge is to come up with Africa's own concepts and ideas of gender at all levels. It would therefore have been interesting to hear more about the specific legal and policy frameworks and what the challenges are and how these things can be contextualised and fitted into the discussed framework. That is the way to come up with priority issues.

Within the context of solidarity between women, the **sexual violence** suffered by women in the East of the RDC cannot be ignored. They must call on us as women and as Africans. They refer to the initiative mentioned by Ms. Moundele-Ngollo. Women are mothers for life, mothers for peace. The women's solidarity lobby is of supreme importance.

A similar conference to this should be able to be organised in Africa.

**Over-indebtedness** and **poor credit management** could be resolved by highlighting the quality of projects for which women get into debt. They must be made aware of the consequences of over-indebtedness and they must be trained in credit management and taught to read and write.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

Initiatives have been taken, gender is being taken into account in local budgets, schooling for girls is progressing and there is a call for women's representation. After Beijing, there will be an action framework for the African platform, and networks do exist. There is also abuse of analysed data.

#### Problems

There is a lack of solidarity, laws in favour of women are not applied, there are socio-cultural pressures and women are under-represented in governing bodies. Women lack self-esteem and do not have access to resources. The concept of gender has been neither mastered nor adapted to African reality. ■

## A4 Gender equality in Asia



Chairperson **Ms. Vandana H. CHAVAN**

*Former Mayor of the City of Pune and Representative of the Regional Antenna of Pune, India Metropolis Women International Network*

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### ***Gender equality in Asia: an introduction***

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The Asian region is very peculiar for its diversity in social set-up, culture and even forms of government or the kind of development. Even within countries there are a lot of varieties. Even in a particular city there can be a lot of varieties. But in Asia, too, equality between women and men is a basic and fundamental human right. There is an Indian Miss Universe and a female Indian-born astronaut, but a lot of other women (more than 50%) remain in the darkness of poverty, are not educated, do not have access to basic services and suffer domestic violence.

In India there are ample policies and programmes for girls – to enrol her in school, give her free education and to make sure that she gets the best out of everything. On the other side, we see in some of the most economically advanced states of India a diminished sex ratio which is 736 girls to 1000 boys.

Another very peculiar and interesting initiative is the microcredit groups that are a great source of inspiration and motivation for women to go forward. They have a tremendous potential to become a partner in the progress of democracy.

As concerns climate change, the Asian Region (India and Bangladesh) will be the worst affected and we have already seen some impacts of this climate change. The problem is that policy-makers have not yet understood that this climate change will also have a social impact resulting in an economic impact. That is the reason why this item may not be missing in this Asian session. ■



Expert **Ms. Sijal AZIZ**

*Executive Director of the Women Empowerment Literacy and Development Organization (WELDO, Pakistan)*

## **Gender Equality in Asia – The tool for Social and Economic Development**

South Asia has a population of 1.4 billion people, nearly 700 million of whom are women, who are denied social, economic and political rights. A woman is the only creature on the planet who can be a victim of discrimination before her birth by means of self-selective pregnancies in South Asia.

Gender equality can be analysed in the three most important areas of development for Asia :

### **1. Gender Inequality and Illiteracy**

South Asia, next to Sub-Saharan Africa, is the most illiterate region in the world. The greatest number of children, that is 42 million, live in South Asia, 23.5 million of whom are girls. Gender inequality leads to poverty because of the non-participation of women in the economic part of the household and the often very large families. Safety in South Asia is a very brave issue because a woman can't protect herself, even through law. For all these reasons a lot of girls are out of school.

Educational inequality is a major infringement of the rights of women and girls and an important barrier to social and economic development. Increased education for women will result in a reduction of illiteracy by 55%, indirectly by almost 100% because a generation of educated mothers, who are – according to estimates – twice as likely to educate their children, will be produced. Gender equality in education will also lead to increased food production, higher incomes per household, lower child mortality and maternal mortality rates, etc.

### **2. Gender Inequality and Economic Development**

No country can boast of economic development if half of its workforce is tied up at home without any rights to participation in economic or social development. The participation of women in the production and economic field can lead to fast-paced economic development. Female employment in the paid labour sector and Gross Domestic Product are linked.

South Asia only has 16.9% of women in the paid labour sector. By closing the gender gap, growth rates would be higher ; equal wages and higher labour force participation for women would result in increased per capita expenditure ; increasing women's participation in economic fields would lead to more allocation of resources per household on child nutrition and education. Furthermore, increasing women's primary schooling alone could increase agricultural output by 24%<sup>6</sup>.

### **3. Gender inequality and Health**

Asia is faced with alarming rates of increase in HIV infections, maternal morbidity and mortality, child mortality and malnutrition, directly or indirectly related to gender inequality because of the low level of education, especially of women.

Out of every three child deaths, one occurs in South Asia ; almost one in ten dies before the age of five ; most of the under-five deaths in South Asia result from diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections, and vaccine-preventable diseases which women without education don't know how to cure, and malnutrition.

More than 200,000 of the world's 529,000 annual maternal deaths occur in South Asia<sup>7</sup> because of limited contraceptive usage caused by tradition and lack of family planning and women's subordinate position resulting in denial of their reproductive rights. Women have to be in a perpetual state of pregnancy because of the selective abortion of female children.

Women also have limited access to healthcare facilities because of their subordinate position, which results in the denial of health facilities ; women eat the last and the least and are denied proper nutrition and healthcare during pregnancy.

By achieving gender equality we can achieve health goals set by the UN : women's education can effectively reduce child malnutrition by 43% and three years of maternal schooling would reduce child mortality by about 15%. Gender inequality indeed leads to female illiteracy and illiteracy leads to lower immunization rates. ■

<sup>6</sup> Source : FAO, Gender and Education, Extension and Communication : <http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/educ-e.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Source : The Millennium Development Goals, Progress and Challenges in South Asia 2006



Speaker **Ms. Hyun-Kyung PARK**

*President of the Seoul Foundation of Women and Family (Republic of Korea)*

## ***New framework of Women's Policy in Seoul: City Project for Women's Happiness***

### **Women's Policy in Seoul Metropolitan Government**

Based on the Women's Development Act enacted in 1995, the first (1998-2002) and the second (2003-2007) Basic Plans for Women's Policy have been enacted and operated. For the last 10 years of operating the policy, the basic plans covered various policy issues and have made good headway in relation to the relevant laws and the systems. In particular, the second Basic Plan for Women's Policy introduced *gender mainstreaming* as the new policy strategy, following the international movement, and it contributed to renovating the mechanism and the status of women's policy within and outside of government administration.

Since the beginning of local self-government, Seoul Metropolitan Government is currently in its 4th term of popular election and promoting an autonomous women's policy, focusing mostly on institutional supports such as gender equality promotion and expansion of women's participation, women's human resources development and support, improvement of childcare services, expansion of welfare benefit for women and the family, and child security enhancement.

### **Creating a new concept for women's policy**

#### **1. Specified women's policy based on local needs**

Initially framed in March 2007, the city government is promoting a comprehensive gender-sensitive women's policy entitled the City Project for Women's Happiness (CPWH). It considers the broad context of women's daily lives, not just prioritizing the improvement of institutional aspects.

#### **2. Women citizens' rights-based policy approach**

The major goal of the project is to ameliorate the elements of gender-specific restrictions and inconveniences in women's daily lives, using public space such as transportation, sidewalks, parks, cultural facilities and shopping facilities. CPWH is the first and representative women's policy, planned and promoted by the local government focusing on the local needs of women citizens.

#### **3. Enhancing gender-sensitive city governance**

The city government convened the CPWH companion groups, inviting experts, women citizens and women NGO leaders and local government officials in the fields of women, welfare, streets and transportation, housing, city competitiveness and the environment who will contribute to enhancing gender-sensitive urban governance in Seoul.

### **CPWH consists of 5 major areas of activities (and 89 sub-projects):**

**Caring Seoul:** aims to promote women's socio-economic participation by socializing care work, which has been regarded as women's work, including domestic chores, childcare and caring for elderly parents.

**Working Seoul:** women's economic participation rate in the Seoul area was only 51.9% in 2006 because of the lack of decent jobs for women and competitiveness of women workers. This area promotes a labour market where women can work with fewer insecurities and disparities (job creation, job training, employment assistance, business starter supporting system building, and creating a more women-friendly work environment).

**Prosperous Seoul:** focuses on expanding opportunities for women to enjoy culture, leisure and sports.

**Safe Seoul:** ensuring the physical safety of the surroundings and ensuring the psychological well-being of women citizens by expanding women's rights when on the move by providing safe streets, crime prevention, safe residential areas, establishing gender-sensitive landscape architecture standards and a manual for women's safety, constructing safe sidewalks for pedestrians and providing a women-only telephone taxi service.

**Convenient Seoul:** improving convenience and accessibility in women's use of public facilities and enhancing women's rights in terms of mobility.

### **Seoul Foundation of Women and Family's functions and future plans**

SEW collaborated with the Seoul Metropolitan Government from the basic planning process of the CPWH project via an online survey, focused group interviews about Seoul women citizens' policy needs, a forum and a research project to provide the basis of the theoretical planning of the CPWH. The CPWH companion groups will provide guidelines and visions for the success of the CPWH and gender-sensitive urban governance. SEW also plans to create a global cooperation network for the development of local government women's policy. ■



Speaker **Ms. Aurora JAVATE DE DIOS**

*President of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Asia Pacific (Philippines)*

### ***The struggle against human trafficking***

Effective interventions and creative responses against trafficking at various levels are slowly making an impact. The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women works in all the regions of the world and has 300 organizations attached to it.

#### **Asian Women: Progress in Some Areas But Inequality Persists**

In terms of maternal mortality rates, there is some general improvement across the region with wide disparities in both maternal mortality and infant mortality rates between the developing and developed countries. Most Asian countries are generally cognizant of the need for clear reproductive health policies with the two extremes represented by the Philippines, which strictly prohibits contraceptive methods of family planning, and China's one child policy<sup>8</sup>.

In the area of education, the gap had been closed before the 1990s in most countries. China, Indonesia and Vietnam have achieved gender parity in secondary education while in some countries, like the Philippines and Mongolia, there is a noticeable gender gap in education in favour of girls (Regional Trends, WAGI, 2006). Rape, domestic violence and trafficking have been criminalized by a lot of new laws.

The Asian region has the highest number of working women in the last ten years working in both agriculture and manufacturing and services. Despite this women stay poor, still dominate the informal sector, have higher unemployment rates, are poorer and have lower wages than men. Due to limited employment opportunities in their own countries, they are driven to migration. In the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, women migrants, mostly employed as domestic workers, account for as much as 70-80% of land-based migrant workers.

The increase in the number of women in elected national bodies since the early 1990s is only 1.6%. In the Philippines they are adverse to a quota system and temporary special measures. No country in SEA has achieved 30% of elected seats. In a few countries, however, such as the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, women presidents have been elected mainly due to their male associations and political name. This is improving with the new, young legislators.

#### **Trafficking of Women: an Asian Human Rights Crisis**

Social and economic inequity, gender inequality, poverty, civil wars and conflicts, natural disasters and environmental crisis have contributed to the worsening human rights situation of the region in general and to the aggravation of the trafficking of women and children, a major human rights, gender and development issue.

The globalization and urbanization processes in major cities in the world have hastened the spread of consumerist cultures and lifestyles, the loosening of traditional social controls on sexuality, including the male demand for commercial sex. In addition, new information technologies are used for new forms of sexual exploitation, reinforcing the stereotypical image of women as sexual commodities.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Philippines is among the main reported resource countries of victims of trafficking, China is both a resource and a destination country and thousands of women are being trafficked from developing to developed countries (or even to other developing countries as well), with over 225,000 being transported across borders within South-East Asia<sup>9</sup>. Based on the ILO study, Indonesia<sup>10</sup> and the Philippines<sup>11</sup> are among the countries with a high number of women seeking employment in other countries of Asia & the Pacific, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

The 2004 annual Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report estimated that there are between 600,000 and 800,000 trafficked men, women and children of whom approximately 80% are women and girls and up to 50% are minors. The majority of the transnational victims were trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation.

Trafficking is a supply and demand-driven reality and a huge gender process. The demand comes from businessmen, professionals, military forces, transport workers and ordinary men. It is a profitable business, the annual revenue of traffickers being estimated between 5 and 9 billion dollars and according to estimations, global trafficking is a 7 billion dollar industry. The US Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates that human trafficking generates an estimated 9.5 billion dollars in annual revenue. The pornography and cybersex industry generates 1 billion dollars annually and is expected to grow.

<sup>8</sup> Observations raised by women trade unionists and NGOs.

<sup>9</sup> From United States State Department Statistics, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Indonesian women migrant workers made up 37%

<sup>11</sup> 76 per cent of all migrant workers from the Philippines working in other Asian countries in 1997 were women.

For introducing strategic intervention programmes a gender analysis is necessary. As D’Cunha (2002) asserts, “the sex industry is predicated on male-centred ideological assumptions; sex is a male right and a commodity; commercial providers of sex services are largely women who exist as sexualized and commodified bodies functional to that male right”. Trafficking is a gendered phenomenon rooted in ideological constructions and the institutionalization of the stereotypical social roles of men and women.

Asia has for many years been a major locus of trafficking for sexual exploitation. In its Mekong region, Thailand has been the centre of the sex trade due to its economic prosperity and its geographical proximity to countries like Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Cambodia has one of the fastest growing AIDS epidemics, estimated at around 180,000<sup>12</sup>, because of the booming sex industry that has entrapped over 20,000 young girls in prostitution, 35% of whom are aged 12-17<sup>13</sup>.

In South-East Asia there is a lot of intra- and interregional trafficking. Filipinos and Indonesian women are brought to Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Korea and a recent government survey in the Philippines confirmed that the country sends migrant workers to 125 countries and that there have been documented trafficking incidents in at least 74 countries with many in Japan, some in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Korea, Taiwan, some countries in the Middle East and as far as Lagos, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria and Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands<sup>14</sup>. City governments must deal with these problems because laws on trafficking are dissuasive.

In East Asia, Japan has the largest numbers in the entertainment industry, with women coming from South-East Asia, Latin America and Eastern European countries. China is a major destination country for Eastern European women and Vietnamese brides who must make up for the shortage of women and the demographic imbalance in Chinese society. The same happens in Taiwan.

In and around the military bases in Korea are clusters of open and hidden brothels, bars and sex-related establishments with 18,000 registered and an estimated 9,000 unregistered prostitutes. Within South Asia there is a lot of trafficking within and among the countries. In India alone there are over 1,000 red-light districts and brothels in major cities like Mumbai, Kolkata and New Delhi with women coming from Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan.

The welfare and well-being of victims have been impeded and therefore they will be unproductive for a while. The money that goes to curative programmes could have been used for the education and economic well-being of women. The consequences of trafficking are health hazards, physical violence, psychological hazards and social discrimination and elimination within their communities.

In Asia, interventions began in 2000 through the ratification of a consensus definition of trafficking and through the adoption of anti-trafficking laws by 11 countries. Other countries have provisions in their laws penalizing trafficking, action plans and programmes. There are inter-agency committees and bilateral agreements and memoranda between neighbouring countries.

The approach can be preventive or legislative. Police must be trained, victims must be helped. Programmes can be survivor-centred and help the victims to recover. Programmes can also focus on the male demand and male behaviour. A Project to Educate Young Boys on Sexuality and the Prevention of Prostitution in the Philippines (initiated in 2003 and still on-going) has demonstrated the potential of addressing male demand. The project is being copied in Mexico. City governments can translate national laws into city ordinances. Some countries are also developing gender-sensitive human rights documentation on human trafficking cases and awareness campaigns.

In conclusion, gender equality should be an integral part of political and development policies, decisions and processes. It must be visible and measurable in terms of outcomes and results. The trafficking in women and girls undermines efforts to implement gender equality and human rights. ■

<sup>12</sup> UNDP, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, October 10, 1999

<sup>14</sup> CATW Case Files 1996-2001

## Debate and conclusions

### DEBATE

The impression remains that the position of **gender equality in Pakistan and in South Asia is only getting worse**. Ms. Aziz refutes this assertion by relating that some laws have been changed, women entrepreneurs are backed by women’s organizations (India), China has more than 40% of women entrepreneurs in the economic field and in Bangladesh a lot of women establish businesses with microcredits. There is progress, but progress is too slow.

In Pakistan, women in **villages** are much more backward and disadvantaged. Women don’t have the right to leave their homes, do not have access to health, (pre)natal health services nor education. In the name of honour, girls can be murdered and rapes can be kept silent. In **urban areas** the empowerment process of women is much more easily achieved because information and services are concentrated. Challenges like the mass transport system and the risk of becoming a target of theft or sexual assault, however, make life in the city more difficult. In the case of **trafficking**, living in a village no longer offers the security it offered in the past because in remote areas information is unavailable.

In 1992 **India** made an amendment to the Constitution, providing for a **33% quota** of women in all local government. Millions of women now participate in the political system and they have changed the face of India as far as women’s participation is concerned. The struggle now is to have this quota at State level and the Parliament.

The central governments in Bangladesh and India now promote **self-help groups** amongst the rural and urban poor. They form small groups of 20 women and work as microcredit groups giving loans to each other. Thanks to those groups, political participation has taken place.

Most women in Indian politics have **political bindings** because very few women want to participate in politics. Provided she does the work for society, it doesn’t matter.

The signing of **international conventions and policies** (CEDAW, Millennium Development Goals,...) doesn’t impact the grassroots much. It is important to reach out to the people and make them know these policies exist.

India has 7500 km of coastline and the coast cities have the largest populations. It is expected that by 2020-2030 some cities may be submerged and the Himalayan snow cap (the main water source of the region) will be reduced by 1/5. **Climate change** is an important issue to tackle.

India – a country with conservative norms – has a law that permits **paternal leave** after the birth of a child.

In the past, protection was only given to married women. In India, the **Domestic Violence Act** was enacted in 2006. It protects girls (sisters, daughters,...) against domestic violence and Seoul has an emergency telephone line for victims. Even the most advanced countries have not stopped violence.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

Law policies (e.g. on safety and health) exist, there is a quota system in public offices, women build networks and start self-help groups. There is government support and cities are able to empower women.

#### Difficulties

Women lack education, awareness of the law, policy and programmes. Women are often poor and have limited access to healthcare and paid employment. They are not completely safe in cities, at work and in their homes. There are often victim of HIV/Aids and of trafficking. The sex ratio is diminishing.

#### Recommendations

In order to improve economic development and healthcare, women should have better access to good education. Women and men should be made more aware of programmes and difficulties and women should participate more in the decision-making process. It is important to take stock of what has happened and of what remains to be done and afterwards make a roadmap for South Asia. Women have to lobby at government level and monitor the government’s programmes. Laws should be made on women issues and the awareness of the law should be increased. All environments should be women-friendly and the role of women in climate change is important. ■

## A5 Urban poverty and migration of women (Latin America)



Chairperson **Ms. María Ignacia BENÍTEZ PEREIRA**

*Regional Councillor in the Regional Metropolitan Council, Regional Government of Santiago de Chile*



Expert **Ms. Elisabeth MALUQUER**

*Coordinator of the Network URB-AL 12, Euro-Latin American 'Women and the City' Centre, Women and the City Network*

### ***Contributions of decentralised cooperation to gender policies in Latin America***

The URB-AL 12 Network for encouraging women in areas of local decision-making constitutes a reference point for decentralised cooperation in the area of gender.

Decentralised cooperation aims to support local government within the framework of decentralisation processes associated with democratic countries. The European Commission's URB-AL programme (1995-2006) helped to put in place a model for networked decentralised cooperation, based on the exchange of good practices and the transfer of knowledge between local governments in the European Union and Latin America. Structured into 13 thematic networks, the URB-AL programme provided grants to 187 projects in which more than 1,000 European and Latin-American cities took part, and in which some 2,000 professional and senior people from the different towns and cities have worked. The URB-AL 12 Network (2003-2006), coordinated by the Council of Barcelona, gained the support of 450 member organisations, which took part in the Network's activities and promoted cooperation projects, 18 of which received financial support from the European Commission.

At the end of the period of providing grants, the Council of Barcelona decided to help the Network to continue by offering the member organisations automatic incorporation into the new 'Women and the City' Network. The mission of the Women and the City Network is to encourage women to advance in the agencies of local decision-making, i.e. in political institutions, in civil society, and in public and private institutions in the cities, and to promote progress in terms of gender perspective in urban politics. And all within the framework of Euro-Latin American cooperation as well as South-South cooperation, through common projects.

The projects arising from the URB-AL 12 Network seek the empowerment of women via a number of strategies. On the one hand, we see a series of projects aimed at citizens, on the other, we see others focused more on institutions, with a wide range of projects combining both approaches.

Prominent amongst the former are projects that concentrate on bringing women into society and the work market. This is considered to constitute the basic premise for achieving full citizenship for women. It involves very diverse projects, including those that seek to create new resources – such as micro-credits and social support centres – and others that seek to raise awareness and to motivate women, for which they promote women's associations or offer training on human rights or on the participation of women in politics, etc.

The projects focusing on institutions seek to introduce into them the perspective of gender, whether by promoting the creation of new structures for managing equality policies, or by transforming traditional forms of sector management in the administrations by committing to the transversality of gender. The majority of these projects have also broached the subject of civil society, which is very beneficial to governance.

Practically all of the projects have provided training to the community and/or to public Administration personnel and all have generated new understanding, given practical expression in guides, good practice manuals or other documents that constitute references for improvement and innovation in public administration.

We can confirm that the participation of local bodies in networked projects helps to generate international relations of great interest at all levels, both political and technical. In particular, openness to the outside world and the generation of new alliances are essential to incorporate the gender perspective into local public policies and for a more rapid advancement of women. This applies not only in Latin America, but also in European cities, which have learnt much from their female colleagues from the other continent, who often have very solid theoretical and practical community backgrounds. ■



Speaker **Ms. Cleidy LACAVERTZ**

*Chairperson of the Social Support Committee of the Provincial Municipality of Cuzco (Peru)*

### **Poverty and Migration in Latin America**

According to data from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 44% of the population of Latin America (230 million people) is poor, of whom 40% are destitute, living on less than one dollar a day. According to a report by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on the economic and social performance of the region between 1990 and 1999, Latin America is the region with most inequality in the world.

The economic crisis has exacerbated unemployment in almost all the countries in the region, making living conditions even more difficult. A report by the consultancy firm Apoyo S.A. in Lima (Peru) shows that 51.8% of the 8.2 million inhabitants of Lima live in conditions of (extreme) poverty. According to official data in the respective countries, in Colombia 60% of the population falls below the poverty threshold, in Argentina 53%, in Venezuela 45% and in Mexico 54%.

A recent report by ECLAC indicates that globalisation and the economic reforms that have been imposed have resulted in 44% of Latin Americans being poor and 30% being at risk of falling into poverty. But there has also been progress: in Bolivia (1976: 85.5% of its population was poor, and in 2001: 58.6%), in Chile and in the Dominican Republic<sup>15</sup>. The countries that have most reduced their levels of poverty and destitution since 2002 are Argentina (from 24.4% to 13.7%) and Venezuela (from 18.4% to 12.3%).

According to ECLAC forecasts, in 2007 the level of total poverty was 35% (190 million people) and the level of destitution 12.7% (69 million), 9.8 percentage points less than in 1990, when the level was 22.5%. This result is equivalent to an advance of 87% towards achieving the first Millennium Goal, while the proportion of elapsed time for compliance is 68%. This can largely be explained by the fact that the two countries with the largest number of inhabitants in the region, Brazil and Mexico, have already achieved the target, along with Chile and Ecuador.

As well as reducing the rate of destitution and hunger by half, other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) included in this platform are to achieve universal primary education, reduce infant mortality, promote gender equality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS.

Colombia, El Salvador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela show progress similar to, or better than, that expected over the time elapsed. The text reports that, for their part, 'Argentina, Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Uruguay have covered more than 50 per cent of the total target distance'. Chile is the only country that has reduced total poverty by half, from 38.6% in 1990 to 13.7% in 2006.

The **factors** that explain the **reduction in poverty** are high growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) per inhabitant, the generation of employment, a decrease in the so-called dependents' tax (the number of people who are dependent on each worker) and the application of social policies that have cost more but are also more efficient. In the case of some countries in Central America, the increase in money sent to families by emigrant workers was also a factor. Job income increased in few countries and did not contribute substantially to the reduction in poverty. Between 2004 and 2005, the average social public expenditure in Latin America was 15.9% of GDP, 3.1% more than in 1990 and 1991.

The reality of global **migrations** has forced almost all the countries to rethink their policies on the admission of immigrants and the assignment of rights, limitations and benefits to their citizens and residents.

**The classic countries receiving emigration** are Australia, the USA and Canada, Spain and Italy. Other significant destinations are Canada (with half a million Latin American emigrants), the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan. The Latin American population settled in the United States (38.8 million people) has surpassed the Afro-American population (38.3 million), making it the primary ethnic minority in this country.

Seven out of every eight immigrants have arrived in these countries through highly regulated channels that attend both to the needs of the receiving countries and those of the immigrants. Regrettably, many democratic Western countries have policies of discrimination and restrictions based on criteria of race, ethnic group and gender.

A shocking majority of the world's refugees (almost 30 million people, mainly adults) tends to settle in the least developed of neighbouring countries.

### **Immigrants and the labour market**

Consumers, investors and companies in recipient countries who employ immigrants benefit by giving them the jobs that have been abandoned by the local and legal work force. For the workers in general, there is a mixture of benefits with possible losses of opportunities.

Some 10 to 15% of immigrants in rich countries are illegal or have lost their legal status. Unauthorised immigrants usually enter by illegal means, although the great majority of them (around 40% in the United States) enter legally and do not leave when their visas expire. Another category includes those who enter with a visa but breach its terms, normally by working.

<sup>15</sup> According to the World Bank.

The influx of workers born abroad has breathed new life into the manufacturing sector and has boosted the “service economy”. In these countries, a middle class aristocracy has evolved that could not previously have paid for certain domestic services now offered by immigrants at a price.

The immigrants mobilise informal recruitment chains and are contracted through networks, leading to concentrations of nationalities in certain types of employment, literally labelled by an ethnic niche.

### **The Immigration Safety Valve**

70% of the costs of any business are labour costs (salaries and labour benefits), which explains why two conditions that are classic precursors of inflation are occurring in developed economies: citizens have more and more money to spend, accelerating growth; and companies are desperate to find employees and workers (especially those who are qualified), resulting in increased salaries to attract them. It appears that this situation is still not at an end thanks to the constant influx of foreign labour to the United States, which continues to add sufficient workers to the economy to maintain the steady increase in wages. This is what some specialists call ‘the immigration safety valve’.

### **Conclusion**

Statistics indicate that migratory pressures are sure to increase in the next 30 years: it is estimated that the native workforce in industrialised countries will decrease while the workforce from so-called ‘developing countries’ will double.

Clear social and economic policies are needed to solve the problem of poverty and migration in Latin America. A recommendation would be to improve the human capital by concentrating on specific areas:

- Improve tax collection in the region by decreasing exemptions and exonerations on income tax, which tend to favour the most powerful groups, and reduce tax evasion.
- Provide higher quality education to more people, through bilingual and bicultural education programmes, in order to reduce the gaps in the years of schooling and improve the quality of education
- Promote equal access to health services by implementing mother-child health programmes.
- Improve detection of sectors at which social policies should be aimed. For this, ECLAC recommends that countries should identify the demographic phase through which they are passing. While some countries urgently need to reduce malnutrition and infant mortality, others face challenges in the areas of higher education and health systems. ■

**Speaker Ms. Diana Mirian MILOSLAVICH TÚPAC**

*Coordinator of the Peruvian Women's Centre's Local Development, Political Participation and Decentralisation Programme, 'Flora Tristán', a member of the Woman and Habitat Network of Latin America*

**Women Migrants and their impact on the economies of Latin America**

In Latin America and the Caribbean, migration, for social, cultural, economic and political reasons, is a female phenomenon that has taken time to become visible due to lack of adequate information and resistance to a gender perspective. Women migrants constitute 49.6% of global migration flows.

Gender inequalities make the experience of migrating different for men and women. Women support their families despite distances and influence the development of their communities of origin through the money they send home. In 2003, money sent home by migrants represented a higher amount in Latin America than the sum of direct foreign investment and development aid; according to estimates by the IDB Bilateral Fund, 38 thousand million dollars were sent, above all from the United States and Europe, and principally from Spain.

In Latin America, countries such as El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua have economies that depend on remittances sent home, which represent an average of 10% of GDP. A second block includes Ecuador and Peru and a third, Mexico amongst others.

Women migrants in Europe and the United States are responsible for the care of children, elderly adults, disabled people and people with different abilities and for domestic jobs. Apart from traditional forms of migration, there is also migration linked to the trafficking of persons and trading in women for the sex industry or for purposes of marriage which must be made visible.

Another relevant debate about international migrations and their increasing expansion relates to the fight against hate, racism, xenophobia and the strengthening of discriminatory practices on the basis of gender, ethnic origin or nationality. In the social, economic, cultural and political fields of interaction, there is a continuous flow of resources and arguments that are questioning and transforming traditional ideas about identity, belonging and rights.

Therefore, it is important to create room for discussion, dialogue and analysis and to find policies to raise government and public awareness in the world on the subject of migrations, as well as to promote democratic and pluralist practices that guarantee rights and a decent life for women migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean. They have become the financial support for family, local and national economies and have come to work or to assist in caring for people in European countries and the United States, a task that has always fallen on women, but that is now largely propped up by migrant women. ■

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## Debate and conclusions

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### DEBATE

- How can we tell what the **real results** of **project Red URB-AL** are in terms of progress in relation to gender equality? Cultural change in the organisations is difficult but important and not just about a couple of women who work in the field of equal opportunities.
- It was observed that the **term “illegal”** is typical of male language use. Other terms can be used instead of “illegal”.
- **Polarisation** must be avoided (the West and Latin America) It would be preferable to identify common problems among female immigrants.
- Instead of talking about problems, we should talk about solutions and actions.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

Women are the protagonists of migration movements, they seek better living conditions for their families and communities. They are much sought-after workers, in particular for jobs for which there are few candidates in the native population. There is often also a great reciprocity between the immigrants and the ‘native’ population.

#### Difficulties

It is not easy for female migrants to connect with the society and the labour market in the country in which they have ended up. Consequently, they often live in a precarious position and often have inadequate access to social security in their new country. They also often have to deal with a problematic legal situation and with discrimination.

### Recommendations

- Opportunities should be created in the country of origin in order to prevent the migration of these women
- The capacity should be created for meetings between migrant women, and the formation of migrant women’s groups
- Support for migrant women in becoming connected to society and the labour market
- Creation of networks for the exchange of experience, discussions, etc.
- Policy that guarantees the rights of migrant women should be developed
- The capacity for discussion should be created
- Strategies should be developed to raise awareness amongst governments
- Democratic practices should be promoted
- A gender perspective should be integrated into the topic of migration in local policy
- Mechanisms must be found for the active participation of migrant women ■



# B

## Global workshop on “Economic challenges”

Tuesday 4 December 2007, 09:30 – 11:30

## B1 Women, employment and equal opportunities



Chairperson **Ms. Sabine DE BETHUNE**

*Senator in the Belgian Federal Parliament and Chairwoman of the political party CD&V, the Flemish Christian Democrats, in the Senate.*

### *The situation of women in Belgium and Europe*

With regard to the policy of employment and equality of men and women in Europe, there is a European policy agreed between all the members of the European Union and since 2000 these countries have had a common objective agreed at the Lisbon Summit in 2000. From this moment the emphasis has been on the degree of activity and work of men and women. Europe wishes to achieve 70% of men and 60% of women of working age between 15 and 56 years of age in work by the year 2010. The levels of activity in Belgium today are almost 53% for women and 68% for men.

There is a significant historical difference in activity between men and women (later entry into the job market) and the definitive objectives are policies agreed and committed to in order to encourage women into work. These policies are national, regional and local, hence the importance of the Dynamic Cities Need Women forum which brings these different levels together.

This inequality already starts with studies since Belgian universities, employment ministers and agencies confirm that it starts during studies: girls achieve better results than boys, they are participating more and more in higher education, but their choice of subject remains stereotypical. As soon as they get their first job, a paradox emerges in Belgium, in that girls with higher degrees find work more easily than boys. On the other hand, they are paid less and accept less watertight contracts than boys, so that they become unemployed more easily.

The reasons for inequality when first entering the job market are diverse, for example, the difference in choice of studies, the fact that girls start a family earlier than boys and are unable to balance working life with family life and a series of other inexplicable factors that come under the heading of discrimination. These inequalities persist further on in a career, nevertheless this gap is diminishing year by year. The reason for this is economic i.e. the fact that men are active in economic and industrial sectors which may be severely affected by unemployment (large factories) whilst economic shifts are less brutal in the sectors where women work (services and administration). The consequence of this is that the difference between men and women is decreasing faster.

Beyond the age of 50, seven out of ten women no longer work as against a slightly fewer than five out of ten men. The great challenge is to convince women to work longer and to give them suitable work so that they have the opportunity to remain active in the job market. Working at the end of one's career, compared with neighbouring countries, is a very weak point in Belgium because the massive entry of women to the job market occurred much later than elsewhere. Researchers refer to a timelag of almost 20 years. Other countries started this process in the 1950s and are therefore ahead of Belgium. Therefore, women are able to enjoy full social rights and more substantial pensions and thus to combat the poverty affecting more and more women in the European Union.

There is great horizontal and vertical segregation in the world of work in Belgium. With regard to horizontal segregation, women can be found in some sectors and men in others, the female sectors being the tertiary (44% women), the public sector (64% women), teaching and care work, and textiles in the industrial sector. This horizontal segregation is significant because, in accordance with economic development, it is the basis of application for women's income and their unemployment, for example, but also because it is a major cause of unequal pay. Vertical segregation means the fact that women are less represented at the top of the ladder than at the bottom in all employment sectors.

This problem requires a targeted policy to give men and women the same opportunities so that women can also be independent, establish their own lifestyles, support their families and build up social rights. This is the challenge for government authorities and it is for this reason that the Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities, Ms. Grouwels, has decided to set up pilot projects in the Brussels Capital Region to create new opportunities for women in the world of work. ■

Expert **Ms. Linda G. BASCH***President of the National Council for Women (United States)*


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### **Women, Employment and Equity**

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Focusing on the global economic status of women is difficult because accurate research and information on women are not available.

Research by the World Bank has shown that when women are vital and healthy, have some education and are economically engaged and when they have the chance to drive local and national agendas, their families and communities are likely to develop positively and even flourish. Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen has argued that nothing is more important for development today than the economic, political, and social participation and empowerment of women. And Isobel Coleman of the Council on Foreign Relations has shown in her research that women who are economically engaged, even in small-scale undertakings, become more involved in family decision-making and participate more in public affairs and community life than other women (Coleman 2004: 3).

Yet, research also shows that in most countries of the world, industrialized as well as underdeveloped, women remain in the bottom quadrants of their economies. Worldwide, women constitute about 70% of the absolute poor – those living on less than a dollar day, and comprise 60 to 90% of the world's part-time workers. And although there are increasing numbers of women engaged in the formal labour force and owning businesses, women still own only 1% of the world's assets, and wages for women remain one-third lower on average than for men, including in the most industrialized countries. Women only earn 5% of the world's income.

More than 2/3 of the world's unpaid work is done by women, that is half the world's GDP. Yet, in return for this work they get no benefits, no legal protection, no pension. In the informal sectors, women are outside the purview of policy-making and macroeconomic planning. In the formal economy, their wages are 1/3 lower than men, even in Europe and the United States.

Progress has been made, but it is slow. In the emerging countries in South East Asia there are now 83 women for every 100 men in the labour force. Research shows that the increase has added more to those economies than capital investments or increased productivity.

At the same time as we are making some progress, women are still disproportionately responsible for household tasks, especially in the developing countries. Every day, for example, African women and girls walk collectively the equivalent of the distance to the moon and back, 16 times a day to supply their household with water.

Women lack equal access to education, to skill training, to land, to property, to credit and to job opportunities. Discrimination and poverty cannot be seen the one separated from the other, but it must be known that one of the challenges is that cultural values and practices support these imbalances and inhibit political will.

Within the most recent decades, the United Nations and many NGOs have developed initiatives aimed at lessening the discrimination against women (CEDAW in 1979, Beijing Platform in 1995). In spite of these international conventions, developing the 8 Millennium Development Goals (2000) was necessary because some serious issues were not met by some countries. The target date is 2015 and these initiatives have had some impact.

Today, 11 heads of State are women, 3 of them were elected on a reform agenda: Angela Merkel (Germany), Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia) and Michelle Bachelet (Chile). As of 2000 there were 20 women ministers of finance, 10 women ministers of economic planning and development and 45 women ministers of trade and industry in the whole world. In Parliaments, the global average percentage of women is a little over 17%, with the exception of Rwanda which has women at 49% in both houses of Parliament, which is the most in the world. In India more than 1 million women hold seats in village councils. UNIFEM has trained many of these women to develop gender-sensitive local budgets and to encourage government spending that benefits women (clean water, health clinics, elder care, better local transportation, flexible hours for working mothers).

The UN Secretary-General's report from August of this year states that women must form a critical mass of 30% of the positions of power in order to have a real impact, the number being 15% at this moment, even in developed countries. In order to attain this, partnerships between the public and private sector are needed. Governments and cities need to be concerned with women and girls and must insist that corporations respect international labour standards and that they involve workers and unions in implementing and monitoring equal protection laws and prohibit sexual harassment. Corporations in turn must encourage government to have healthy and productive workforces and NGOs must exert pressure to make sure that all these steps are taken.

Female decision-makers wield 3 kinds of influence : they have a powerful set of social justice, they bring new styles and new visions, they see themselves as representing their families, other women, men, children, their communities,... They care more about life's essentials than men, but providing all this requires an equitable and gender-sensitive tax structure. Since 1984 about 40 countries have tried some form of gender budgeting, the objective of which is to make sure that tax structures and budget policies do not disadvantage women. One of its requirements is gender-disaggregated data.

By 2005, 84% of the poorest – some 69 million people – who received microcredits were women. In 2006, the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh received a Nobel Peace Prize for their microcredit loans. Microloans by themselves are not enough, women must also have access to financial and marketing skills, the right to keep the returns of their work and

strategies for moving from small to larger loans. There must also be attention for macrofinance issues keeping women's interests in mind. In many countries women's organizations are monitoring what governments do to ensure economic justice for women.

To truly succeed in all this, we need an actively engaged civil society, government agencies responsive to women's particular needs and corporations ensuring fair labour standards, more women in positions of power and decision-making. Women are critical agents of change, they are able, talented and determined. A new social contract that recognizes all of women's basic human rights is needed. ■



Speaker **Ms. Dominique GAUTHIER**

*Chief Executive Officer for the Policies on Pay and Working Conditions  
at the Secretariat of the Treasury Department – Government of Quebec (Canada)*

***Pay equity: the experience of Quebec in eliminating entrenched sexist prejudices in salary matters***

With an area of approximately 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup>, Quebec is the largest of the Canadian provinces with a population of almost 7.7 million. During the last 20 years, the proportion of women available<sup>16</sup> for work has increased from 55.5% to 71.8% and their rate of employment<sup>17</sup>, which was 48% in 1984, climbed to 66.1% in 2004, a historic peak. Therefore, of the 3.7 million people in work in Quebec, 49% are women.

Over time, a social consensus has emerged to improve the economic conditions of women. Quebec was the first Canadian province to adhere to the “Equal work, equal pay” principle by enshrining it in the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms dated 28 June 1978. This principle recognises that equal treatment, without discrimination, is a fundamental human right. On 21 November 1996, the Government of Quebec passed the *Pay Equity Act (Loi sur l'équité salariale* – French Canadian designation LÉS) and set up the Pay Equity Commission to monitor the establishment of pay equity programmes and maintenance of pay equity in companies. It is a proactive approach which obliges employers to apply the LÉS by fulfilling specific obligations which vary according to the size of the company. Equal pay is awarded for jobs or functions of the same value, determined by assessment of the jobs and in accordance with a points system which takes account of the necessary qualifications, the responsibilities undertaken, the efforts required and the working conditions.

Implemented in 1996, companies were granted a grace period of up to four years to realise pay equity and a second period of grace of four years from November 2001 to rectify any salary differences and to pay any necessary adjustments. Once this exercise has been completed, the results must be displayed in visible locations and easily accessible to the people covered by the pay equity programme. This notification must necessarily include information on rights and redress. Employers must maintain pay equity in their companies once the exercise has been completed.

The experience of Quebec as a government employer More than 500,000 people work in the public sectors, on school boards, in colleges and health and social services. Well before the implementation of the LÉS, the Government of Quebec was considering the question of pay gaps between men and women and a new pay structure was implemented for all unionised staff which enabled an average 6% pay adjustment for 261,000 persons working in one of the 304 predominantly female jobs.

Some trade unions refused to participate in these tasks because they disapproved of the government's pay equity programme and, following their complaints, the Quebec Superior Court declared some provisions of the LÉS unconstitutional and therefore invalidated the government programme which had been endorsed by the Pay Equity Commission which had deemed it in compliance with the LÉS. However, the government and the trades unions agreed to continue the work already started with the aid of the new job evaluation tool.

In May and June 2006, the Government of Quebec concluded three agreements on pay equity affecting health and social services, education and the Quebec civil service or 15% (360,000 persons) of the province's workforce. These agreements comply with the LÉS, they are the fruit of employer/trades union consultation without precedent and have required significant investment in human and financial resources. Some predominantly female job categories (education, health and social service sectors), will get very significant pay adjustments to the maximum of their salary scales.

**The effects of the *Pay Equity Act***

Since 1997, the year of implementation of the *Pay Equity Act*, the average pay gap between men and women has dropped from 16.6% to 13.9%. However, this pay gap varies according to age, education, company size and trade union membership. The Act does not take account of these characteristics because it only relates to that portion of the pay gap attributable to the systemic under-evaluation of predominantly female jobs.

Since implementation of the Act, one in three companies has completed its pay equity exercise, the average pay adjustment percentage is 6.5% and pay adjustments have increased the total wage bill of companies by less than 1% on average.

We have also heard that other positive effects were observed such as the improvement in pay logic, the upgrading of service jobs for people and clientele, the working atmosphere and the improvement in relations between company management and staff.

<sup>16</sup> Or the proportion of active women (available for work) of those who are of working age.

<sup>17</sup> Or the proportion of women in work (full or part-time) of all the women of working age.

### **Difficulties with regard to the application and maintenance of pay equity**

However, application of the *Equity Pay Act* may prove to be problematic in certain respects. The absence of a formal pay structure in small companies; the fact that a company may have several distinct programmes and different pay structures and differences in the perception of the Pay Equity Committee and that of the employees.

Some problems relating to pay management have arisen in the pay equity maintenance phase, so here is a brief summary: the fact that all pay elements with a monetary value must be taken into account; the fact that one employee may at any time exercise recourse to the Pay Equity Commission; the fact that the predominance of certain job categories may change, that certain job categories may be added or abolished and that, in the event of a change in the legal status of a company, the pay equity exercise has to be repeated.

### **Conclusion**

Women's participation in the job market is now an absolute reality and if a reduction in the pay gap between men and women is to be seen, this gap does not affect all women in the same way.

The *Pay Equity Act* has enabled the realisation of important steps in the elimination of pay discrimination based on gender. More than 50% of taxable companies in Quebec have completed their exercises. The average pay adjustment for women in the Quebec Government is 6%.

However, experience shows that there are difficulties with the application of the *Pay Equity Act*. The objectives of the *Pay Equity Act* are still to correct the injustices of the past, to recognise the full value of the work carried out and to establish equality between men and women. Quebec can be proud of having achieved this objective and, in conjunction with other measures already promoted by the Government of Quebec over decades, such as minimum pay increases, parental rights and the creation of a network of day nurseries at reduced rates, it can claim to contribute to the improvement in the advancement of the economic and social situation of women. ■



Speaker **Ms. Fatemeh GHAYOUR RAZMGAH**

*City Council Member in the City of Mashhad (Islamic Republic of Iran)*

### ***Justice in work for women***

Equal and fair distribution of employment does not necessarily mean a 50/50 division between men and women. Most often, women, in comparison to men, are the ones usually more lacking in proper education, training and suitable job opportunities and are thus forced to accept jobs, such as prostitution and hard labour, which are harmful to their psychological and physical well-being as they struggle to support their families. Suitable and appropriate employment must be available for women, with equal pay for similar work responsibilities and conditions as men. Equal education, training, and job opportunities for women are necessary, and equal respect and recognition must be given to women who prefer to stay at home.

Iran has a 4-year Development Plan. The first Plan establishes women's participation in social, cultural, educational and economic affairs, while protecting the family's dignity and religious values, and the improvement of girls' education. The second Plan deals with providing social security to women and children without a carer, with helping victims of war who have lost their primary carer and with granting marriage loans. The third Plan establishes work opportunities and the improvement of women's current jobs. It provides legal and judicial consultation for women and creates equal opportunities for women with regards to hiring procedures of women in both government and private organizations. Women's hiring and work conditions are improved, while the family is protected and a suitable atmosphere for education, as far as gender is concerned (observing women's special rights), is established. The Fourth Developmental Plan establishes insurance for the protection of women without a carer, of their legal, social and economical rights, while providing the necessary freedom and security. Men and women performing the same form of work and possessing the same job title are equally paid.

Specialized media programmes on the importance of women's role in general; programmes to rid wrong ideas and beliefs of women in society; wide-ranging research, study and surveying to find resolutions to the challenges that women are facing; the promotion of correct values and goals according to religious teachings; defining women's rights and responsibilities in society and increasing the educational levels of females.

Female literacy shows excellent growth in comparison to past decades. In 1976, the literacy gap between girls and boys was 23.4% while by 1996 the gap had been reduced to 10.5%. The percentage of literate women in Iran in 1976 was 25.5%, while in 2000 this percentage reached 80%. Presently in Iran 97% of Iranian women are enrolled in educational institutes and, in this new university year, 51% of new enrollees are women and 49% are men. The number of female graduates between the ages of 20 and 29 is higher than the number of men, and women are involved in almost all fields of studies. In higher education, the presence of female students in higher education exceeds the presence of male students.

Cultural and social barriers have largely been eliminated. The creation of suitable facilities for girls' education all over the country, at the elementary, junior high and high school level, is helping them to attain higher educational achievements.

For employed women, legal measures have also been taken: men and women performing the same form of work and having the same job title are equally paid, the maternity leave with pay has increased from 3 to 4 months along with yearly merit, while keeping the mother's job. For an 8-hour working day, 2 hours can be taken off for nursing.

As for Iranian homemakers, they have an important role in the learning process and in the development and establishment of beliefs and cultures whether right or wrong. The job of homemakers merits respect. However, to assist this group of women to enter social activities, cooperatives and NGOs have been established. In 1997, for example, 67 NGOs were run by women while, at present, over 700 NGOs are run by women.

In conclusion, women have achieved social growth and women provide service to the government and perform good deeds while creating a new job sector.

The Iranian government has put its efforts into cultural reformation and making laws in order to secure the rights of employed women. Nowadays, men and women have the same rights, such as the right to be educated, to work, to own, and to vote and be voted for. ■

## Debate and conclusions

### DEBATE

The Flora Tristán centre of Peru observes that there has been progress in Latin America and in the Andean community on the issue of women's access to employment, but there is a **relaxation of controls on working conditions** which enables them to get jobs, but without employment rights. The European Union has met with the Andean community on this subject, but has not taken account of these labour rights of the women in the community. Neither does the Free Trade Agreement with Peru contain a chapter guaranteeing employment conditions in women's sectors, for example agro-industry and agro-exportation. The city of Bern also deplores the fact that the role of international business organisations is not mentioned more. Furthermore, it would like to know what role the globalised economy plays. Ms. Basch confirms that **macrofinance issues** on a global level and **trade** are critically important for women. She also confirms that putting pressure on the international trade organisations is very important. Although there is a need to work across these national divides on a global level as some organisations already have (UNIFEM, Flora Tristán, etc.)

UNIFEM has found the example of **Morocco** effective. The country ranks 107<sup>th</sup> out of 159 on the gender gap study done by the World Economic Forum, although it has tried to revamp some of the gender inequities in the country through gender-sensitive budgeting.

The Region of Castile-La Mancha (Spain) observes that the difficulty for women lies in accessing posts with greater responsibility. Using the Equality Law passed in Spain, Castile-La Mancha has made a great effort to help reconcile work and family life, assigning 800 thousand Euros for this task to the Work and Employment Council. The aid is channelled in two ways: to business owners to permit women to reconcile work and family; and to women themselves, so that when they request reduced working hours, they do not lose all of their income. This aid has been implemented through the welfare agencies. But businesses also need to be educated so that reconciliation can take place. The challenge here is not to put women on an outside track in terms of career advancement. In this discussion it is important to have men as partners with women.

There are some doubts about the **figures** in the presentation of **Ms. Gahyour Razmgah**, who confirms that they are based on a national census carried out every 10 years (1997, 2007), the statistics for which can be found on <http://amar.sci.org.ir/>.

The **city of Bern (Switzerland)** has opportunities for complaint based on the equality law for equal and equivalent pay and is wondering how Quebec has managed to implement the pay equity programme and what role the trades union and the government have played.

The **Greater London Authority and Office of the Mayor of London** says that the legal situation in Canada is relevant for the current discussions in Britain that are reviewing the country's anti-discrimination legislation and the equal pay and sex discrimination legislation. The few elements of proactive legislation in the public sector do not cover the private sector, nor pay in any case. In response to some questions, Ms. Gauthier recalls that the Pay Equity Commission is promoting the Act and may conduct a survey on its own initiative or following a complaint. The Pay Equity Committees in companies of 100 or more employees are made up of employers and employees who have equal power.

Tunisia states that it does not have problems of unequal pay (in either the public or private sectors) thanks to pay scales, a parity commission and also collective agreements by sector which apply to men and women. With regard to women, the problem arises when they **get their first job** and when they want to access **managerial posts**. In Quebec, there is a programme of access to the job market targeted at women, ethnic minorities and the disabled.

The City of Cuzco (Peru) wants to create work opportunities, fundamentally for women, and demands work conditions that adjust to women's needs.

Does **Iran** have a promotion policy for **women in the job market**? Iran has laws that support their decision to work or to stay at home. Women are not forced to stay at home.

In **Mali**, the very first problem is the birth of a girl. The few girls who have received an education suffer a great deal of discrimination in the job market. Similarly, in politics, women do not receive the same operating resources as men. At government level and at the level of civil society, there are attempts to find solutions (grants, literacy courses). Legally, the Malian constitution in fact protects women, but in practice it continues to have problems in this regard. The National Employment Promotion Agency has been set up so that women have the right to assert themselves in other areas if they have no work. Many women have turned to microfinance.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Strengths

- access to studies is greater, but career paths are different to those of men (slower start, career break);
- there are gender-sensitive budgets;
- the social and political aspects are the engines of change: women involved in the economy enjoy greater involvement in decision-making in both the public and private sphere.
- Some top-down initiatives do exist:
  1. Canada: proactivity of the Pay Equity Act
  2. Iran: education is increasing the level of women's literacy and paid work
  3. protection of women's role in the family and social life
  4. Spain: grants to facilitate the work-life balance

### Problems

- there is horizontal gender segregation: by sector (female sector = tertiary) and vertical gender segregation: there are few women in decision-making and management posts;
- the feminisation of poverty: 70% of absolutely poor people are women and they only own 1% of the world's capital.
- the law is not always applied;
- the globalised economy makes things more difficult.

### Recommendations

Political objectives must be:

- to implement initiatives already taken;
- to make the tax system gender-aware;
- to collect data to measure the situation of women;
- to make equal pay legislation compulsory;
- to give the pay equity act a constitutional basis;
- to include men in all initiatives;
- to involve international economic players. ■

## B2 Women and entrepreneurship



Chairperson **Ms. Françoise FONING**

*World President, World Association of Women Entrepreneurs*

### ***Women and entrepreneurship: the special case of Africa***

The World Association of Women Entrepreneurs (FCEM) is a pioneer association founded in 1945 with the aim of promoting female entrepreneurship by uniting women with a common spirit of enterprise in a vast network of exchanges. Today, the FCEM is present in more than 60 countries spread over five continents with the majority in developing countries. The total membership is 600,000 persons.

Sixty years after its creation, the FCEM is the united voice and spokesperson for women entrepreneurs in the world, whose interests it champions vis-à-vis governments and international, public or private bodies.

One of the objectives of the FCEM is to promote access to information and communication technology by women in these countries. In fact, the industrial revolution which fashioned the 20<sup>th</sup> century world has been marked by the advent of heavy technologies, characterised by the perfecting of tools and machines operating first of all with steam and then with different petroleum derivative fuels. These tools and machines were generally, if not exclusively, used and operated by men. In view of the risks connected with using them, women were excluded from such activity.

Today, the development of computers and telecommunications, the emergence of the international network (Internet) and the advance of digital technology have established New Information and Communication Technologies such as the major technological revolution at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Now, the use of these technologies does not pose any physical risk and they can be available even at home, in other words, to hand and at any time. Their mastery only requires the use of an individual's intellectual capabilities, an area in which women are equal to men.

Consequently, women, who outnumber men on our planet, should also be more numerous in mastering and using these technologies, which are essential today in order to develop and run businesses properly within a context of the globalised exchanges. This is why, as part of the FCEM's plan of action for prosperity, these technologies are one of our priorities for promoting access to Information and Communication Technologies by women in these countries. For these ICTs are powerful vehicles for international commerce. The Candgo Internet platform which we have developed at the FCEM is significant in this regard because it facilitates the integration of women entrepreneurs in developing countries into the international trading system.

In fact, the FCEM Candgo Internet platforms are a state-of-the-art technology application which offers national associations and companies the possibility to communicate and to manage, promote and market their businesses online by using performance tools in Secure Virtual Offices and especially through the B to B Marketplace and the interactive partnership exchange. ■

Expert **Ms. Astrid PREGEL**

*President Feminomics Inc. (Fulton County, Atlanta, USA)*

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### ***Micro-Entrepreneur to Small Business Titan: The Importance of Microfinance to the Economic Empowerment of Women***

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Microfinance is often confused with microcredit, which was started about 30 years ago in Bangladesh by Dr. Muhammad Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. As microcredit is evolving to include other financial services it is now referred to as microfinance. The basic principle is that financial services, usually credit, are provided to the poor who do not qualify for standard banking services to start micro-businesses in the informal sector of the economy.

These microloans come to the world through **microfinance institutions (MFIs)**, which were often started by people passionate about working with the poor. Integrated services can also be offered, especially by the traditional non-governmental organizations: health and nutrition support and counselling, literacy education, business-related training, gender empowerment. The majority of these loans are given to women and for a lot of instances the idea of women receiving loans and running small businesses is brand new. That is also the reason why a lot of empowerment work takes place and why the husband and the family are being involved.

The interest rates, unless subsidized, are quite high because the administrative costs of small loans are very high. The rate can vary from 20% to 100%. Microfinance is an area where some people have real trouble with accepting how this all works, but it is necessary to make it financially viable and to move away from the limited pool of development assistance funding and charity money.

The estimate is that there are 3,000 MFIs in the world, of which 300 large ones and 30 or 40 that do 75% of the lending in the world. They are highly profitable, and by 2005 the larger ones have reached 114 million clients and the World Bank estimates that in 10 years they will reach 500 million clients. Because of the interesting returns on investment, commercial interests are moving into it.

Microfinance is important because of the 114 million people reached annually, about 80% are the poorest of **the poor** and those people are difficult to reach. Microfinance lending is growing about 30% a year and because of not being a hand-out, but a lending, it is an assistance with dignity and that makes it a unique way of reaching people.

Microfinance leads to improvements in nutrition, health, education levels and empowerment and women truly become empowered. The majority of the world's poor (between 60% and 80%) are **women** and, of the 80 million very poor reached by microfinance, 84% are women. Microfinance is of great importance for women because they produce 80% of the world's food, but only own 7% of the world's land, which means they have no collateral. They are disempowered from the beginning and microfinance is successfully improving their economic empowerment. The repayment rates of nearly 100% and the fact that interest rates cover costs makes it an economically very interesting activity.

**Women matter for the economy** because 40% of the measurable global economy is the result of women's work and over 50% of the informal unmeasured economy is in the hands of women. Since the 70's, women have been taking 2 out of 3 jobs around the globe. When unpaid household work is included, women work at least 35% more than men on a weekly basis. **Women also matter to poverty alleviation** because when a woman controls her earnings the benefits to her family are as high as 20 times greater than when income is controlled by her husband. When mothers control the family income children are taller, better educated and healthier. It is at the intersection of both truths that microfinance works.

As regards the **commercialization of Micro Finance Institutions**, it is important to note that this process can have an important advantage and disadvantage. Commercial markets could potentially meet the total demand of the world's poor where microfinance is now only reaching 10% of the world's poor. The dangerous outcome could be that the focus will be more on financial than on social returns.

Women could move from a micro-business to a small business and this is what is called the commercial enabling environment. If this link could be made and if women could become women entrepreneurs connected into the communities and their economies, poverty would be eradicated. ■



Speaker **Ms. Iram MASUD**

*Senior Director of the Women Empowerment Literacy and Development Organization (Pakistan)*

### **Women Entrepreneurs: Opening the Doors for Progress in South Asia**

Opening the doors of development for “Women Entrepreneurs” can accomplish economic progress in the developing countries in Asia. Women Entrepreneurs will mean SMEs that are headed by women. The definition of SME will be largely in accordance with the prevalent definition of SME in a majority of Asian countries.

**South Asia** is a very poor region with 31% of the population living on less than 1 dollar a day. It is the least literate region because of primary school attendance being only 74% and more than the half of the adult population being illiterate. Discrimination against girls begins before their birth in the form of female foeticide and it continues throughout whole lives in the forms of caste, class, religion and ethnic division.

The **problems faced by women entrepreneurs in Asia** are all caused by gender inequality. Although common sense dictates that developing women entrepreneurship can help achieve the daunting task of development, poverty reduction, literacy and improved health, the deep-rooted social and cultural set up hampers the economic contribution of 50% of the population in Asia.

Women have minuscule financial support and lack access to capital finance. Because of their limited access to financial resources and capital, women have no collateral, which banks may require for a loan. They lack collateral because they are denied ownership of land and property. Women are seen as credit risks because of their gendered image. They only receive 10% of commercial loans and we must also keep in mind that sometimes men – on a woman’s name- negotiate credit. This is what we call surrogate female entrepreneurship.

There is also a lack of training and capacity-building opportunities. In South Asia less than 2% of females are enrolled in second level vocational education because it is perceived as unnecessary for women and because they are always short of time because of magnified family responsibilities.

They have limited access to local and global markets because they are unable to market their goods and services strategically due to the lack of vocational or relevant training. They are prevented from travelling alone to international markets by their fear of prejudices and harassment. Because of being unfamiliar with the external world, they have social problems in establishing and operating a women-owned business.

As regards the lack of support by the government, trade bodies and women chambers of commerce, it is important to know that it is almost exclusively men who are represented in them and that they don’t even consider that women entrepreneurs could have problems. Once women become members, they are excluded from decision-making processes.

**Women-owned SMEs<sup>18</sup> in South East Asia** only represent a fraction (10%) of the total economic sector in Asia while they make up 49% of the population. Men (51% of the population) own 90% of SMEs.

Secondly, women entrepreneurs favour occupations that are not as rewarding as other economic ventures that are predominantly undertaken by men. The reason for this is also a deep-rooted social culture that succeeds in being prevalent even in initiatives undertaken by women.

Asia has a huge reserve of future women entrepreneurs who can make a significant contribution to the development of their nations and the Asian region as a whole. **The effects of Women Entrepreneurship Development in Asia** will be the creation of jobs, a contribution to GDP (10% increase), an increased consumption rate per household, the empowerment of women and gender equality, the creation of better family units and the improved health of families and communities, poverty reduction, improved literacy and educational achievements and wider social and economic development.

Women entrepreneurs can add to industrial output by a minimum of 4% to 10% or more, provide employment to about 20% more workers and increase South Asia’s exports by at least 15%. ■

<sup>18</sup> An SME employs less than 100 people and has a capital of less than 100,000 dollars. SMEs make up 90% of all enterprises in Asia. They account for more than 50% of the total industrial sector output in India and China and 10 to 25% in most other Asian countries. SMEs provide employment to about 50% of all the workers, they contribute to 50% of the GDP and provide about 35% of all export activities.



Speaker **Ms. Ann LEDUC**

*Secretary General, Canadian Securities Administrators (Canada)*

### ***Entrepreneurs, Leaders and Decision-makers***

Ms. Leduc has presented the trends, major achievements and major questions on women's progress as entrepreneurs, leaders and decision-makers. The findings<sup>19</sup> on the subject of women's progress as entrepreneurs, members of top management and members of boards of directors are the following based on contributions from women in Canada in a similar position to those in other developed economies: they own 800,000 companies; they contribute 18 billion Canadian dollars in economic terms and take 80% of the decisions on household expenditure. Women contribute 50% of taxes, 50% of retirement saving schemes and 50% of investments in trust funds. More than 50% of law, administration and accountancy students are women. Canada is the international leader in terms of women entrepreneurs by capital.

Some examples of women entrepreneurs in Canada:

- Ms. Liliane Colpron is the founder of Boulangerie Première Moisson, which she set up following a divorce because she wanted to feed her children. She has continued to develop her company and to provide quality products, bread products made in the traditional way. According to her, her success is founded on listening and intuition.
- Ms. Cora Mussely Tsouflidou is the founder of Cora Restaurants. In 2004, she owned 70 Cora restaurants. Cora restaurants provide business breakfasts and recently also lunches. She also founded her company following a divorce.
- Ms. Phyllis Lambert is the founder of the Canadian Center for Architecture and the daughter of a rich businessman who is passionate about architecture. She dedicates her fortune to the promotion of heritage and architecture. She has been awarded various qualifications and prizes.

The indicators for the difference between women's expectations and achievements in these areas are diverse. The difference can be confirmed by comparing women's position as engines of growth and employment with their position in top management and on boards of directors. Women who sit on boards of directors make up 12% and no progress has been made for 12 years.

Possible explanations for this difference are based on some recent studies relating to the myths affecting the perception of women as entrepreneurs, decision-makers and members of top management and boards of directors. Gender-based schemes, “a corpus of implicit or unconscious hypotheses on the subject of differences based on gender, which plays a sensitive role in the professional lives of men and women”<sup>20</sup>. The concepts of the gender-based schemes are identical for men and women: their expectations, their assessments, their performance as professionals and their self-perceptions. For example: ‘Real men don't eat quiche’ and ‘An iron hand in a velvet glove’. These zero-gain double-standard dilemmas<sup>21</sup> show that the typical leader is a man and women are atypical leaders. These perceptions are polarised. In general, women are over-qualified and their qualifications do not receive the recognition they deserve. They are competent but hated.

The Canadian government has recognised this dilemma and taken positive discrimination measures. It has adopted an Action Plan 2007-2010 so that equality of rights becomes equality in actual fact:

- the law on the Governance of State-owned Enterprises which provides for parity on their boards of directors in five years' time. These are only objectives and not requirements,
- the Pay Equity Act,
- parity of representation in places of power,
- promotion of equality in local and regional governance. ■

<sup>19</sup> Financial Women Association of Quebec Brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Public Finance, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Free translation by V.Valian, Why so slow? *The advancement of women*, MIT Press, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Free translation of *The double-bind dilemma for women in leadership: Damned if you do, Doomed if you don't*, Catalyst, 2007.



Speaker **Ms. Yvonne-Adélaïde MOUNDELE-NGOLLO**

*Minister for Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Supplies for the Congo;*

*Chairperson of the Conference of Ministers of Commerce of the African Union*

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**Women in management and female entrepreneurship. The case of the Republic of Congo.**

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Congolese women have become involved in entrepreneurship and the management of money-making activities. These activities are chosen in accordance with their little or poorly-remunerated know-how or in accordance with their investment in their daily lives. Therefore, they are present in the food industry and the small-scale processing of rural products, import-export, etc. 90% work in the informal sector.

**Three characteristics distinguish female entrepreneurship:**

- After 30 years of protected economy, the Congo now has a liberal economy and has had to develop training capacities and capacities to adapt to a changing business world.
- The DRC is a post-conflict country where the national economy has been devastated by the hostilities. This has exacerbated poverty.
- Women constitute about 52% of the population, 76% are illiterate and 30% participate in active life. Women's jobs are as follows: teacher, child-carer and housewife and production activities manager in rural areas.

Employment opportunities are minimal, which is why women have become involved in entrepreneurship and the management of money-making activities.

**Obstacles encountered:**

- The lack of profound recognition of the enterprising spirit.
- The absence of perspective: women who rationally manage the resources at their disposal (time, money, etc.) and other skills (solicitors, lawyers, etc.) are rare. An information and business opportunities management centre has been created at the Chamber of Commerce in the business capital. Access is free, but is still very little used by economic operators.
- Access to finance is difficult in view of the isolation and the refusal to consolidate when the trend should be towards solidarity (tontines, cooperatives, mutual guarantee societies, etc.).

- Poor motivation for continuing training in pursuit of perfection.
- Weak conquering or audacious spirit: women have little recourse to modern management, marketing or even communication methods, on which, however, an increase in turnover depends.
- Atavistic reaction of caution and deep need for protection (and assistance). Setting up a group of prominent business women is difficult. It would be necessary to invest in import and distribution chains for consumer goods in order to replace the non-national men who hold the monopoly.

**Approaches and solutions**

- Lending the funds which could come from the government (ministry, female political staff) or from financial backers.
- Creating a positive business framework.
- Encouraging new partnerships in order to make an impact on female entrepreneurship.
- Increasing the rate of monetarisation and bankarisation of the economy.
- Promoting "positive discrimination" for the benefit of female entrepreneurs.
- Encouraging women to mobilise.

In conclusion, general mobilisation is the solution. The strengthening of peace and security, the resources wasted during the hostilities and their repair could serve as economic activities. ■



Speaker **Ms. Vandana CHAVAN**

*Former Mayor of the City of Pune and Regional Antenna of Pune, India,  
Metropolis Women International Network*

**Reason to SMILE on their new-found confidence – a Pune initiative ([www.smilepune.com](http://www.smilepune.com))**

As in many cities in India, 40% of Pune's population lives in slums. A change in their mindset and lifestyle can be brought about by empowering women, who can become 'agents of change'. This is only possible by starting with the education and economic empowerment of women. During a literacy drive initiated by Ms. Chavan in the slums of Pune (2007) during her tenure as Mayor of the city of Pune<sup>22</sup>, 44,000 women learned to read and write. Young children were also schooled to teach their family to read and write.

Language was taught in small lessons teaching them also about health, vaccinations, how to save the environment, how to save money, how to vote in elections, why people should form groups, sexual education, ... These language classes were accompanied by vocational training courses (painting, cookery, stitching...) and those who completed the course successfully wished to convert this new skill into business but didn't know anything about marketing.

Their area of operation and range of products was extremely limited and, to be successful entrepreneurs, they had to manufacture a variety of gift products to reach out to a larger consumer base. The women received training in manufacturing attractive bags, folders, purses, pouches, mobile phone covers, ... as the region is predominantly industry/service and agriculture-based and hence does not have inherent art and craft varieties. It was, and still is, not very easy to divert women to skilled work.

To ensure quality control and timely delivery they were formed in clusters headed by a woman who could invest and provide them with design input. A shop was required and the Municipal Corporation, after some hesitation, took up the project as a joint venture with SFURTI: it provided infrastructure and initial financial support. The stores came to be called SMILE (Savitri Marketing Institution for Ladies' Empowerment). The women got a shop from where they could sell their neatly crafted products.

The initiative has been recognized as an example of 'best practice' under the Government's Poverty Alleviation programme. The State Government of Maharashtra has issued a notification to other cities to replicate this project, which should also be integrated in the Central Government Policy and programme. Poverty Alleviation is a major priority for the country, which has already provided 500 000 rupees for municipal corporations who set up a shop to market products. People can submit a project proposal to ask for a subsidy to start a project. Five years back, the government produced a notification saying that if a women's group is making a product that is required by the government, the government has to buy it with priority from the women's group and pay 20% more than they would pay to a particular tender. This link must be formed by other people in order to give those women access to this notification.

There has been a marked improvement in the economic and social condition of the beneficiaries. With their new-found confidence, these women are now becoming leaders in their own community in addressing issues such as population control, education, health, cleanliness and civic amenities. Their husbands support them and are proud of them – often they help them.

Women are functioning as 'agents of change' as they involve themselves in community initiatives/programmes – sanitation and cleanliness, children's health, advocating population control measures and also taking the government programmes to the people they are meant for. The atrocities or harassment by husbands or their relatives have decreased considerably as these women provide help in such an eventuality.

Because of the groups' dynamism they are ready to take up any challenge in the interest of society. They are now better informed as they read the newspapers – there are instances where they have sworn not to waste water after having read how important it was not to do so. They know why and for whom to vote. They know the ill effects of unclean surroundings on the environment and health. They are aware about HIV/Aids. They know their legal rights and approach the police or the courts for redress. They have been instrumental in uniting to get illicit liquor shops closed by protesting and have been successful in so doing. ■

<sup>22</sup> Vandana Chavan was elected Mayor of the city of Pune in 1997, the 50th anniversary of India's independence.

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## Debate and conclusions

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### DEBATE

The **Ivory Coast** used to be a member of the **FCEM** but has left. This contact needs to be renewed.

The **African Development Bank** provides **loans** in accordance with a country's dynamism, action plan and business plan. For people wishing to set up savings schemes, it is better to look for a partner, preferably an NGO, to facilitate this process. These NGOs can, in fact, increase their turnover by opening other branches in a village, a new community. The main thing is to know which NGO is active in a specific place and get to know them.

The mayor of one village in the Ivory Coast states that local elected representatives in a developing country also act as social assistants whilst his monthly budget does not exceed 300 CFA Francs. This situation deteriorated at the time of the crisis in the Ivory Coast. After this crisis, women started to do business in the informal sector, but due to too modest means they were unable to develop it. **A mayor or mayoress in a community in the Ivory Coast does not have the means** to help all these people every day. One mayoress took the initiative to develop a microfinance bank into which a number of friends put their contribution. The bye-laws were filed with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, a savings account was opened because this was an authorisation requirement and they rented premises. On the other hand, the reaction of the Ministry was that the security was inadequate. The mayoress deplores the fact that the lack of funds is blocking every investment initiative.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

Women are an important economic resource and they enjoy certain economic empowerment in the literacy, health, family and education fields.

#### Problems

Women are still victims of gender inequality: they have limited access to financial resources, they do not have enough support from the authorities and they experience a lack of training and opportunities. The consequence is that they have limited access to the market. Furthermore, they lack a spirit of enterprise.

#### Recommendations

- microfinance is required for women's entrepreneurship ;
- the government must play a proactive role ;
- networks of women (networking) are required ;
- gender equality must be acquired in local and regional governance ;
- women must be better trained and educated. ■

## B3 Women and technology

Chairperson **Ms. Ana María SCHWARZ GARCÍA**

*Third Councillor, Municipal Government of San Pedro, Mexico*



Expert **Ms. Micheline BRICLET**

*President of the Belgian Association of Women Entrepreneurs,*

*Development and ICT Commissioner of the World Association of Women Entrepreneurs*

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### ***Female managers at the top of Information and Communication Technologies and innovative and low cost web tools to manage and promote SMB's***

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#### **What is the World Association of Women Entrepreneurs Network?**

- A pioneer association founded in France in 1945 that has 60 years of experience and that covers more than 60 national associations on five continents (the majority in developing countries);
- A strong economic network of 500,000 enterprises representing all sectors of activity;
- An NGO with consultative status at the United Nations (Ecosoc Roster status 1996/31), the Council of Europe, representation vis-à-vis the European Union, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNDP and OECD, which provides this network with a wide view of the problems.

#### **The FCEM programme**

The Women Entrepreneurs' 'Window of Opportunity' Initiative is a project to strengthen technical and institutional capacities and the integration of ICTs. The aim of the programme is to promote the development of women's enterprises by strengthening the technical capacities of associations of women entrepreneurs in their role of educator and mentor and the economic development of enterprises through access to the regional and global economy and to international trade.

On the one hand, the target groups are national associations of women entrepreneurs selected in accordance with the following criteria : access and utilisation of the Internet and ICTs in their respective countries, the capacity and means to train women entrepreneurs and, on the other hand, the ultimate beneficiaries of the programme are the companies of women entrepreneurs who are members of the associations.

The benefits of the programme for associations of women entrepreneurs :

- the infrastructures and management of the associations are strengthened by the advancement of their members and by the provision of the Business Development Service (BDS) ;
- educators are trained in how to use WEB tools integrated into the FCEM-CandGo Net System in order to manage the associations and to set up networks on the Net ;
- the associations create websites and provide various types of online training : in business, tutoring, setting-up of enterprises and research into finance ;
- the associations generate income by promoting and marketing e-space Business (Virtual Offices) in the FCEM-CandGo Net System.

The benefits of the programme for women entrepreneurs, the PMEs, are :

- access to management training, commercial information, business networks ;
- access to online company management tools on the Web ;
- the promotion and marketing of their products or services in a B2B Market Place, managing tenders, partnerships and exchanges of information with members of the FCEM and all online companies ;
- the setting-up of new coaching, training and webmastering services, cyber centres and online management for affiliated companies.

The multiplier effects expected from the WEWIN programme :

- the WEWIN concept can be easily replicated throughout the world, in particular in developing countries or countries in transition ;
- it can be duplicated thanks to the partnership agreements of the NGO FCEM with the regional development banks for Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the private sector, institutional programmes in favour of North-South and South-South exchanges.

**The technologies provided by FCEM.**

FCEM provides a virtual office on the Web in order to manage communication, share addresses, diaries and documents, prepare tenders and invoices, set up its website and put its products and services online.

Therefore, this is a high-added value service which provides extra benefits such as time-saving (work delocalisation), productivity (centralisation and sharing of business data), economy (improvement in communication without investment), advertising : presence of the company and its products on the Web, 24h/24h connection, accessibility, total security, zero investment, absence of technical problems, easy-to-use and in several languages, online help in each tool.

The cost of €9 per month is paid by a foundation for the women's project. ■



Speaker **Ms. Dominique LALLEMENT**

*Independent consultant at the World Bank<sup>23</sup>*

### ***Technical Skills and Poor Women’s Economic Empowerment : Some lessons from Bangladesh and Liberia.***

The World Bank’s Policy on Gender dates from 1975. From the beginning, the intent was to have equal economic empowerment and social benefits for both women and men in the policies developed. The work was focused on women and social sectors improving women’s health and education. Only recently was everything pulled together in terms of economic empowerment that must be accompanied by social empowerment and welfare.

The 2006-2010 Gender Action Plan seeks to empower women to compete in the 4 essential markets: the product, financial, land and labour market. Four sets of actions were identified to implement the plan, some of which are technical assistance, research-based initiatives, research and statistics and communications.

Within this plan there is a very significant role to be played by the infrastructure sectors and services (water sanitation, energy, telecommunications, information technologies) that must facilitate equitable access to the 4 markets. Improved infrastructures also help women to save time, to facilitate access to information and education (e.g. the Internet) and to health (telemedicine). It is about telephony, drinking water, energy and improved sanitation. Intersectoral linkages are also very important.

In the urban public space, there are different gender needs and different constraints in the balance between work and home life and also the issue of risks and vulnerabilities as concerns inadequate infrastructure services (transport). The issue of women’s safety is very critical in development work. Access to utility services (water, sanitation, electricity,..) is also important, especially in slum areas.

On a remote island in the **South of Bangladesh** in 1998, the World Bank tested a new empowerment model for women. Here, women still worked with traditional fuels for cooking, less than 20% of the women were literate and there was no government policy on providing technical skills to women with limited education. The World Bank organized technology training sessions to make it possible for the women to earn money from off-grid energy services (the traditional income opportunities were fishing and agriculture) and to create a sustainable micro-enterprise. At the same time, the World Bank tried to remove the social and cultural discrimination associated with the gender role to be played by women.

One of the World Bank’s technical assistance programmes, ESMAP, provided two grants totalling 300,000 dollars. There was an implementation contract with a local consulting firm owned and managed by 2 women engineers. A women’s micro-enterprise of 35 women was created and the training was focused on technology and enterprise management training. Women appropriated the technology of assembling lamps on batteries (electric lighting was new in the area) and later specialized in 5 main electricity and technology-related business activities and the improvement of stoves. They brought the technology to other islands and the principle of teaching women technical work has now been adapted by other organizations. They have started expanding to the solar home system market, they have established 17 different sales units on different islands and they have hired 117 salaried employees (112 men). In this project, empowerment has taken place, thanks to which the whole household and community have improved.

In **Liberia**, the World Bank tried to assess women’s economic empowerment through their participation in the labour market created by infrastructure programmes during the reconstruction of the country after 15 years of civil war (1989-2003). Most of the women are illiterate and can only take lower-end jobs.

Some pilot projects have now been started to make women start micro-enterprises for infrastructure management like garbage collection, road maintenance, sanitation work. This would be a solution to the lack of many services in the urban environment in Liberia.

If we want things to change, political commitment is a prerequisite and we must, through infrastructure programmes, provide opportunities for literacy training and the validation of skills acquired on the job by the relevant government institution. The overall health issue must also be tackled by adopting an overall health approach that explains to them the effect of teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS on their futures.

The overall conclusions and recommendations are that the lack of sustained political and institutional commitment is the issue. Through technology, women can be leaders of change in their communities. ■

<sup>23</sup> Dominique Lallement worked at the World Bank for 3 decades but went into early retirement in 2006 in order to be able to work on the content and implementation of the World Bank’s Gender Action Plan 2007-2010



Speaker **Ms. Vera ENGELEN**

*Senior Project Manager at IBM*

*Member of IBM Women in Blue (IBM Belgium's Women's Leadership Council)*

### **Women in Technology at IBM**

Research proves that men and women have different complementary strengths, attitudes and approaches. The business world is warming to traditionally "feminine" values such as communication, coaching, organization skills, cooperation, flexibility and valuing relationships and feeling, having empathy, thinking long-term and team-building. A diverse team is more innovative and better equipped to handle complex projects. Two examples of successful products designed by women are the Philips Senseo coffee machine and the Volvo concept car 2004.

Within IBM, diversity is very important because of better business results, a better reflection of our customers, better performance, higher retention and productivity levels and higher employee satisfaction levels. But diversity is also<sup>24</sup> about integrating people with disabilities, gay and lesbian people, the maturing workforce and generational and cultural diversity.

IBM has Women's Leadership Councils in every country and, within these councils, the Women in Technology group was established in 1997 to support and encourage girls to pursue college and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; to attract and recruit technical women to IBM and to support the growth, development, advancement and recognition of IBM's female technical talent.

Women in technology is an important focus because high tech is a relatively new, exciting and evolving industry that is also very competitive. The current pipeline for technical workers is inadequate to fill the projected demand. In Belgium there is a shortage of 13,000 ICT persons and the European Commission estimates that by 2010 there will be a shortage of 300,000 ICT persons. Women are underrepresented in technical fields. At IBM, they only represent 22% of the technical population worldwide. It is very difficult to recruit female ICT persons because few girls are in an ICT-related course of study. In Belgium and the Netherlands, for example, 50% of all students are female, but only 10% of them do an ICT-related course of study.

Women are needed in ICT because they are best placed to design products for women, they are very creative and ingenious and the innovation that results from diversity is very important for ICT companies.

Catalyst's "Women in High Tech" Study from 2001 (done at Dell, HP, Oracle,...) found the following to be the most important barriers to the advancement of women:

- corporate culture at many high tech companies is exclusionary and does not support women's advancement; senior leaders are not committed to diversity;
- women do not have access enough experience and learning;
- the demands of work and careers are at odds with having a commitment to family and personal responsibilities;
- women feel isolated with a lack of role models, networks and mentors;
- companies don't strategically and objectively identify and develop top female talent;
- men see women as temporary workers, not as equals.

IBM organizes technical conferences, web lectures and specific training and development programmes for IBM women. IBM managers have gender diversity goals and are helped to recruit women. IBM also has networks and councils, talent programmes, mentoring, sabbaticals and work/life balance programmes. IBM also organizes a workshop for all women at all levels of IBM to strengthen their leadership skills, to develop their network, build relationships and shows them how to develop a dynamic leadership presence, whether in a meeting, a phone call, or in front of an audience.

In the short term, IBM tries to attract qualified technical women and therefore has external partnerships and relations with universities. In the long term, IBM tries to encourage girls and young women to pursue education and careers in mathematics, science and technology by organizing the one-week IBM E.X.I.T.E. (Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) Summer Camps for middle school girls, children's workshops and inviting the daughters of employees to come to the office for one day. ■

<sup>24</sup> The first woman was hired in 1935.


**Speakers Thera VAN OSCH**

*General Coordinator of the European Feminist Forum (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)*


**and Joanna SEMENIUK**

*Affinity Groups Coordinator of the European Feminist Forum*

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***The use of ICT in the European Feminist Forum***


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Europe is living through a phase of rapid change and transition due to multiple forces both within and outside Europe. There is the process of European enlargement, the decline of the nation state, new trends in the movement of people in search of jobs, and changes in identities and communities. For many women there is growing poverty and increasing marginalization. For others, new avenues have opened up. Gains made by women's rights movements are under threat and many new concerns for women are emerging.

The European Feminist Forum is a vibrant, jointly web-based and face-to-face space for discussions on how to re-politicize the feminist movement in Europe and to explore feminist agendas needed in today's Europe. Major feminist networks in Central, Eastern and Western Europe envisioned and have organized the European Feminist Forum process because feminism must be redefined and because they felt that on European social fora feminist items were not being discussed enough.

Cyberspace and FLOSS (Free/Libre/Open Source Software) is being effectively used as a networking tool for feminist activists and researchers. Most women working for the Forum are volunteers. The Steering Committee works on-line. The mailing list and the web-based server were developed to target social organizations. All documents can be put on-line.

From the on-line debates, the European Feminist Forum has already learnt that the main concerns of European Feminists are as follows :

- The need for economic change in Europe: changes in the economy, the labour market, migration and feminist alternatives
- Women's physical and sexual integrity: women's bodies, abortion and the politics of ending violence against women, redefining women's sexuality

- Our movement: feminist resource mobilisation and building political power

The structure of the EFF is twofold: first there is a period of intense discussion online and through Affinity Groups. EFF Affinity Groups were formed in 2007 and are non-hierarchical, open, participatory and innovative spaces for individual feminists and groups to organize around a specific topic and host debates across Europe. The themes currently addressed by the Affinity Groups are movement, preventing violence – peace and security, migration, labour market, ICT – new media, money and gender budgeting, secularism, feminist migrant agenda, feminist art, the European Union and Roma women. Currently there are 20 groups, ranging in size from 3 to more than 20 core members. Affinity Groups demonstrate their progress and contributions to the EFF through creating website content, such as discussion papers, videos, podcasts and other media. Some groups are also working with men on, for example, the redefinition of masculinity.

A lot of women have been empowered thanks to the website and now work with Content Management System (CMS) and Open Source allowing them to influence the way the website is designed. The Affinity Group Information and new Technologies is working on skill sharing and bringing the ICT closer to women.

After the online discussions, there is a face-to-face meeting in Poland from 13-15 June 2008, where a new European feminist agenda will be drawn up and where women will be taught how to use the website, to make videos,...



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## Debate and conclusions

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### DEBATE

- The European Feminist forum was inspired by the African Forum. In November 2007, the **African Feminist Forum** published a Manifest with similar information to the European one.
- In Africa, many women are interested in technology, but because of their training they are not able to enter the job market, this being the cause of the gap between Northern and Southern countries. In the Cultural Diversity Group at IBM, such programmes exist for developing countries. In this way IBM, organises **exchanges between North and South**.
- In Germany, there are programmes to teach boys and girls separately in **technical and natural sciences** so that girls open up more and become more confident. Boys, however, never learn how to interact with girls in technical fields. Boys and men must be educated at the same time to tackle sexism.
- If we compare the philosophy of **open source** with corporations, we can state that open source is free and can be made women-friendly by women themselves. Open source is a better empowerment tool.
- The connections developed in the infrastructure sector could be copied in other sectors because, more and more, we look at service centres where women can also get business services like Internet, training or child care facilities.
- The FCEM project meets the needs of many women. This is the result of a study which many entrepreneurs have looked at and which was submitted and leased to the International Labour Office. Technology can also be of relevance to women working in politics or in public administration. Intranets and extranets can be set up at any level and contacts exist with the governments of Mali and Cameroon. Chambers of Commerce could use it; the African Bank is interested in delocalising its experts.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

- New technology is a great empowerment tool: women can connect with other women, network, find information and save time. Work is globalised (e.g. online books, telemedicine).
- Women entering the technology sector bring an added value, change organisation culture, design successful products, learn technological skills and get more autonomy. Their command over technology increases and the whole household becomes more empowered.

#### Problems

- Technology still has a male connotation and culture (especially in Europe & U.S.A.)
- Too many technical training programmes for micro-enterprises are based on literate women. There is a great need for specific ICT-skills & courses for illiterate women.
- Lots of locations still do not have the Internet, so infrastructure and services are needed. Internet cafés can be a solution. Though it is important to state that English-speaking Africa has made much more progress than French-speaking Africa. Cyber-café are very expensive and often have connection problems.
- There are problems with the work-life balance.



### Recommendations

- Ministries of Education and Vocational Training must validate on-the-job training with a diploma so that those women who have had no education can prove to their next employer that they are qualified. The basic knowledge necessary for the use of technologies can be acquired on the road.
- Politicians must be aware of the importance of the empowerment of women and must show an important political will to work on this empowerment and to raise awareness on this issue. Together with the education sector and companies, they need to work on this topic worldwide.
- Educate mothers about what their children will be learning and what a technology career for their girls can be. Parents and children talk more together and parents lose their fear of new technologies. They can understand and support their daughters.
- (Technology) tools must be made gender-friendly.
- Infrastructure and services (cyber-café) must be free of charge for all citizens. Governments should provide the necessary satellites. (cf. free internet access and instructions in Mexican cyber-kiosks).
- It is necessary to start with the basics with girls.
- In many countries, the population is ageing rapidly and a lot of older people are women who will, in the future, rely on technical systems and communication systems in their daily activities. These women also need to be educated in order to be able to work with the technical support systems and programmes.
- Economic assessments of the work carried out by women could encourage companies to recruit women. ■

## B4 Work-family conciliation



Chairperson **Ms. Maite ARQUÉ I FERRER**  
Mayor of Badalona (Barcelona – Spain)

### *Mothers' and Fathers' Assembly Hall Programme*

#### **Analysis of what the programme is and why it exists**

The first demands for a balance between work and family life were made in the 1970s and 1980s in the most developed countries. Meanwhile, the term 'reconciling family and work life' has gained much attention in the media and discussion of the issue has occupied a significant place in political agendas. The issue had never been considered before because the world of work was conceived for male workers who did not have to manage their domestic time, which was delegated to women.

From then to the present, a great public debate has been taking place that has led to broader consideration of the organisation of public and private activities in an urban environment.

There is also a demand for society to be aware of the different types of families that are emerging and to finally acknowledge that both family diversity and one-parent families where only the father or mother is present (Sara Panella, 2005) are leading to the gradual disappearance of the traditional notion of the family.

Paradoxically, the activities that are not valued and not recognised socially are precisely those directly committed to sustaining human life. Consequently, behind the problems linked to reconciliation and working hours lie a contradiction and a much deeper conflict which call into question the foundations of our social and economic system.

As a result, we are confronted by a society that reflects an unresolved conflict in the area of equality between men and women.

According to De Singly, reconciliation must be replaced by policies aimed at transforming the male way of seeing and being in the world and at revaluing the tasks of caring for and helping people. The crux of the matter is to achieve male joint responsibility in domestic and family work.

For all of these reasons, to speak of reconciliation is not only to talk about women, but also to talk about men and their participation in the domestic-family setting; to talk about the distribution of tasks between both men and women, as well as between fathers and mothers and sons and daughters, and to talk about social transformation through policies on time-sharing.

The experience of the Mothers' and Fathers' Assembly Hall Programme as a tool for reconciling family and work arises from a demand by women in Badalona and the surrounding areas at the 1<sup>st</sup> Women's Congress of the North of Barcelona Province, held in March 2006. The main aim of this Congress was the creation of a broad framework for women's social participation.

The Mothers' and Fathers' Assembly Hall Programme attempts to bring municipal services to citizens, in order to achieve gender equality and daily welfare.

#### **Organisation running the Programme**

Within the City Council's Social Services and Equality Policies Department, the Councillor for Women has the task of promoting and coordinating different programmes related to social and community action and to policies on time aimed at achieving gender equality.

One good practice is the Time Bank programme, involving 50 people (men and women) prepared to exchange time, which is then dedicated to caring for people. This opens the way to get to know neighbours and to resolve daily living needs. In this bank, time is the main asset and, therefore, the unit of exchange.

All of these programmes stem from transversal vocation, in other words, the intention to work as a team with other municipal departments (social services, education, culture, cohabitation, etc.) and also with the social services network made up of the different districts and women's organisations in the city. ■



Expert **Ms. Janine HADDAD**

*Vice-Chairperson of the Ile-de-France Regional Council Responsible for International and European Affairs – Paris*

### ***Time conciliation on the Île de France***

The Île de France, a large region of Europe with 12 million inhabitants, is rich but has territorial and social problems and inequalities. Families in the Île de France are housed further and further away from their place of work. Travelling time for parents is sometimes quite significant and adds to the working day.

In the Île de France, childcare provision is very inadequate despite numerous experiments initiated mainly at town hall, department and regional level and it is often out of synch with parents' expectations in terms of proximity and childcare service.

These problems are increasing for the most vulnerable people. In the Île de France, there are many single-parent families of which 85% comprise women and their children. There is job insecurity and switching between unemployment, employment and training, and, in this case, the childcare facilities are unsuitable. This results in tighter and tighter time-management which harms the wellbeing of the child and the social life of the parents.

There is a problem of prejudice and it is absolutely necessary to focus on the wellbeing of children and parents. With regard to early childhood, it is important to invest and not to think in terms of cost but rather of investment. We must initiate the emergence of innovative solutions, the setting-up of childcare facilities to suit parents in all parts of the region, and an ambitious early childhood policy needs to be reorganised not only for demographic vitality, but also for social and economic dynamism.

Young parents must be placed at the heart of the system in order to support their desire to have children. The responsibilities of these childcare services must also be clarified.

The department is still the leader for this policy because it has the experience in early childhood matters, but it is also necessary to work closely with general councils (departments), regional councils, local elected representatives (mayors) and family allowance funds.

The Île de France Region has a duty of professional training, which is its primary responsibility, and needs to adapt this policy to suit such training. Companies must play a fundamental role.

The Île de France Region must encourage large companies to set up company crèches and childcare services particularly suited to the areas where there are many jobs. 7,000 jobs are being created every year in the vicinity of Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport, for example. Two-thirds of these are women's jobs in hotels and catering, and women often cannot take these jobs because of problems of transport and unsuitable childcare services.

Some examples of initiatives in the

- support for 'Paris Pioneers', the female incubator which provides a range of day-time support services for women entrepreneurs with children, unemployed female executives, female company sponsors;
- as part of the cooperative and voluntary sector, the region lends its support to the creation of mobile crèches in the Île de France, to alternative childcare services such as the creation of intercompany crèches;
- the Montmartre Project: support for childcare services in a district with atypical lifestyles aimed particularly at single-parent families;
- part-time school project: children of 2-3 years of age go to school in the mornings and are looked after by child-minders from 11.30 am onwards;
- outlook: signing the Charter (CEMR) on Gender Equality in Local Life which confirms this principle which will be included in the action plan.

In another context, at European level, the region and the *prefecture* have drawn up an operational programme for ERDF and ESF funds for the period 2007-2013. In terms of social innovation, the project sponsors (institutions, agglomerations, companies) are encouraged to innovate and integrate this early childhood services dimension in order to promote job access for parents.

The battle against discrimination and gender dimension is an integral part of all political, economic and social policies pursued by the region of the Île de France. ■



Speaker **Ms. Annemie PERNOT**

*Social attaché – Belgian Permanent Representation to the European Union*

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### **Reconciling family and work**

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The subject of the reconciliation of family and work is the great challenge of our time. This subject occupies a central role in the debate on the functionality of the labour market and economic and demographic efficiency, but it is also crucial to guaranteeing a more equal and balanced social life. The important link between the equality of men and women and the distribution of paid and unpaid work in our society means that it is impossible to talk about the reconciliation of family and work without mentioning gender equality.

First of all, you have to look at the figures that show the continuing segregation within the labour market, the distribution of tasks within the family and society, and the various instruments used in the various Member States of the EU in order to achieve a better distribution of these tasks. The ageing of the population means that Europe is in serious need of women in the labour market. In this light, the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs sets a target of an overall employment rate of 70% for men and 60% for women by 2010. The combination of work and family is, of course, an important aspect in this. The figures show that women do more part-time work than men, and that women work more if they do not have children, while men actually work more as they have more children. Moreover, women spend more of their free time on household tasks and care duties, in other words on unpaid work. Tasks within the family are generally better distributed where there are no children. Since satisfactory day-care is a crucial element in this connection, the Lisbon Strategy sets targets in this regard relating to day-care provision by 2010.

How has policy at EU and national level provided an answer to these challenges? First there is the European Commission's Roadmap for gender equality 2006-2010, in which the combination of work and family is an important topic and which aims to achieve greater flexibility in how work is organised. In addition, the ministers responsible for equal opportunities and equality at work signed a pact in 2006 in which they committed to engage in an active policy in their home countries on the combination of work and family. Finally, the Beijing indicators in the platform for action (under which all the Member States commit to work together towards specific objectives) in 2000 related to the combination of work and family, but these have not yet been evaluated. In addition, there are European Directives that must be implemented in every Member State: the right of pregnant women to return to the same position after their maternity leave, the right for parental leave for both men and women (3 months before the child is 8 years old), the right to equal pay for equal work, and non-discrimination between part-time and full-time employees.

The final form of this policy at national level varies in each Member State. The Scandinavian model combines lots of childcare with long and well-paid parental leave. In the continental model the predominant feature is lots of part-time work, which is mostly done by women, though. In the Mediterranean model, childcare often takes place within the family and there are no regulations providing well-paid leave. Then there is the mixed model (countries like Belgium), which is a combination of extensive childcare and paid parental leave. The island model (UK) has a lot of part-time work but not much regulation of time off.

A major role has also been set aside for the social partners, which have a right in Europe to draw up collective European conventions that then have to be translated into Europe Directives. There is, of course, also a need for financial support (e.g. programmes such as ESF, PROGRESS). What is needed most of all, however, is to convince businesses, the trade unions and the employers' organisations to seek solutions.

One important conclusion is that policy relating to this problem is not neutral. When the emphasis is placed on combining work and family and the re-organisation of work, it is, after all, particularly [sic]. To that end, preference can be given to expanding childcare provision, which is more neutral for men and women. ■

Speaker **Ms. Sara PAIT**

Board Director of the Peruvian Institute for the promotion of Sustainable Development (IPES)

### ***Urban Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean in relation to the reconciliation of family and work***

Speaking about this item is appropriate because most people in Latin American Countries are self-employed in microenterprises or in self-managed jobs in the peri-urban zones of big cities, former farming sites that became urban sites where the population keeps on farming.

Ms. Pait presents the results of the Regional Seminar in Gender and Urban Agriculture in Latin American and Caribbean Cities (2006), promoted by the RUAF Foundation (Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security), associating farmers all over the world, and IPES, which represents RUAF in Latin America, within the Programme 'Cities Farming for The Future', where six gender case studies were systematised and presented in relation to gender issues.

Lessons related to work/family relations were taken from urban agriculture projects developed in the East and North-East Regions of Belo Horizonte (Brazil, 2001-2003), Rosario (Argentina, 2002-2006), San Luis Tlaxiátemalco en Xochimilco (Mexico, 2004-2006), Havana (Cuba, 2004-2006), and Guantanamo (Cuba, 200-2006).

The **trends** of recent years are:

- that the demands of different actors in relation to gender, intergenerational aspects, ethnic origin, migration and displacement are incorporated and that all subgroups (former and new inhabitants) are involved in the projects;
- gender issues are considered to show the integral impact of interventions;
- strategies are accessible and appropriate in the cultural context of the action.

The **basic assumptions** on which the interventions are based are:

- that there is enough information about benefits for (women in) households from urban agriculture;
- that there is empirical evidence and a solid basis for investigation;
- that there are clear concepts, accessible project executors and the avoidance of oversimplification of concepts ("just women's issues").

### **The study of some gender strategies**

In *Cuba*, men and women were made facilitators by creating boys' and girls' interest circles about urban agriculture and the environment. Besides political programmes, community participation, adapted budgets and mass media attention were found necessary when tackling gender issues.

In *Xochimilco* a gender study showed that urban agriculture was able to absorb a high proportion of women who were not employed in other salaried activities during the urbanization of the region.

As a result of these studies, general indexes for women's decision-making and their freedom of movement were created. The result was that (especially elder) women working in agriculture had more decision-making power and freedom of mobility than women working in other activities and this thanks to regular visits to the market.

A lot of aspects still have to be studied: inter-gender and inter-generational relations in the households, valuation of work, third age role in productive activities,...

In *Belo Horizonte* in Brazil all the family members were included in workshops to break the division between male and women's issues. Cartoons and the work of male assessors were used to create a distance from typical male and female roles.

In *Rosario* in Argentina, men's and women's organisations in urban agriculture were able to create networks at local and regional levels. The project promoted income-generating activities, interchange and socialization spaces so that women could gain autonomy and reaffirm their collective identity as producers. Some risks did remain though: saturated leadership, the creation of competition between women instead of a redistribution of power. ■



Speaker **Ms. Martine BLANC**

*Expert in local and international democracy and mentoring (Canada)*

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### **Work-family conciliation and municipal family policies in Quebec**

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The concept of a specific family policy emerged in Quebec in the 1980s under pressure from civil society, particularly women's groups and trades unions. In 1983, 29 associations were formed with a view to setting up such a policy and in 1985 a round of regional consultations throughout the province produced initial recommendations and the first Quebec family policy declaration. Two other important stages were the creation, on the one hand, of the Ministry of Childhood and Family Affairs and, on the other hand, of the *Carrefour action municipale et famille* commissioned by the Government of Quebec to provide municipalities with technical support for local family policy (to assess the requirements, organise consultations, training sessions, etc.), within the context of the economic crisis at the time. The concerted Family Plan, adopted in 2002, required municipalities to become involved in family policy at local level due to their proximity to citizens. For many localities, it was a matter of enticing those families which had deserted them back into town by improving their quality of life. During consultation for the first Quebec policy on work-family conciliation, the *Conseil du statut de la femme* insisted that the equal opportunities dimension be integrated into family policy and that a new social contract be established for gender equality. Consequently, a 2007-2010 action plan was drawn up and municipalities received grants from the Government of Quebec to implement their family policy. This policy has borne fruit, since 225 projects in 200 municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants were started. 80% of Quebec families are thus affected by these projects. A future plan is scheduled for municipalities with a minimum of 5,000 inhabitants. As family policy agents at regional level, municipalities play a quadruple role :

- service provider : (adapting the opening hours of municipal facilities, for example) ;
- planner : (intergenerational parks, for example, where children can meet older people) ;
- catalyst : creating a link with regional partners :
- employer : conducting a family policy for their own employees.

Women's contribution to family policy in Quebec is of paramount importance, since it is a majority of women elected municipal officers who are responsible for family policy and 95% of the administrative council for the *Carrefour action municipale* are women.

In conclusion, an effective work-family conciliation policy depends, of course, on political will implemented by an action plan and financial means which result in concrete projects, but also on a clear definition of the family – something which is not obvious in our time (single-parent families, reconstructed families, etc.) and on the quality of family life. Furthermore, this policy must be conducted in conjunction with others, particularly gender equality and differentiated gender analysis, which involves the specific training of all active players in this context. ■

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## Debate and conclusions

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### DEBATE

- The following are crucial factors in the success of **day-care centres**: location (e.g. easily accessible by public transport), opening hours and affordability. The potential integration of day-care centres and elderly care was also discussed, and reference was made to the differing situations in the countryside and in urban areas.
- What is the **impact** of measures relating to part-time work, etc., on **women's working opportunities**?
  1. In **Spain**, a law is being brought forward that will deal with caring for the elderly (with the result that women will not have to give up their jobs in order to be able to look after their parents).
  2. In **Québec**, women often take leave in order to look after their parents. Childcare there costs 7 dollars a day (depending on income).
- What is the role of **private companies**?
 

There are very varying types of 'families' for whom public and private companies may be needed.
- The EU has carried out a comparative study of the **costs of childcare**. In Belgium, for example, childcare costs between 2 and 20 Euros per day, depending on income, and that amount is then tax deductible (up to a specified limit). The equal opportunities ministers of the EU met on 5 December 2007 to discuss the "balanced roads of men and women". In the Île-de-France, there are mixed day-care/school structures.
- In **Peru**, **local development** plays the central role. Before political decisions can be taken, they have to know what the situation is (to avoid getting the decisions wrong).

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Advantages

- The situation of women in the world of work, both public and private
- Highlighting of the importance of institutional support for equality and family policies on the part of governments and local authorities, because of their proximity to the needs of men and women citizens
- Highlighting of the role of the communications media in eradicating the prejudices and stereotypes in our societies

#### Disadvantages

- Lack of economic resources to finance programmes
- Lack of investment by employers and unions
- Lack of services with varied opening-hours to support reconciliation with family needs

#### Recommendations

- Set up a partnership between the public and private sectors
- Create and/or use the existing laws and instruments to promote reconciliation of family and work life ■

## B5 Education, training and employability



Speakers, Members of the QUING network :

**Ms. Lut MERGAERT,**

*Senior Consultant at Yellow Window Management Consultants (Belgium)*



**Ms. Mieke VERLOO**

*Lecturer in Political Science and Women's Studies at the Nijmegen School of Management*

*& Institute for Gender Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen;*

*Coordinator of IWM, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna;*

*Scientific Director of the QUING network*



and **Ms. María BUSTELO**

*Professor Doctor at the Faculty of Political Sciences and Sociology,*

*University of Complutense, Madrid (Spain)*

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Participants in the debate :

**Agnès Hubert**

*member of the Bureau of European Policy Advisors of the European Commission*

**Myria Vassiliadou**

*Secretary-General of the European Women's Lobby*

*Founding Board Member of the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (Cyprus)*

**Nathalie Wuiame**

*Belgian gender trainer and consultant*

**Katlijn Demuyck**

*Flora, Belgian Network for Training and Job Creation with Women*

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### Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies

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The research project QUING started in 2006 and compares gender equality policies in the EU-25 plus Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey. The project is organized in such a way that it would fit into gender training at the end of it. One of the problems identified in Europe is the lack of an exchange of ideas between the people who commission training, those who do the training and academics. As a result of the commercial nature of training, there is a need for intervention and the establishment of standards.

#### The OPERA subproject (María Bustelo)

OPERA aims to present a minimum set of standards for gender training in Europe. It is about the integration of knowledge on gender, intersectionality and European gender equality policies into operational standards for gender+ training, including the training of trainers.

OPERA is studying equality policies in the 29 countries, and in the European Union as a whole, with a particular focus on gender training. A summary of the results has been made through state-of-the-art studies in the countries. Who are the organizers of the training? Who are the trainers and the targets?

It was necessary to define what is understood by gender training, and the study was limited to training commissioned by public institutions, for which reason it targeted politicians, civil servants and public administrators. The focus was on gender training aimed at facilitating the incorporation of a gender equality perspective into the policy-making process as this is one of the gender-mainstreaming responses in many countries.

The **results** are that gender training is not regularly or systematically organized. The landscape is diverse.

As regards **commissioners and organizers** it was seen that

- of the 3 main state bodies, the executive body is the most common one in gender training. Should the political responsibility for gender training and gender mainstreaming lie with members of parliament and politicians as well as with civil servants and administrators?
- Equality institutions are the main commissioners of gender training. They still seem to be necessary in order for gender training to be initiated. But what are the strengths and weaknesses of equality bodies versus public administrators and general training institutions?
- NGOs have a strong role because they can also be commissioners and organizers rather than merely trainers.
- EU funds are important in promoting gender training in the Member States

As regards **targets**:

- most training courses are aimed at public administrators or civil servants within public administrations;
- in some cases, high-ranking policy-makers are the main targets;
- politicians are not the main targets;
- in some cases, exclusively women were targeted;
- NGOs can also be targets.

As regards **trainers**, it was not possible to carry out exhaustive research. They often come from NGOs, most of them are individual trainers (academic or private consultants), trainers from international institutions and transnational training sessions can be interesting. Would a network of gender trainers be convenient in Europe?

**Content** can be about gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, gender impact assessment, equality and employment, violence, women and politics, anti-discrimination. A lot of intersectionality was found.

Very different **methods** were seen, with the interactive approach being judged the best. Different **formats** are used: longer or shorter periods, varying intensity, face-to-face or online, voluntary or compulsory. Sometimes there was no monitoring or evaluation; in other cases they had very different meanings.

#### The online survey

The survey was launched in the summer of 2007 and was online for 12 weeks. The questionnaire was sent out by all the national researchers to the people identified in their country. The targeted respondents were gender-training organizers (referred to as 'commissioners') in public organizations.

57 responses were received from 20 different countries plus 1 from the European Commission. There was a high response from Spain and Austria.

The types of organization that commission gender training are mostly federal or state-level administrative bodies (nearly half of the sample) and equality bodies (one third of the sample).

The geographical scope of the organizations' activities is the national or regional level for nearly half the sample. This result is mainly due to Spain, where several regional bodies responded to the questions.

The organizations were asked to describe gender training that has taken place in their countries and, in total, 210 training courses were described, of which 44% came from Spain. Most of them were organized by equality bodies. 62% of these training courses lasted between 1 and 3 days and nearly all training courses were conducted on a face-to-face basis.

The large majority of the training courses were aimed at developing personal competences, followed by policy implementation and integrating gender into policy definition. Nearly all training courses take place within office hours and 43% of them provide an incentive (certificates, credits,...). 7% of the training courses were for women only, targeting a specific group of women. The number of participants is mostly more than 10 and a participation fee is only asked for in 33% of cases. Trainers are mostly professionals or consultants, followed by academics. There was no sex balance among the trainers and this was not important for the commissioners.

Trainers are recruited via informal methods (intern pool, personal contacts, recommendation). The criteria for hiring a gender trainer are gender competences and the professional background of the trainer. The personal characteristics of the trainers are also important. They should be flexible, open, communicative and have excellent social skills.

Good gender training has the following characteristics: professional skills on the part of the trainer(s), good personal characteristics on the part of the trainer(s), interactive and participatory methodology and techniques, the practical dimension of the training, immediate applicability and relevance for the trainees in their professional activity and a homogeneous composition of the group undergoing training in terms of professional background and gender knowledge.

46 respondents described an example of good practice. Mainly they described a face-to-face training course of 2 days in length provided in discrete, non-consecutive modules, within ordinary working hours, with an emphasis on development of the personal competences of the participant and on the practical applicability of the acquired knowledge and competences. 20% also address other inequalities. Active involvement of the participants, a homogeneous group of participants and the absence of a fee were all described as very important. Participation must be voluntary and there must be recognition of having taken part in the training. A good training course is evaluated by the trainers, the trainee and the organizer.

### Reaction of the panellists:

**Katlijn Demuynck (Flora)**: The majority of Ms. Demuynck's experience as a gender trainer did not involve working for politicians or civil servants. The gender training in which she has been involved had a very diverse audience.

Ms. Demuynck is surprised that intersectionality is so exceptional. Intersectionality for Flora came naturally because they were dealing with a very determined target group: people who were accompanying poorly educated women from a diverse background. There was therefore, right from the beginning, a mix of gender, ethnicity, class and education. Training was never just on gender. This opened up perspectives and made it possible to overcome the classic resistance towards gender, which is the feminist issue.

It is not surprising that, in the cases of good practice, the compulsory element was not retained, although compulsory training courses can also be examples of good practice. It depends on the context and courses must be kept short because people often have the feeling that they are not learning anything new, whereas when they can learn from each other's experiences something can be opened up.

Ms. Demuynck is curious to learn more about the combination of online training and face-to-face training.

**Nathalie Wuiame** is a researcher who conducts gender training.

Ms. Wuiame found it interesting that the focus is on the integration of gender equality perspective into the policy-making process. There is a problem with gender mainstreaming as an objective in itself because the reason why is not dealt with any more.

Gender mainstreaming is now a policy obligation and that is a risk because tools are put in place without a clear objective.

The single compulsory training session Ms. Wuiame gave was a bad experience because of the resistance she felt. They think inequality is a matter of personal choice and the whole issue for the training is to deconstruct that.

**Agnès Hubert** is concerned with gender equality policy and the advancement of gender equality for which gender training is a tool. Ms. Hubert applauds the QUING project, which puts gender training on the table.

The big problem of training is that people feel that there is no gender inequality.

Ms. Hubert was surprised to see that there are almost no private commissioners of gender training that were consulted. The QUING team states that they were not able to reach them in the different countries and that the focus was on the public sector.

The question of mentoring is a big issue that must be debated and should have its place within a study. Mentoring is sort of a one-on-one training that is put on a continuum.

**Myria Vassiliadou** confirms that the study is very important.

In some countries, equality bodies have now been merged with other bodies and gender would be one of the many things they deal with, which is a positive for the intersectionality aspect. In some bodies, however, there is a worry because gender in some countries is at the bottom of the equality agenda.

Ms. Vassiliadou is very much surprised about intersectionality being so exceptional and thinks that this is very much linked to who the trainers are. In some instances there is a lack of seriousness in the studies by the people who commission them. As regards trainers' qualifications, there should be some standards.

At the European Commission, people without any background were working on the gender item and that does not help the agenda of the European Commission. The roadmap for equality for 2006-2010 has not done much yet to have an impact on gender training and gender mainstreaming (according to an EWL study).

In many instances, depending on the context, gender training should be compulsory. It is not less important than IT skills and as we are talking about a way of working, gender should be an integral part of that. You need to invest time and effort in explaining why gender is so important.

The feminist approach can be different to how many people understand gender equality training and it would be interesting to know more about what this feminist approach would entail.

And once someone finishes a study, it would be good for the people who commissioned the study, especially in the civil service, to be targeted and lobbied in a particular way so that they know more about the study's importance.

## Discussion with the audience

### • Goals and objectives of good gender training in Europe :

What are the gaps, strengths and weaknesses of the aims of gender+ training in Europe?

The '+' in Gender+ is a sign of intersection and indicates that gender equality may not be separated from other inequalities.

The audience thinks that gender training should be part of something broader. If you want real institutionalization of gender in an organization in terms of policy development, training is just one of the actions that must be put in place.

Otherwise, it is possible that you train people who are not in the position to implement gender in the institution. Those people work on their personal development, know more about it, but what can they do with these skills? Therefore, it must be part of a larger set of policies to obtain gender equality.

Gender+ equality policies do not articulate clearly enough what they want to achieve and this is often for strategic reasons. This is because a vague political decision is acceptable to everyone.

### • Content of gender training :

it is not always clear what the content of gender training should be. Managers, academics and audience understand different things. Should there be minimum criteria for content? Should we think about gender competence?

### • Resistance :

how can a gender trainer overcome the resistance of the audience?

In public administration, women are often in a privileged situation and therefore must also be convinced about the fact that inequalities remain. It is important to use figures, statistics, arguments and tangible examples to prove this to them. It is often more acceptable for them that social and economic inequalities remain.

Officials want to learn techniques that help them to do something concrete about a problem.

As concerns practice, it is important to work with successful pilot projects to convince the others. People often think that gender inequality is not something to be tackled by politicians as it is about personal choices.

Another good method is to include a section on the international obligations that States already have. This shows that it is part of their job.

- **How to deal with the other inequalities as linked to gender ?**

In the US, the most important intersectionality elements are race and class but it is very difficult to discuss the issue of class in Europe, where it remains a taboo. Women are typically at the bottom of the economic scale, both in the developing countries and in the US. Discussing how the issue of class impacts on a gender decision-making process is fundamental because, in the US, the issue of race correlates with gender as it is women of colour who are mostly at the bottom of the economic echelon.

The equal opportunity departments in Austria and Germany are dealing with diversity and have women-oriented their policies, showing a big resistance against all the rest. For these countries, the concept of intersectionality is very interesting.

In Europe, equality departments discuss a lot of items, but class is never one of them. In some studies, it is now emerging a bit and is coming back on the agenda. People often speak about poverty, but poverty is something else. Class should be dealt with and discussed because it intersects as much as gender with everything else.

For time and money reasons, all the causes of discrimination are very often lumped together. If, however, we want to be very effective, we must understand that it is from the inside that people will find the arguments, the strengths to show that there is a real problem. From 'inside' means that we take the strengths of discriminated women, lesbian women, black women,... The ambivalence is about the specificity of gender on the one hand and about the importance of the other causes of discrimination.

- **Methodology and techniques :**

What are the conditions that make a gender training session work ?

It is important to find best practice in the method of giving gender training. The difficult part is that nobody monitors the quality of gender training and if the quality is not monitored problems can arise or people risk thinking that they are properly tackling the problem when they are not.

The technique used must be very different for different audiences and target groups, but people do not necessarily understand the differences. Any specificity must be addressed.

The information centre for women in Belgium, Amazone, recently did a project on examples of good practice.

In Montréal (Canada), along with the Federal government, there is a regulatory body "the Status of Women" that trains and licenses trainers. This body can provide a list of trainers, provides a back-up and does a result analysis. The fact that diverse groups are asking for the training means that there is a wide spectrum of ways to deliver such training. ■



Speaker **Mr. Alexander A. MEJÍA**

*Executive Director of CIFAL Atlanta (Centre International de Formation des Acteurs Locaux - International Training Centre for Local Actors), an International Training Centre for Government Authorities and Civil Society Leaders*

### **Gender equality and government**

In 2006, CIFAL developed a global initiative on gender equality and government. CIFAL does not take a wide-ranging approach to gender equality and only works in this particular niche, which, in the case of the United States, was unoccupied. Nobody was working on gender equality and government issues. Accessibility to government posts, the convenience or inconvenience of quotas, the turnout rate in elections...

CIFAL Atlanta is part of a network of 12 centres of UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research). This programme is possible thanks to the vision of 2 women, the heads of the governments of the city of Atlanta and of Fulton County, which is the region in which the seat of Atlanta is situated.

The 12 CIFAL centres in the world work towards the UN Millennium Development Goals, which have to be completed by 2015. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women form an integral part of the human development goal and CIFAL focuses on the system in itself, such as primary and secondary education.

All of the CIFAL centres were created in 2004 and are good examples of public-private partnership. The CIFAL centre in Atlanta covers all the 34 nations of the Americas except Brazil, where a sister organisation works with CIFAL Atlanta and also covers the Portuguese-speaking nations of Africa.

There was a kick-off session in November 2006. In May 2006 there was a ministerial meeting in Quito (Ecuador) and in September 2007 CIFAL completed the Americas' Gender Equality and Government Forum with a number of ministers, vice-presidents, senators, mayors,... There were scholarships already in Geneva, Shanghai and Durban and in September 2008 there was another scholarship in the Americas. There will be more meetings in Jordan, Beijing and Johannesburg and all these long discussions will be wrapped up in Atlanta in September 2009. CIFAL Atlanta is going beyond the Americas.

According to Mr. Mejía, peer-to-peer assistance is a method that works and makes a difference. Understanding an issue and learning how to deal with an issue is different for different types of professions. People like mayors, presidents and ministers make a decision based on good faith that a project will succeed. If, however, someone can tell you about an example of good practice and all the challenges, figures and mistakes from that project, that is very instructive.

A CIFAL session starts with a self-assessment exercise and continues with an encounter, a dialogue in the form of a workshop in which knowledge is shared. Afterwards, the participants leave behind a one-pager in which they commit themselves to do something in the next year. CIFAL gets a copy and does some follow-up and sees that, in the end, often only one third of the intentions have been realised.

CIFAL would like to know the impact of a dollar backwards. At the end of a fiscal exercise, CIFAL Atlanta wants to know how many cents per dollar went to gender issues and is in the process of making this possible.

After the kick-off meeting of the “Global Leadership Initiative on Gender Equality in Cities” programme in Atlanta in November 2006, a declaration was signed that raised awareness and indicated priorities. Local Governments in the Americas imitated this. Following the declaration, taskforces and a national association of counties were created to work out how to implement a gender equality taskforce plan.

CIFAL Atlanta is also planning on going back to the Americas, based on their suggestion, to do regional and subregional meetings: one for Central America only, one for the Caribbean only, one for the Andean countries only and one for the 5 MERCOSUR countries.

All of this has provided the motivation for the creation, funding and realisation of the first ‘Americas’ Award for Excellence in Public Service’. CIFAL Atlanta used the 8 Millennium Development Goals to create categories for the Award, one of which covers gender. The Organization of American States was the body that selected the 8 winners and the Mayor of Mexico City, Marcelo Ebrard, was one of the winners because he was working on the cabinet of the former Mayor of Mexico City, Manuel López Obrador, who had the idea of developing a programme to create employment for women at the head of a family who were entrepreneurs that were able, after having received a small loan, to export the next year. The programme grew and now employs thousands of women. The greatest significance of the Award is in the dissemination of best practices. ■

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## Debate and conclusions

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The Quing team relates how they have established a transatlantic link with the Northern US, with Wisconsin and Boston, under the auspices of the European 'Atlantis' programme on policy-related measures. In the next 2 years there will be a series of transatlantic meetings of experts on gender training between the US mainly and the Quing team. It would be nice to make a connection to the CIFAL network.

Within the Quing team working on the European Union, one person is comparing the European Union with Mercosur, working together with Brazil to see how such regional development policies function. She would be delighted to put gender equality in that comparison.

Latin American culture, because of the way men are raised, makes it difficult for men to prioritize gender issues. It can therefore be confirmed that it is important to work with little boys. This change must begin at home. ■



## Global workshop on “Urban environment challenges”

Tuesday 4 December 2007, 14:00 – 16:30

## C1 Women and sustainable development



Chairperson **Ms. María Ignacia BENÍTEZ PEREIRA**

*Regional Councillor, Regional Metropolitan Council, Regional Government of Santiago de Chile*

### ***Women and sustainable development: an introduction***

A socially and territorially integrated city, with a good quality of life, safe public spaces, an efficient transport infrastructure, restoration of impoverished areas and their empowerment by the community, conservation of historical and cultural heritage, strengthening of community organisations and improved security for citizens are some of the desires common to all cities.

Urban Environmental Challenges, which is the name of the panel which brings us here today, represents an issue common to all cities, despite the differences that may exist between them. It therefore implies common challenges and shared experiences, from which each city can benefit, depending on its specific circumstances.

This panel has been divided in 5 areas: climate change; water; urban waste management; urban safety; and natural disasters and reconstruction.

Responding to these challenges involves sustainable development in cities through the application of practices that permit the coexistence of economic growth and care for the environment.

According to some experts, climate change may be the most serious environmental problem that faces us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Global warming is the result of carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This warming will have real consequences, including a rise in sea level, changes in rainfall patterns, greater risk of droughts and floods, threats to biodiversity and potential challenges for public health.

When I wrote this article, I wondered whether climate change would affect men and women differently. I still do not have an answer to this question, but what I can tell you is that various authors of articles on this subject believe that climate change affects women more than men. They attribute this principally to the fact that women depend more than men on the threatened natural resources and to the ways in which women use their surroundings in comparison with men. These assertions are especially valid in poor countries, where it is generally women who have the task of obtaining the family's food.

The above is equally valid in relation to natural disasters, such as storms, floods and earthquakes, when it is often women who must provide the essential daily items.

Something similar occurs in relation to the water issue. The Gender and Environment Network of Mexico disseminated the Blue Agenda in 2006, a document that broached the problem of water shortage from a gender perspective. One of the conclusions of the Blue Agenda indicates that women and men have a different relationship to water, in which women face a specific problem that should be studied, analysed and dealt with.

Regarding urban waste management, the key players in good management are local government and the inhabitants. No policy can work without a population that is informed about and committed to urban waste management. Raising awareness in the population about the issue of domestic waste, separation at source and waste recycling campaigns are some of the practices that can be used to reduce the amount of waste. Good management of waste also includes its final disposal in ways that respect the environment.

Lastly: urban safety. This subject is perhaps the most sensitive for women, who are ever more exposed to crime. Cities are increasingly implementing new initiatives to increase urban safety. In this context, programmes exist for reclaiming public spaces so that the community can use them, make them its own and defend them, as do programmes for installing security cameras, public lighting projects and many other initiatives which seek a common, safer and more friendly environment. ■


**Expert Ms. Adela MARTÍNEZ CACHÁ MARTÍNEZ**

*Deputy Mayoress of Murcia City Council; Councillor for the Environment, including Parks, Gardens, Public Thoroughfares and Urban Landscape, Urban Quality, Energy and Climate Change; Vice-Chairperson of the Murcia Local Agency for Energy and Climate Change*

**Women and Climate Change**

In 1995, Murcia City Council created the post of **Councillor for the Environment**, whose powers since then have fallen to women in the majority of legislatures. Murcia has participated in the 'Sustainable Planet through Planning Programme' (1996), in the signing of the Aalborg Charter (1998) and in drawing up the Local Agenda 21. Since then there has been a range activities in this field, such as incorporation into the Spanish Network of Cities for the Climate (2005), the creation of the Murcia Local Agency for Energy and Climate Change (ALEM – 2006), the recent drawing up of the Local Strategy for Climate Change and membership of the +Biodiversity 2010 Local Organisations Network (2007). Since 1995, sustainable development has formed an essential and indispensable part of municipal management.

Murcia City Council has now joined the Protocol signed between the Autonomous Region of Murcia and organisations representing economic and social activity in the region. The Protocol's aim is to encourage environmental responsibility and sustainable development. It involves a series of commitments that can be summarised as follows:

- Sustainable management of **water resources** (Murcia suffers from a shortage of this resource),
- Increase and restoration of **green public spaces and free zones**,
- Promotion of **renewable energies** and **energy saving** both in municipal and domestic consumption,
- **Sustainable urban mobility** (Mobility Plan and transport alternatives to the private vehicle),
- Sustainable management of **urban waste** (selective collection and energy use of biogas),
- **Air quality** (atmospheric and acoustic) (network to monitor air quality, strategic noise maps and drawing up of Action Plans),
- **Local sustainability** (environmental quality systems in the municipal offices and the Local Agenda 21),
- **Dissemination and awareness-raising** regarding the environment.

Murcia municipality already has experience in the field of sustainability and the fight against climate change. The municipality is highly agricultural in nature and includes a considerable area of market gardening where sustainable maintenance practices still exist, for example, the irrigation system, with an extensive network of channels and ditches from Roman and Arab times linked to the River Segura.

Murcia City Council has launched a **Local Strategy against Climate Change**, now up and running, which will involve over a hundred measures being carried out before 2012. These are expected to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by urban activity by 20%.

The plan of action is based on four main strands:

- **Identify greenhouse gas emissions** (quantify and categorise the sources).
- **Reduce the emissions** produced by municipal activity or in which municipal responsibility is involved.
- Measures to **minimise the effects of climate change**: extend or improve vegetation formations such as greenhouse gas sinks, whether protected municipal land, green areas, forest assets or management of environmental improvement areas. Provide incentives for the use of more efficient technology in energy consumption. Mitigate the effects of climate change through adjustment mechanisms, fundamentally in relation to water management by improving quality, supply and savings.
- Increase **awareness and concern in the population** about the causes and consequences of climate change.

The mission of the action plan will be to reduce the 2004 level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by urban activity by 20% (equivalent to 0.24 Mt). The 2004 figure, in the municipality of Murcia, was 3 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is equivalent to 7.5 t per inhabitant per day. ■



Speaker **Ms. Sémia AKROUT -YAÏCHE**

*Chief Executive Officer of the Association for the Protection of the Medina of Tunis  
(Architect-Town Planner)*

### **Women's participation in urban projects and urban politics**

Tunisia is a small country of 10 million inhabitants where the urban population is approximately 65%. Tunisian women enjoy full civic rights. In particular, they acquired the right to vote in 1959. In order to encourage women to integrate into political life, a system of quotas has been introduced which should soon reach 30%.

#### **Women and urban development**

Today, Tunisian women are no longer claiming civic rights, but rather they are attempting to improve their positions in order to achieve the general objective of equal opportunities so that men and women have the same opportunities, rights and obligations.

One of the important components of human rights and basic civic rights is the right to move freely around town and free and quality access to urban public spaces.

The numerous social, economic and demographic changes and also the problem of the quality of the environment challenge many of the principles on which the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century city was founded. These changes have resulted in greater participation by women in the job market and public life and an increase in the number of single-parent and single-person households. Furthermore, urban policies are based more and more on the needs of the inhabitants and on the inhabitants themselves so that they can have access to jobs, leisure activities, etc.

Major urban projects have been conducted as part of the strategy of protecting the Medina of Tunis. This involved restoring insalubrious and overpopulated districts where many heads of households are women and where many old women live alone. Through these projects, it was noted that women wish to live in town centres because they are looking for more security and at the same time they have particular requirements which need to be taken into account.

The 'Women and Cities' alliance, a panel of women architects, town-planners, municipal councillors and administrators was set up in 2001 under the aegis of the *Union Nationale des Femmes tunisiennes*. The aim of this alliance is to strengthen the image of women and their presence amongst planners, academics, decision-makers, architects and local elected representatives and to implement an awareness and training policy for women in order to provide them with opportunities to participate in urban management and decision-making processes as a result of greater representation on appropriate bodies such as municipal and regional councils and in freelance occupations such as town planners and town-planning specialists.

Three principal strands define the objectives of this alliance :

- women and urban policies ;
- housing and living environment designed for and by women ;
- urban services adapted to the needs of women and children.

#### **Women and urban professions**

The marginalisation of women in decision-making and management bodies is real despite a political commitment to promoting women. The quota system has enabled women to participate in municipal councils and in the Chamber of Representatives where they make up 25% and yet only 5 women are mayors and few are in charge of urban associations, district committees and joint-owners associations. The number of women architects in the private sector is insignificant. The appointment of a female architect as Minister for Infrastructure and Housing has enabled improved access by some women architects to management posts.

In order to strengthen the power of women and their role in governance, it is necessary to enable women to participate more as decision-makers on urban matters, to deal with urban matters and problems particularly affecting women, to invest in all urban management areas other than social matters and culture, particularly sustainable development, security, mobility, housing and local infrastructure.

Progress has been considerable in Tunisia and has had a positive impact on the status of women thanks to an increasingly proclaimed political commitment. But it is necessary to seize these opportunities and to ensure that the position of women on decision-making bodies is strengthened and to enable the mobilisation of women's skills in order to meet the unprecedented urban challenges faced by Tunisia at the turn of the century. ■



Speaker **Ms. Hilde CREVITS**

*Flemish Minister for Public Works, Energy, the Environment and Nature (Flanders, Belgium)*

### ***Gender and mainstreaming in Flemish waste policy***

Waste policy relates to nearly all our everyday actions. As a government, it is important to know who it is you need to address. Is it the woman or the 'new man' who does the shopping? The management team that decides about environmentally conscious investment and low-waste production may consist of men and women.

Achieving a sound waste policy relies on good information and raising public awareness. More than 30% of Flemish families compost at home; 71% of Flemish people sort their waste, and companies are now sorting or re-using fully 75% of their waste. A collection structure that is easily accessible to all and the application of the 'polluter pays' principle were important tools.

These positive results demonstrate that the way in which we approach our target groups, giving consideration to gender, clearly works and gets results. Giving consideration to gender is part of a conscious policy on the part of the Flemish Government and its offices. In the late '80s or early '90s, the Flemish Government was the first to adopt a policy of emancipation, and in 1995, equal opportunities policy became an explicit government post in Flanders, with a dedicated minister. From that moment on, there was also more consideration given, on a systematic basis, to the gender aspect in governmental policy and within the Flemish Government's organisational culture. And as for mainstreaming – our civil servants are required to integrate the gender equality perspective automatically into government policy.

In terms of waste policy, the Flemish Public Waste Agency (OVAM) focussed an awareness campaign a few years ago on getting families to change their ways when it came to waste. The campaign targeted both men and women, breaking the stereotypical role pattern.

Since 2003, equal opportunities policy has been fully integrated into OVAM's personnel operations. The result is that the organisation has since taken on more women than men. A woman has now been in the post of administrator-general for two years, and 1 in 3 middle managers is now a woman.

OVAM aims to be an attractive employer for both men and women and gives a lot of consideration to providing a balanced work/life relationship (alternative ways of working, modern forms of flexible working and a high-quality crèche within workers' own office buildings during school holidays, a stand-in policy with maximum back-up).

In awareness-raising and communications policy, consideration is given to gender mainstreaming. Who exactly is the citizen that we are trying to convince? Marketing people tell us that it is the woman who does the shopping and is thus in a position to reduce waste. When planning a campaign to encourage SMEs to have an environmental efficiency review carried out on their business, do you have to employ a more male-oriented use of language, given that most of the decision-makers are still male, or are they? On the other hand, it is also pointed out that government policy that takes account of the differences between men and women can be more effective. This is because such policy is then better tailored to the diversity in society.

These are, therefore, not easy questions or choices, given that as a government, you have also to act as guarantor that the waste mountain will be effectively reduced and take the responsibility if the expected result is not achieved. Flemish waste policy opts for a gender-friendly approach. Most government policy is directly or indirectly about people, about men and women. The trick is to make that distinction in a meaningful way – where gender-neutral wording does not always have to be the best way forward. That is not always easy.

OVAM's long-running campaign to encourage businesses to cut back on their waste and emissions took on a male face in 2004 since the emphasis of the campaign was on the financial profit. This is because it is mainly male managers or environmental co-ordinators who take the decisions on environmental investments. There was little response to the campaign, so in 2005 OVAM took a softer approach to its imagery – a smiling woman with strawberry earrings. The female image did not put people off, as 330 SMEs had an environmental efficiency review carried out on their business, which was the aim of the campaign.

Here is another nice image (man ironing board). A clear message, a wink and gender-friendly.

A third example – a few years ago, OVAM wanted to encourage the people of Flanders to do more composting at home. Since it varies greatly from family to family who it is that puts the rubbish out and does the composting, there was no gender-reinforcing effect (man and woman on the poster, male and female voices on the radio commercial).

In September 2007 there was a campaign to encourage young people to put their litter in public bins. A film competition entitled 'King of Trash' ran alongside the campaign. 'King/Queen of Trash' was not 'cool' enough. As it turned out the first prize went to... a 'Queen of Trash'. She chose the title herself and got the most votes from the young people themselves and from the jury.

It is not always straightforward to apply diversity to waste policy as waste-related matters have entirely their own, varying role patterns within a household. Marketing companies also take no or too little account of diversity in their recommendations.

The American advertisement experts Jane Cunningham and Philippa Roberts have studied what women get out of advertising. One in two women is convinced that advertisers do not represent real women. Women are saddled with a poor self-image. 71% feel that advertisers think women are only interested in beauty products and interior design. Advertising is therefore greatly underfocussed on women. The study did show, though, that 91% of the women make or share the decisions within the family about food shopping and 90% about drink shopping. There is therefore still work to be done. ■

## Debate and conclusions

### DEBATE

**Tunisia networks with other countries in the Maghreb** as part of the 'Arab countries' Urban Management Programme subsidised by the World Bank. Coordination is in Cairo and there are local panels (Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, etc.) and also training workshops for female Arab journalists from the various networks.

The countries of North Africa and the Middle East have developed into regional NGOs, the Urban Forum NENA (Near East and North Africa) in Rabat (Morocco), where the countries hold regular meetings. As far as protecting the Heritage is concerned, Tunis is the site of the regional secretariat for the Organization of World Heritage Cities for Arab and African countries. The Foundation for Arab Heritage and Historical Cities was set up under the aegis of the Arab Cities Organization.

**Women should own the city. Cities are seen as business centres, as a place for other people but not for them. Female business fairs can be hosted in cities.**

Issues such as housing, security, city planning, taxes and active female participation in the city should be tackled. A good number of women, who do not have access to the traditional **housing** system, live in poor conditions in the **historical centre of Tunis**. The two projects presented by Ms. Akrouit Yaïche have taken this aspect into account with the aim of producing integrated projects comprising several components. The Municipality is standing surety for these vulnerable people and is providing, for example, credit purchases with interest-free repayment over 25 years. Often it is single women who seek out the central location of town centres (proximity to services and activities, public transport, safety).

A psychologist from the Basque Country, who is an expert in gender with 17 years' experience working in the field, set up a consultancy that works with more than 50 local and regional governments to implement equality policies in different areas. As regards day to day sustainable development, women have always managed resources better, as they always have fewer. She recommends raising men's awareness and giving more support women in powerful positions. The paradox in Spain is that the country works a lot on sustainable development at a local level, but makes bigger investments in anti-personnel bombs and armaments instead of, for example, on reconciling women's working and personal lives or on sustainability policies.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

- women promote sustained development ;
- at local and national levels, many women already struggle constantly to reduce climatic changes ;
- there is financing available to improve biodiversity ;
- business women contribute to the environment ;
- women are more sensitive to the need to improve the environment.

#### Problems

- women encounter greater difficulty in doing business with governments ;
- the participation of women at government level continues to be very rare ;
- public places are not safe enough for women.

#### Recommendations

- economic centres must be created to support sustained development ;
- advice needs to be sought on quality of life ;
- more suitable transport must be used to keep the environment clean ;
- urban areas in city centres must be renovated ;
- Waste must be recycled and natural resources used in a sustainable way ;
- there is a need to recognise and value the role of women in the sustainable use of materials, the prevention of waste and the transmission of these values to future generations. ■

## C2 Women, water and urban waste management



Chairperson **Ms. Mame BOUSSO SAMB DIACK**

*Member of the National Assembly and Deputy Mayor of the City of Dakar (Senegal)*

*Chairperson of the Office of the Metropolis of Dakar*

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### ***Introduction to workshop***

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The challenge is great. To make our cities healthier, to create a pollution-free living environment to counteract the incursion of factories, gas emissions from vehicles and other modern inventions, to ensure good governance through planning that takes account of factors such as the unrestrained growth of our cities and the accumulation of rubbish and through the diversification of concerted strategies between local governments, the grassroot populations, the government, etc.

It is thus proving necessary to exchange ideas from experiences in our countries and cities, particularly good practice which we will all have the responsibility to share.

The invited experts will help us to draw pertinent conclusions so that we can get an idea of the next angles on practical actions in response to the concerns of our people for a better living environment and healthier development. ■



Expert **Ms. Anna GONZÁLEZ BATLLE**

*Position: Director of Communications of the Environmental Body for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area<sup>25</sup>*

### ***Women as managers of the environment and metabolizers***

Each person in the EU uses an average of 50 tonnes of resources a year. Together they produce 1,800 million tonnes of waste, of which less than a third is municipal waste, known as urban solid waste. The first step in good waste management is to give value to the majority of the waste. Some of it can be utilised. Municipal waste will be collected and treated, doing away with the idea of disposal.

The Environmental Body for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area brings together 33 municipalities (3 million inhabitants) and manages their urban waste. The (joint) management model is complex and requires the participation of citizens. It is based on the separation of waste at homes into 5 types: paper, glass, plastics-aluminium containers, organic material and the rest.

The waste must then be placed by type into containers in streets and squares, grouped into contributing areas. The number of containers depends on the density and characteristics of the territory and where they are placed is the subject of arguments and a source of conflicts.

The separated collection of the types of municipal (urban) waste and its differentiated management and treatment contribute to the fight against climate change, preventing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and saving raw materials and energy.

Some principles of the Barcelona model may be universal: the preventive ‘those who pollute, pay’ principle and the principle of proximity (waste should be treated as close to its source as possible)

Proper waste management is necessary for health, for protection of the environment and for developing the community. It should be based on principles of sustainability, understood as a balance between economic, social and environmental objectives, and on norms of prevention, reduction, recovery and recycling, always using the technology available and adapted to the country. The best waste is that which is not generated: prevention and reduction of production are essential. The second rule is to lengthen the life of products by reusing, restoring or repairing them.

Then comes recycling, which saves energy, water and raw materials, and the conversion of organic material into compost or energy by transforming methane into biogas and this into electricity.

It is important to take these steps to avoid burning or burying resources and so avoid polluting the land, subsoil water and the air and lengthen the useful life of environmental facilities.

The ‘Habits and attitudes towards recycling and separation of waste in the home (2006)’ study, shows that in Spain housewives of around 40 years of age are those most likely to see recovery and separation of waste as a responsible citizenship task. The majority of those who trivialise the problem of waste are men under 39 years old, living in large cities. Other studies confirm that in Spain more women than men separate domestic waste by types.

The uneven distribution of domestic tasks means that the majority of these tasks fall to women. The choice of products at the time of purchase, their use, the sorting of waste generated and placing it in the different containers has become a new domestic task. The role of women is also very important in transmitting values.

As the environment sector grows and becomes more technical, a niche opens up for female employment. Ms. González Battle proposes the creation of a Global Observatory to study the women-waste pairing. This could be developed within the Barcelona Body. ■

<sup>25</sup> The Environmental Body for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area has led the Commission on Metropolitan Waste Management (C3).



Speaker **Ms. Joke MUYLWIJK**

*Executive Director, Gender and Water Alliance<sup>26</sup> (the Netherlands)*

### Sanitation for all

Gender has to do with men and women, but also includes age differences, ethnic differences, socio-economic relations, religion, caste, etc., because they have a large influence on the position of a person. Gender is a dynamic concept that is present at all levels and that is always changing. That is why we can speak about **gender+**.

**Empowerment** is the process in which all categories of people and also individuals manage to improve their own position, to feel free, to make their own decisions. Empowerment is essential in the gender approach to water. It has 4 interdependent elements: the social, the economic, the political and the physical aspects. In water supply and sanitation all four elements are strongly present and interact.

- Social empowerment relates to the self-image people have, and how they are seen by the rest of the family, in the community and by society at large.
- Economic empowerment deals with work and income and decisions related to work: can a person decide for her- or himself what work to do and how the income and other benefits will be spent?
- Political empowerment relates to people's the right to organise, the right to participate in democratic institutions (e.g. village water committees)
- Physical empowerment is the right to decide about one's own body, about one's sexuality, access to health care, sanitation facilities and clean water. It also includes the right to safety and security.

**Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)** means talking about water in the broad sense, taking into account also the social aspects such as gender. Different water uses are drinking water, domestic water use, sanitation, water for agriculture and food security, water for industries, and water for nature: for a sustainable environment. This even includes solid waste management. It is seldom women who make the decisions and have rights in this domain.

There are many **urban water issues** because cities grow explosively and infrastructure does not expand that much and is scarcely maintained. There is a total lack of sanitation and solid waste management. The situation in slums is even harder. For women, toilets, for example, are crucial. In urban areas, they have no place to relieve themselves and therefore wait till it is dark, and run the risks of sexual harassment, insects or wild animals and falling. They drink less, which results in bladder and kidney problems. This can no longer be a taboo issue, this is about the right to dignity. Women who get ill will not go to work and will not be able to earn money. Sanitation is a terrible poverty trap. Girls are kept out of schools because of bad toilets or no toilets at all, especially when they reach the age of menstruation. These girls lack education and it is a downward spiral.

Other issues are solid waste removal and urban agriculture, already discussed in another workshop.

Even in **cities in the North** systems are vulnerable and clean groundwater is often threatened by pollution. Nevertheless, not all women and men in the North, especially in poor neighbourhoods, are empowered, and they could learn from the many years of experience in the South.

It must be studied how financing and the privatisation of water can be used in the best way. Governments remain responsible for water for their inhabitants. If they don't deliver, the private sector can mean an improvement for poor people. Governments are not all the same, and neither is the private sector homogeneous. Water is a human right and governments should sign the agreement on this.

Climate change, international conflicts over water and refugee camps, HIV and Aids within the family always affect women more than men, because they always keep their responsibilities to supply water in difficult situations. Women are victims, but they are also very strong, capable and clever actors. ■

<sup>26</sup> The **Gender and Water Alliance** is an international network with close to 1000 members in more than 100 countries: individuals and organisations who work in water management, water supply and sanitation, agriculture and environmental conservation. Many are also gender experts. More than 40% of the members are men. This is important in order to reach men and to support them in mainstreaming gender in their work. The GWA works with partners (UN-Habitat, UNDP, GWP,...) because gender has to be mainstreamed into certain work. The work consists of capacity building, training trainers, training in gender and IWRM. GWA also develops material and manuals and supports and influences governments to gender-politicize their water policies.



Speaker **Ms. María Angélica ALEGRÍA CALVO**

*Member of the Steering Committee of the Gender and Water Alliance (Chile) and Chief Engineer of the Water Resources Assessment Area in the National Directorate for Water, Ministry of Public Works, Chile.*

### **Water issues need women**

In 2000 44% of the world's populations lived in Asia, followed by Europe, Latin America, North America and Africa. This trend will continue. There are no disaggregated data about women and men which makes it necessary to guess sometimes. 50% of the current world population live in urban areas and it is projected that by 2030 60% of the 8 billion people on earth will live in urban areas. Women constitute more than 50% of this urban population.

Between 1900 and 2000 the world population increased threefold, whereas water use increased sixfold. The main question then is if the use and management of the water is sustainable? The annual water use per capita in the United States is double the water use in Europe and 10 times the water use in Africa. In Africa, the availability of water is 6 l per person per day, which is less than the minimum humanitarian quantity of 20 litres/day. Middle or high-income households in the same city may use 150 litres/day, while the amount people really need for living is about 1 to 2 litres per person per day. Every person needs to drink, to brush his teeth and to wash the food. The other litres of drinking quality water are used for flushing toilets, for taking a shower, washing the car,...

Urbanization also diminishes the natural ground infiltration capacity of the soil, which causes a higher risk of floods, which affect poor people.

The current practice of urban water use is not sustainable because there is no re-use, water is discharged without treatment (worldwide less than 15% of all wastewater is treated), surface and ground water is often polluted and there is a public health risk. There are competing water demands and increased water limits, water resource deterioration, a reduced water quantity and quality and a reduced availability of water.

Urban water mismanagement and crisis is caused by current water use and the unnecessary and exaggerated consumption causing economic, social, cultural and environmental consequences for women and men. Improving the position of women in leadership positions in urban environment issues can improve access to water and sanitation.

Urban water supply, sanitation and waste management are important issues that relate to the gender aspect of urban settlements. 117 million people in the world are still unconnected to a water supply and 600 million people are still unconnected to a sanitation system. Most of them are living in the less-developed and undeveloped countries. In spite of not having sex-disaggregated statistics, it is known that improving these services has an important positive impact on women and girls. Therefore, women's knowledge about water resources and the multiple uses of water must be given significant attention. Women who have better access to water and sanitation have more time for childcare and economic activities that will improve the quality of life of their families, their own health and well-being.

Water related to natural disasters in urban areas is also an important issue and it is Asia and Africa – where more than 50% of the world's population lives – that are the most affected by these disasters, the number of which has increased in recent years due to climate change.

Efficient vulnerability assessment requires access to data on attributes of groups and individuals including socio-economic class, ethnicity, gender, age and religion, and that rarely happens. The few disaggregated data on floods and droughts give quantitative and qualitative information on gender and the differentiated impact. During droughts women spend more time on domestic water collection, their workload increases after a flood. During droughts food consumption patterns and access to food may be gender-differentiated. The seasonal or long-term migration of men because of these events put an added burden on women to manage land. During droughts women suffer from hygienic problems.

When making strategies, it is important to consider that women have income-generated activities dependent on water availability. Many women work in small greenhouses, they do pottery or cultivate flowers.

Women and the urban poor lack influence in policy-making and on government agencies for water services and water needs. Combined with education and paid employment, this can simultaneously help them to influence governments. The main water-related challenge with gender focus in low and middle-income nations remains that of ensuring adequate provision for water supply and sanitation services, water availability and adequate conditions for women micro- and small entrepreneurs or survival activities besides water-related natural disaster prevention. We urgently need more water technicians and politicians to put these declarations into practice. ■



Speaker **Mr. Dagbénaho Basile GBAGUIDI**  
*Director of Technical Services, Cotonou Town Hall (Benin)*

### **Women's participation in sanitation in Cotonou**

Cotonou (1,200,000 inhabitants) is the economic capital of Benin. As the seat of all government institutions, it incorporates the autonomous port, Dantokpa international market and the international airport. With an area of 7,000 ha, it has 1,200 km of roads, 300 km of sewers and produces 0.59 kg of rubbish per inhabitant per day.

There are 2 strands to sanitation organisation : actual waste management and street cleaning. Household waste management is both shared and participative management. The process comprises pre-collection, collection and transportation to the rubbish dump.

Supported by 53 NGOs providing carts, collection has enabled the creation of 900 jobs. Rubbish is amassed at assembly points and collected by 6 service providers who provide transportation to the rubbish tip (landfill site).

Two systems are used for street cleaning : mechanical cleaning, provided by service companies (26% of the network) and labour-intensive cleaning provided by 112 women's co-operatives called 'FINAMIN' in paved streets in the centre and outskirts of Cotonou (74% of the network).

What is the contribution and role of women in waste management and street-cleaning in Cotonou ? As far as picking up and collecting rubbish are concerned, women make up 25.54% of the workforce and are active at all stages of the process, mainly in administrative functions, only one of whom works as an operations supervisor. However, it should be noted that it is only women who do the cleaning and pick up rubbish in the Dantokpa market. As for the men, they are truck drivers, labourers and security guards and take care of the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure. The vast majority of the women work in the cleaning sector (87.72%), particularly manual cleaning where they are both co-operative managers and field technicians where they make up 90% of the workers. On the other hand, it is a majority of men who work in mechanical cleaning and as company managers and field technicians. Finally, women only make up 16.12% of the administrative staff who are in charge of operations supervision, data control and collection. Women are therefore greatly involved in sanitation management in Cotonou, since they make up not less than 62.50% of the total personnel in this sector.

Nevertheless, these favourable statistics conceal certain problems, such as the financing of the women in the co-operatives who often need financial start-up aid, or access by girls to schooling, since it must be noted that relatively few women are executive staff. Therefore, in the future, it will be a matter of strengthening the financial capacity of women and promoting access by girls to schooling to enable them to occupy more managerial posts. ■

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## Debate and conclusions

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**Collective urban waste and water management** is highly **problematic** in developing countries where the often too rapid growth of cities creates water and waste management problems. These problems are intensified by the lack of infrastructure and equipment and have a significant impact on health, hygiene, safety and education (e.g. insalubrious or communal toilets, lack of technology for water purification, etc.)

**The non-sustainable use of water** also causes imbalances between urban and rural areas and its scarcity leads to **conflicts** with regard to access to water (pricing/privatisation) which are exacerbated by global warming and natural disasters. The drying-up of wells is a real problem for many African countries where there is an urgency to develop potable water collection projects. The fact of having to go a very long way to fetch water also poses a safety problem (unlit roads facilitate rapes).

However, collective urban waste and water management stimulates the development of a definitive gender approach in the management of cities and **new responsibilities for women**. Some examples of good practice by the women of the South show how they take charge of these problems in an original manner and with few means in order to contribute to the development of economic income-generating activities (recycling of plastic bags into clothes, new networks, EIGs and co-operatives). The participants have conducted experiments which show how to promote **women's emancipation through ecological projects** whilst developing economic independence as part of an improvement in their living environment. In Senegal, plastic bags are swamping the landscape. The organisation of women into EIGs (Economic Interest Groupings) has enabled them to be collected and turned into clothes. In Mali, where household waste management poses a real problem, women are also developing projects. They are appealing to partners in the Metropolis network to advise them on the management of other types of waste such as biomedical waste.

Whilst it is important to remember that there are social differences between women, these are also more significant in developing countries where women nevertheless do not lack a spirit of enterprise but rather the means to implement their ideas. In order to implement as many projects as possible, it is necessary to be able to count on **co-operation and solidarity between women**, partnerships between women of the North and women of the South. 'It is a matter of bringing women together who have money but no project and women who have projects but no money.'

Various **recommendations** were formulated at the end of the debate :

- The creation of a world watch on water and waste management ;
- The development of eco-feminism with the aim of connecting women with sustainable development and stimulating their professionalisation by strengthening their ability to manage and to pass on their knowledge through better education ;
- Awareness campaigns for men ;
- Pressure campaigns vis-à-vis governments to ensure access to water for everybody (2008 priority for Metropolis) ;
- The strengthening of world solidarity by setting up partnerships. ■

## C3 Urban safety



Chairperson **Ms. Brigitte GROUWELS**

*Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities, the Port of Brussels and the Civil Service of the Brussels Capital Region*

### Safe Cities

The district where we wish to live, work and relax, in short where we wish to live, must be a safe district where we do not feel threatened. Especially in large cities, more and more inhabitants, both men and women, feel unsafe and avoid certain districts.

It is clear that a city where women are fully and freely present in the streets is a safe city. We could say that women are a barometer of safety. Women have their own concept of safety. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that women be involved in town planning. In particular, women have different concerns to men.

**Public transport** all too often creates a feeling of insecurity in women, children and elderly people. Metro stations in particular contribute to this feeling of insecurity due to their underground location, dark corners, poor lighting and their bad smell. Places which are not welcoming to women and which do not fulfil women's specific needs very often frighten them, making them more dependent on others.

Solutions should be found in consultation with women. In order for this, it is necessary for women to participate in **advisory committees on public works and town planning**. Male engineers should not be the only ones to take decisions in this area.

Women must claim their place in public spaces: they must be able to move quickly and efficiently; prams and pushchairs must not make them dependent on others, and the fact of being women must not prevent them from getting anywhere.

Men's way of thinking must change, and not only at the level of institutions, planning and development of public spaces and the police. We must get them ready for the new reality of a society where all human beings are equal. Let us call him **'the new man in the street'**.

In Brussels, more and more people are being verbally abused in public spaces (because of their clothes). A study has been carried out on the feasibility and benefits of setting up a liaison office for **verbal abuse**: a telephone listening line, the prime task of which is to draw up a picture of this problem. It is important that the statistical data on gender regarding the types of complaints be available in the Brussels region in order for the matter to be examined in detail and experiments conducted in the field.

The **police and security services** must develop gender awareness. A police force attentive to all the inhabitants of a city can only include women in managerial positions.

**Violence within the family** affects women, not exclusively, but principally. In the Brussels Capital Region, a regional co-ordinator on violence between partners was therefore appointed in 2005. The battle against this form of domestic violence is part of the national framework in Belgium where the three regions and communities of the country work hand in hand. The female regional co-ordinator for Brussels is the contact for everything concerning violence within the family. She leads a regional consultative platform where all actors on the ground can exchange their mutual experiences in order to set up an effective approach. The police, the law and social workers regularly exchange their ideas there.

The district court which covers Brussels now has a referral magistrate for matters of violence within the family. In particular, it monitors the enforcement by the legal machinery of the circular from the College of Principal Public Prosecutors at the Court of Appeal.

Involving more women in the planning and development of public spaces, making men aware of the unacceptable nature of verbal and physical violence towards women, setting up a police and justice system aware of gender issues, all these aspects must constitute our priorities to make our cities safe cities where women feel safe for the greater wellbeing of everyone. ■

Expert **Mr. Serges BRUNEAU**

*Program Director for the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime in Montreal*

### **Violence against women**

Violence against women may take **more than one form**. It can be verbal, psychic, psychological, economic and sexual. It can involve intimidation, exploitation, mutilation or trafficking of human beings.

'The feeling of insecurity is a factor which impedes the participation and contribution of many women..... and deprives them of a minimum sense of wellbeing in their everyday lives. It is essential that governments recognise the entire significance of this situation and of the obstacles which prevent women from participating in remedial processes.'<sup>27</sup>

The **underlying motives** are often the expression of power and domination over the person under attack. Rape (of men and women) as a weapon of war; violence as a punishment for women who have transgressed social or moral codes; etc.

48 surveys throughout the world show that 10% to 69% of women have already been physically attacked by an intimate partner of the male sex at some time in their lives. The percentage of women attacked by a partner in the 12 months preceding the survey varies from 3% or less in Australia, Canada and the United States to 27% of women living as part of a couple in Leon in Nicaragua and to 38% of women currently married in the Republic of Korea.

The **consequences** can be **physical** (abdominal and thoracic injuries, fractures and disability); **sexual and genetic** (gynaecological problems, infertility, pregnancy complications and miscarriages); **mortal** (murder, suicide and AIDS-related death); **psychological and behavioural** (alcoholism and drug addiction, depression and anxiety, suicidal behaviour and self-mutilation).

This subject has been dealt with at United Nations conferences in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing and in the extensive Amnesty International 'Stop violence against women' awareness campaign. The Council of Europe has been studying the problems of violence against women since 1985.

**Different approaches** are apparent: safety due to dependence and restriction; the parental approach; safety due to independence and freedom; the independent approach; the concept of women's safety based on safe town-planning and the gender approach.

Women who do not feel safe in **public spaces** are afraid of going about at any time, they find their mobility restricted and encounter obstacles to participation in social life so that they become isolated and dependent on the protection of other people. This affects their physical and psychological health and means that they perceive the outside world to be dangerous. They develop protection or avoidance strategies which lead to isolation.

The city of Montreal has produced a safe town-planning guide and the city of Levis has produced an implementation guide as an exploratory step. In France, a guide to security and public safety studies in town-planning, development and construction operations has been produced

According to a general social survey in Canada, 15 out of 100 **adolescents** of 13 years of age are victims of physical violence in their love life. The rate of victimisation is 21% for adolescents of 16 years of age. 60% of male students say they would not hesitate to commit a sex attack if they were sure of getting away with it. According to the world report on violence and health in Peru, 47.6% of girls state that they were (usually) forced to have sex.

A campaign under the chairmanship of the Mayor of Montreal entitled 'Men against violence towards women – A commitment to repudiate violence by men towards women' addressed the everyday gestures which can have an impact on women's feeling of safety. A declaration that men have the responsibility to eliminate violence against women and that their silence contributes to limiting their full participation in urban life has collected 20,000 signatures from men. ■

<sup>27</sup> Women and international cities.



Speaker **Ms. Elizaveta BOZHKOVA**

*Director of the Information Centre of the Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF) (Moscow, Russia)*

### ***Building partnerships for friendly cities***

The Information Centre of the Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded as a resource, support and documentation centre about women and for women.

This presentation aims to share the experience of women in the grassroots, how they organized neighbours into neighbourhood communities, how grassroots women's groups improved their quality of life, how they can influence the policy-making process in the city of Petrozavodsk, the capital of the Republic of Karelia in north-western Russia.

In Russia neighbourhood communities are not our cultural habit. Sometimes our neighbours don't know each other and don't greet each other. It is very hard work to raising common awareness amongst residents of their living conditions in the house, common space and yard.

ICIWF and other NGOs in Petrozavodsk provided numerous seminars, round-tables and meetings where citizens studied how to work together, how to write submissions, how to collaborate with the city police and the administration. As result 13 neighbourhood groups were formed. 12 leaders of these groups were women.

The strategic goal is to build new communities capable of creating new responsibility, to create new social and cultural habits which can be promoted as the new tradition. The ICIWF and other NGOs continue to work together for the empowerment of women in neighbourhoods and involved women in the city policy-making process and helped them to build good partnership with different political actors and stakeholders at the city level.

One important result was the mayor's decision to allow the female leaders to take part in the weekly meetings at the city administration for maintenance departments. Women's voices at the city's the decision-making level were promoted and they had the opportunity to get the floor and to solve unresolved problems relating to their houses, their lives, domestic violence and others. It was a new approach to the problem of violence and crime prevention.

Achievements :

- Grassroots women as neighbours united in neighbourhoods and became strong communities ready for common actions ;
- New neighbourhood communities can improve local plans and architectural designs in accordance with safety and gender-friendly criteria ;
- Partnership and collaboration are main strategies for neighbourhoods ;
- Real reductions in crime figures ;
- Awareness raised about education and training support for the public ;
- The Miliitsiya [Russian police] is the main partner of the local grassroots women and involved them in safety issues ;
- Grassroots women, in the shape of neighbourhood communities, changed the environmental space around the houses making it more friendly for women and children ;
- Grassroots women became leaders capable of sharing experiences and of organizing themselves into communities ;
- Partnerships between women's groups and the police contributed to changing behaviour and stereotypes among police staff and citizens and raised the public awareness of gender and safety issues. ■



Speaker **Ms. Tina MUSUYA**

*Coordinator of the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) (Kampala, Uganda)*

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### ***Efforts to prevent domestic violence in Uganda***

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Women throughout the world experience violence at the hands of their intimate partners at alarming rates (WHO 2002; Heise et al., 1999; UNICEF 1999). Despite human rights conventions and international and national policies that condemn violence and call for its eradication, it continues to be a major obstacle to women's quality of life, the health of relationships and families, and the development of communities and nations around the world. Domestic violence is by far the most common form of violence against women. Women's low status within the community, family and relationships is the root cause of domestic violence against women. “The consequences of abuse are profound, extending beyond the health and happiness of individuals to affect the well-being of entire communities” (WHO, 2002: 100).

Uganda has made important advances and implemented key initiatives in the protection and promotion of women's rights, mainly within the public arena. Great progress has been made in political representation and education for girls. Deeper social issues such as women's status within the family and relationships are given much less attention. They are seen as highly controversial and met with stiff resistance through all layers of society, yet these are the very issues that determine so much of women's health and possibilities within the public sphere.

The Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) was founded in the year 2000 to mobilize communities to prevent Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS in Kampala District by spearheading a project entitled the Domestic Violence Prevention Demonstration Project. CEDOVIP, in partnership with Raising Voices, spearhead community mobilization in Kampala District to bring about a change in attitudes and behaviour that perpetuate violence against women. CEDOVIP and Raising Voices also partner 10 civil societies to promote and enable national prevention of domestic violence; and do local and national level advocacy to influence the general public and key decision-makers to better understand, and take action to prevent, domestic violence. ■



Speaker **Ms. An WUYTS**

*Coach, Target Group Management, Integral Security Service, City of Antwerp (Belgium)*

## ***Behind the doors of single mothers in Antwerp***

### **The relationship between nuisance behaviour amongst young people and gender**

The security policy-makers in Antwerp chose a three-track approach to tackling nuisance behaviour, with case management to be performed by Target Group Management, with four phases:

#### **1. Signal**

The local director gathers together the relevant field workers from the police, the city administration, youth workers, outreach and social housing on a monthly basis in order to discuss the phenomenon of nuisance behaviour, get an update on the current situation and establish joint action. It is primarily the partners of these networks that name young people in Target Group Management as being primarily responsible for persistent nuisance behaviour. In so doing, the Target Group Management works on the basis of principles.

#### **2. Management: part 1, house calls to obtain information**

After obtaining a name, the next step is obtain the consent of the person in question to work on their file and visit them at home. The young person gets the chance to put their side of the story while the parents are also spoken to about their responsibility.

#### **Management: part 2, discussing case histories**

The Target Group Management now gets in touch with other services that are active in the spheres in question.

#### **3. Arrangements: discovering the gulf between those who need help and the help on offer**

This overall action plan aims to tackle the problems in the short and long term. When there are problems at school, they are discussed with the school assistance department. Young people with no meaningful way of occupying their free time are invited to sports clubs.

#### **4. Follow-up:**

Around three months after the last contact, the target group management carry out another home visit. This means that someone can be followed-up on for up to a year.

### **Single mothers**

A profile analysis of 100 “nuisance youths” by the VUB<sup>28</sup> university in Brussels shows that very few girls tend to cause nuisance and that 30% of cases involve a young person with a single mother.<sup>29</sup> A study from the Netherlands showed that the factor “single mother” is a... predictor for criminality.<sup>30</sup> The women are often of Moroccan descent and come to Belgium via marriage immigration, often have a low level of schooling and are totally unprepared for their new country. In such families no Dutch is spoken, which means that the children are behind linguistically when they start school and very quickly fall behind with their schooling. In the last ten years the divorce statistics for immigrant families have increased dramatically. In most cases, the men leave the family without paying any maintenance or taking any further responsibility for bringing up the children. The language problem makes it really hard to provide help. Intensive, weekly contact is impossible as it is not always possible to use an interpreter. In practice 1 (or more) in three **fathers is absent**: they have left the family, they are off in a café somewhere, they are active in a club or have unsociable working hours.

### **From the street to the living room**

The personal approach to tackling youth nuisance behaviour is bringing many hidden problems to the fore. The failure to conform to minor norms of behaviour is often a cry for attention. The tackling of nuisance behaviour is thus an entirely preventative instrument.

The Target Group Management therefore has to build a bridge to the voluntary help that is available and in particular pay attention to single mothers. ■

<sup>28</sup> J. Christiaens, S. Van Polfliet, L. Amezghal, Overlastjongeren uit Antwerpen aan het woord [Nuisance youths of Antwerp speak], Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2006

<sup>29</sup> Local Social Policy Plan 2008- City of Antwerp, Local Information Service

<sup>30</sup> G. Weijters, Stad en buurt: de invloed van beide contexten op jeugd-criminaliteit in Nederland, lezing studiedag De invloed van de buurt op criminaliteit [City and neighbourhood: the influence of both contexts on youth criminality in the Netherlands, workshop lecture. The influence of the neighbourhood on criminality], Antwerp, 22 June 2007.



Speaker **Ms. Diana Mirian MILOSLAVICH TÚPAC**

*Coordinator of the Peruvian Women's Centre's Local Development, Political Participation and Decentralisation Programme, 'Flora Tristán', a member of the Woman and Habitat Network of Latin America*

### **Trade in women**

A United Nations' fact tells us that 190 million people, that is, 3% of the population, live outside their countries of birth. Of this total, 95 million (49.6%) are women.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, migration, for social, cultural, economic and political reasons, is a feminine phenomenon that has taken time to become visible due to the lack of adequate information and a resistance to the new focuses on gender, such as interculturality, for example. These women extend their relationships across geographical, political, economic, social and cultural borders, to create little studied and recognised transactional communities.

In general, 3 very important focal points stand out and call for consideration by municipalities, cities and local governments:

- remedy the lack of budget
- improve access to justice
- comprehensive victim-care models: women must have access to complete crisis care in a single place. Women's refuges are also very important.

If municipal councils were to consider cities in terms of specific spaces for women (see, for example, Thematic units – special commissions on women in the municipality – in Belo Horizonte), progress will be more significant.

Many women are victims of organisations and/or national and international networks dedicated to **trading in women**, whom they help to migrate for purposes of sexual exploitation, slavery, forced labour, domestic exploitation and begging. According to a study by the United States' Justice Department, 700 thousand women and children are trafficked across the northern borders (with Mexico) each year.

Due to its clandestine and illegal nature, little is known about the trade in women for sexual exploitation in Peru, but the fact that female migration has increased considerably in the last decade is a cause for concern.

According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, trafficking in persons is understood as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, and harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purposes of exploitation. Such exploitation shall include, at a minimum, sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, servitude or the removal of organs'.

The trafficking of people typically involves facilitating their illegal migration; it may involve a situation of trading in people, depending on the purposes of the transfer. Trading and trafficking are complementary, but trafficking does not always lead to trading in people, which is a broader concept.

According to the UN, trafficking with the intention of sexual exploitation moves between 5 and 7 billion dollars in the world annually. The United Nations Population Fund indicates that 4 million women are sold into prostitution, slavery or marriage and 2 million girls are introduced into commercial sex market each year.

In order for women to be alerted to this situation, they must be informed about the modus operandi of the traffickers and the recruitment mechanisms. The influencing factors are: difficulties in obtaining employment; mining areas which generate trade; women continuing to be the cheapest source of labour (they must cover the needs of their children); corrupt authorities; indifference of the population and of the authorities; lack of information for young women/families; and poverty. ■

## Debate and conclusions

**In London**, domestic violence is a responsibility of the public authorities. According to figures, ¼ of violent crime is related to domestic violence as well as 1/3 of all murders. A campaign was organised and direct policies introduced changes i.e. 1500 arrests in London and 57% drop in domestic violence murders. The Mayor of London put up a programme on safe travel at night that includes the registration of mini-cabs and black cabs, an awareness-raising programme about the danger of using unlicensed cabs. The effect was a 6% reduction of sexual violence.

**In Catalonia**, a law stipulates that violence is the result of patriarchy. Macho violence is a reality.

**In Uganda**, the handbooks "Police domestic violence" and the "Domestic Bylaw handbook" are available on the Internet and local activism creates a supportive environment that rejects domestic violence and targets activities to start changing attitudes.

City administrations from **Russia** think that only the police can reduce crime. However, city administrations, police and women's group should work together. The ICIWF promotes a new model of crime prevention in cities and organises trainings involving the police. The police got more open, interested in domestic violence and helped to reduce domestic violence. The knowledge of the ICIWF is based on architectural criminology. For example: redesigning the street and the surroundings of the house, training citizens in order to reconstruct houses and to lay out and renovate playgrounds.

The habitat network in **Peru** takes initiatives linked to housing programmes that are aimed to give better access to women. It must be recognized that violence is a female topic.

In **Canada**, urban planning and security in cities became an important issue in the year 1992 when security for woman was an issue of right. The organisation of cities and rural areas recognized the importance of physical spaces. A measure consists in giving a name to a place, a park, an underground to improve the police's intervention. Safety planning is increasingly important.

As a result of a large influx of migrants from Morocco in **Belgium**, security policy in Antwerp is to give greater consideration to women and children and their problems and to encourage dialogue with the Moroccan community. It is not the intention to single out one group. Rather the public emphasis is on the fact that violence is a universal problem and is not determined by class or origin.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Difficulties

- the fact of being a woman is a difficulty in itself;
- urban safety is a multidimensional problem (urban planning, transport, dark streets, home & others);
- the different and new forms of violence make detection and treatment of violence difficult;
- violence is intrinsic to armed conflict situations;
- there is a lack of practical examples of urban planning based on safety and gender;
- the feeling of insecurity hinders the participation of women in every day life;
- there is a lack of consciousness at the level of police and local authorities;
- men are generally in charge of city planification;
- migrant isolated women are difficult to be reached (language & others)

### Strengths:

It is important to note that the methodology used for sensitization is very diverse, that research on the topic has been done and that some countries have a lot of statistical information and figures about the topic. Crime prevention programmes are developed, awareness is raised, measures are taken and partnerships are established (with police, city planners, justice...).

### Recommendations

- women should take part in decision-making plans, reorganizing cities and urban planning and taking concrete measures for transport (e.g. embellishing the neighbourhood).
- in difficult family situations the children must be given the convenient support as from the first moment;
- their awareness must be raised and they should auto-organize themselves (cfr. Peru).
- transactions (e.g. money) related to human trafficking should be traced down



## C4 Natural disasters and reconstruction



Chairperson **Ms. Roula AJOUZ SIDANI**  
Member of Beirut City Council

### *Lebanon: a resilient response to a challenging status quo*

Though Lebanon witnesses few natural disasters, it has witnessed many war tragedies and multiple occasions of civil strife, such as the 15-year Civil War that began in 1975 and several foreign invasions, ground, air, and sea. The civil war resulted in 150 000 deaths among the 3 million inhabitants, a quarter million people were displaced, whole villages were destroyed, Beirut Central District disappeared. In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon again and destruction, despair and damage escalated. In 1996 and in 2006 there were another two Israeli invasions that destroyed whole regions, villages, bridges, fuel reservoirs, airports and caused suffering to aquaterrestrial life. The tragedy, in terms of loss of life and material losses, has been huge. Faith in the country has been undermined.

Over the years, and in response to war violence and resulting instability, Lebanon's government, official entities, and civil society have adapted by developing a quick recovery and reconstruction response. This response has resulted in a number of entities that often function on a national scale.

Another entity is the MINISTRY OF THE DISPLACED (founded in 1992) and its corresponding Fund. This Ministry has helped create solidarity among civilians and restore destroyed residential areas, as well maintain and develop human relations with thousands of displaced families within Lebanese territory. It was developed to enable the displaced to return to their homes. Around 1.5 billion dollars were spent during the first years of war and after the invasion of 2006 the Ministry built 30 000 residential units, most of them in Beirut.

Another entity is the SOUTH LEBANON COUNCIL FOR RECONSTRUCTION (founded in 1970), tasked with providing reconstruction aid to the Lebanese south, an area repeatedly affected by bombing. Aid was about financial compensation for afflicted citizens, reconstruction of destroyed homes, aid for war prisoners, the wounded and the deceased. This council has an exceptional aid procedure that enables it to act quickly.

The fourth entity is the HIGHER RELIEF COMMISSION (founded in 1977 and upgraded in 1993), which has proven successful in its mission as it enjoys full authority for immediate response – unimpeded by administrative complications – to destruction resulting from natural or man-made disasters.

One entity is Lebanon's 700+ municipalities, all accustomed to acting quickly in response to urgent needs. Lebanon's other vital active sector consists of NGO's and civil society, which exhibit high professionalism and which have demonstrated courage in taking the initiative in response to national needs (medication, water, food). Special thanks also go to the international community, to the UN, the UNIFIL (UN Interim Forces In Lebanon) forces and all the Arab countries who were with Lebanon.

Lebanon has witnessed a prominent political leader who has become a symbol for reconstruction: the late Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. His efforts in retrieving Lebanon's role as the "Switzerland of the Middle East" have been recognized locally and globally. His achievements in restoring and developing Beirut Central District, as well as major road networks and Lebanon's international airport, are concrete evidence of his exemplary success in this regard. Solidair received the UN Award on Housing and Reconstruction, among others.

Rafic Hariri granted 40 000 higher education scholarships outside Lebanon for Lebanese men and women to come back and serve their country with higher degrees. Rafic Hariri was assassinated on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005. He brought peace and prosperity to Lebanon.

Women and men all over the world need dynamic cities to spread the words of love, peace, equality and humanity. ■



Expert **Ms. Ndioro NDIAYE**

*Deputy Director General, International Organisation for Migration (IOM)*

### ***The role of women in the prevention of disasters and reconstruction***

Climate changes and global warming have increased the frequency of cyclones, tidal waves, etc. The consequences are multiple and difficult to imagine in their entirety: the number of victims, the risks of epidemics, etc. The impact of these elements will be more or less permanent on the development of the region concerned. With regard to migration, about 200 million people will leave their place of residence for climatic reasons between now and 2050. The price paid by women is always greater. For example, during the Tsunami which hit South East Asia nearly three years ago, 80% of the victims were women in some places.

#### **1) What lessons can be learnt from these recent disasters with respect to the direct/indirect impact of these disasters on women and their role in reconstruction ?**

Within the disaster context, women's vulnerability is increased by their status within society and the family, socio-cultural elements, the sexual division of labour, their way of adapting to the situation, their responsibility for the family, which means that they do not always have the opportunity to migrate, etc. Women in general have fewer skills, less property and less developed networks. Furthermore, they are not always represented in the decision-making process. They have specific health needs. Following a disaster, women and girls should be protected against physical abuse and sexual violence. In the longer term, matters of economic opportunities and of the means of subsistence will be significant for them, particularly when they are widowed or responsible for the family. They will suffer social exclusion or will have difficulties with claiming their land rights.

Following the passing of hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua and Honduras, women were involved in reconstruction by extending their traditional role of the person who takes care of the family. They also carried out activities traditionally assigned to men. Studies have shown that this involvement was not without conflict within households.

#### **2) How to increase women's participation in the prevention and management of natural disasters ?**

Non-sustainable development practices and efforts are harmful to the environment and their consequences are an increasing occurrence of disasters. Men and women, from this point of view, have a complementary role to play and it is only when all members of society are involved that prevention of disasters can be effective and that the vulnerability of a society can be reduced.

##### **Actions to be considered :**

- **Greater representation of women in local, regional and national decision-making bodies :** with regard to prevention, the capacities of women's associations and community organisations must be strengthened.
- **Greater participation by women :** they must benefit from the reconstruction projects in which they are involved.
- **Better worded information campaigns :** a gender dimension must be guaranteed in communications, training and education. Women are a springboard for prevention campaigns, but these must be targeted in order to affect women.
- **More resources allocated to the research and assessment of programmes integrating gender specificity :** criteria and indicators must be established in order to measure the reduction in vulnerability of women and societies.

##### **Conclusion**

Women's involvement is an important component of disaster prevention and reconstruction strategies. This involvement enables a strengthening of their socio-economic position within the community and even a reduction in their vulnerability and that of their community to future disasters. The vulnerability of a society depends on its exposure to climatic conditions and its adaptability. At international, regional and national level, natural risk-management policies must be placed in coherence and in synergy with women's development and empowerment policies. ■



Speaker **Ms. Jany HANSAL**  
*President of DESA, Dubrovnik (Croatia)*

### ***Economic Empowerment of Women for Future Prosperity***

DESA is an NGO, formally founded in Dubrovnik in 1993 – although the founders of DESA were active from the very beginning of the war in 1991 – as a response to the terrible war that struck our country and our town. DESA is an old traditional girl's name and its aim was to help women refugees and their families, immediately after the tragic events which had taken place here in 1991/1992. Dubrovnik was a city under siege from which no one could leave, a lot of Bosnian women had fled down to the city, and at night food and medical supplies were smuggled in. Dubrovnik has about 45,000 inhabitants and in 1992 the city received 55,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and displaced persons coming from other parts of Croatia. These people were accommodated in empty hotels in the city and were turned into helpless beggars from one day to the next, which made them feel very ashamed.

Our initial aim was to give them a chance to be engaged in any activity that could work as a therapy. While it has maintained its humanitarian and peace-promoting activities to this day, as time went on DESA's programmes have sought to adapt to the requirements of real life situations (besides heavy destruction wrought by war and the loss of their beloved, women were faced with high rates of unemployment). Within its programmes, DESA has empowered women through workshops on psycho-social support and various educational workshops (foreign languages, informatics, traditional crafts..), seminars on entrepreneurship, round tables, lectures, rural tourism, gastronomy and authentic products (including traditional food). The women were trained in peaceful reconciliation and conflict prevention and contacts were build with women from the neighbouring countries. In this way their return to normal life was prepared.

Nowadays, DESA has become an organization which aims to help women to find their role in society. Through its educational and developmental projects, DESA encourages women to become economically independent and to get actively involved in the transition processes in society. Nowadays, women make up 25% of the representatives at the Croatian Parliament, while in the Dubrovnik region we have two women in leading positions : mayoress and district prefect. Only economically independent woman can be active in politics and decision-making processes on an equal basis.

DESA focuses on :

- training women to take a more active role in economic development and decision-making processes
- training the local community to act, within the framework of civil society (with special attention for women's issues),
- promoting traditional values, stimulating the revival of the originality and recognizability of the Dubrovnik region on the basis of sustainable development.

DESA's vision is to develop civil society based on the principles of sustainable development, the leading role in which is to be taken by the woman as a peace-maker, an advocate of tolerance and dialogue for building better co-existence in a multi-ethnic society. ■



Speaker **Ms. Sara GOULD**

*President & CEO of the Ms. Foundation for Women (New York, United States)*

### ***Equitable Rebuilding with Women at the Centre***

The name of the Ms. Foundation for Women comes from the American word 'Miss' used to name women who are not married. The Foundation was founded 35 years ago by women who felt deeply about women's empowerment and believes that women are one of the most powerful forces for creating the political and cultural changes that can bring countries closer to democratic ideals.

By August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005, 80% of the city of New Orleans was flooded under sometimes 15 feet of water because the levees that were protecting the city were breached after the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (August 2005). This made it a man-made disaster caused by decades of underinvestment by the government of the State of Louisiana because of the racial and economic make-up of the city of New Orleans, with 3 times the number of African Americans as in any other city. Approximately 52% of the population in New Orleans was female, but half of the families with children in New Orleans were headed by women. The race and class dimensions of this disaster were immediately recognized because some families did not have the economic means to leave the city. Still, almost no one in the media, except the Chicago Tribune, commented on the gender dimensions of the disaster, even though most of the survivors (75%-80%) were women. Women, especially when of racial minorities, have long been publicly invisible in a predominantly male and white media.

The Ms. Foundation did notice the gender dimensions of the disaster and response to the destruction and massive displacement on the Gulf Coast of the US and created the Katrina Women's Response Fund (KWRF) in September 2005, which has granted about 2 million dollars on the Gulf Coast to women, organizers and activists who have been responding to the disaster. The aim was that women would be fully integrated into all aspects of relief efforts and that they could play a key role in recovery and rebuilding on the Gulf Coast. The KWRF received important financial support from some global institutions (Urgent Action Fund, Global Fund for Women, Kellogg Foundation, Women's Funding Network (WFN)) that provide support to women in times of crisis and conflicts. In partnership with the WFN, funding was also obtained to provide support to five local women's funds in cities to which large numbers of Katrina and Rita victims were evacuated.

KWRF provides strategic support to meet the needs of women of colour and low-income women on the Gulf Coast and other affected areas to ensure that their leadership and priorities are central in both short and long-term recovery and rebuilding efforts.

The Katrina Women's Response Fund (KWRF) focuses on providing a direct response to low-income women's needs; rebuilding the infrastructure of women's organizations and other social change organizations that were directly affected by the Hurricane and flooding; facilitating the participation of women – especially those directly affected – in local and regional structures formed to make policy and allocate resources; ensuring that state, regional and national advocacy organizations that are tracking and advocating in regard to the allocation of resources have leadership of women from the region while ensuring that the perspectives of low-income women and women of colour are prioritized.

Most grants promote grassroots leaderships by women of colour, support advocacy and research efforts, support traditional and non-traditional job training for women (construction); reactivate supportive services for women (childcare); pay special attention to immigrants, single mothers, disabled citizens, low-income people, victims of any kind of violence. The KWRF also went through a longer process helping people with grant-making procedures. Unfortunately, it is the only philanthropic organisation working on the intersection between gender, race and class.

The grantees were women and social justice organizations who talked with the women about the upcoming elections, provided wages for immigrant workers who did not receive pay, bought back land in historically black communities so that this land (under great pressure from developers) could stay in the ownership of the community, they built modular housing, they located women with HIV/AIDS and re-established the access to their medications, they advocated additional rental units and forced the government to provide decent housing conditions. The women formed state-wide coalitions and learned how to make radio documentaries about their experiences. All this with the support of KWRF.

Now, women are not yet at the centre of recovery. The private sector immediately became involved for profit and benefit and the government sector is no longer seen as helpful in recovering from this disaster. ■



Speaker **Ms. Arwa BALKER**

*Director of the Arab Regional Office for the Metropolis Women International Network (Jordan)*

### ***Involvement of women in local authorities***

There is an interdependency between women in local councils and the way disasters are resolved, between women and security, between gender mainstreaming and democratization. Natural disasters are part of human history and local communities are the first to get involved in disasters and most of the time don't have any knowledge. Disasters hit men and women, but women are always vulnerable and at increased risks, because women and men have different strengths and resources in disasters.

48% of the Jordanian population are women and 10% of all Jordanian households are headed by women. Jordan has a long history of migration and a continuous influx of displaced people from neighbouring countries as a result of the old Israeli aggression against neighbouring Palestine and the recent war against Iraq (half a million of residents of Jordan are Iraqis). All this has accelerated urbanization and has created lots of problems within Jordanian cities, especially Amman. Two-thirds of the population lives in 3 cities and half the population lives in Amman, the capital that is growing into a metropolis, where, unfortunately, little is done to promote planning and management systems to cope adequately with the massive urban population growth. Gender mainstreaming is still not applied in municipal planning and development. In addition, gender equality and women's empowerment are facing obstacles due to the persisting conservative trends in the society and the wave of growing fundamentalism that has hit women's progress hard.

The Arab Regional Network for the Women International Network (WIN) is a regional office of the Metropolis International Network and is hosted by the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM). One of the projects is about ensuring capacity-building for women and ensuring their good performance as beginners in leadership participation, in the light of new policies of providing a 20% quota system for women in municipalities, as a result of which 235 women members are now at work in municipal councils. There is an exchange of expertise between female councillors, for example concerning disasters or crises.

At the disaster management level, the initiative plans to adopt early warning systems for Amman City to prepare and reduce the impact of disasters whether natural or man-made. This could contribute towards safeguarding livelihoods, human settlements and associated basic services, which are easily destroyed when disasters strike. As part of disaster management, women have access to training sessions and to contact training programmes, for example to increase female participation in civil defence and to establish humanitarian support units to provide the troops with physiological support.

The Royal Medical Service Organization provides field medical service and hospitals that are sent to Iraq, Lebanon, Iran and Palestine. No female doctors and nurses work in these hospitals due to 'cultural' reasons and 'women's nature', which is in contradiction with the fact that in a lot of conservative areas in the Arab Region women may not be treated by men.

The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization established a centre to deal with disasters and organizes seminars and training on disaster management. Only 8 women in one year (out of 52 participants) attended the seminars. The participants are employees nominated by their Ministry. The WIN Regional Office will start to cooperate with the centre to contact seminars and training workshops for women and for local councils.

In 2006, the Humanitarian Support Network started working through cooperation with NGOs and the private sector. One of its partners is the Jordanian Society for the Protection of Family Abuse Victims, which joined after the hotel bombing in Amman in 2005 to provide support and physical shelter to the family of the victims in times of crises or disasters.

The greatest difficulty Jordan faces in removing gender discrimination is not legislative, but cultural and educational. The media must be encouraged and gender equality in all policies and programmes must be promoted because it is an important issue as it is a must for broadening the role of women at the decision-making level, especially in local administration. Women are the key to recovery and must be engaged in reconstruction planning and in management, one of the main municipal tasks in Jordan. ■

## Debate and conclusions

### DEBATE

**In Africa, the rural population sometimes causes natural disasters** through agricultural fires. The population in eroded areas faces great problems of reintegration in other districts after having fled their eroded land.

The **poor management of household waste also** causes major problems. The proliferation of non-biodegradable plastic bags makes the soil impermeable which results in natural disasters. **The interrelationship between waste management and the production of natural disasters ought to be examined.**

Some **changes** in society following natural disasters may be **reversible and not sustainable** if there is not a certain coordination or connection between the forms of aid during the phases of humanitarian crisis, between subsequent aid and cooperation and development and between public policies in these countries.

It is very important to do **research on disasters** and their consequences. During the Balkan war a Swedish doctor did research on the civil stress syndrome that women suffered from being in a war, sheltering, and protecting their children. Her documents had a great impact on the Swedish soldiers going abroad. She also reported on sexual harassment, abuse and violence against women used as a war strategy. The highest chief-in-command of the Swedish army has engaged a special female advisor to focus on the female perspective and to integrate a female focus when reconstructing a region. This advisor also does research and reporting. This is very important in order to avoid doing the same wrong things all the time.

Hurricane Katrina has exacerbated the **social determinants** which affect personal status, so much so that the fact of being white or black, rich or poor, American or Latin-American, determines someone's fate. It's hard to engage the people in the US in continuing to talk about the experience of the city of New Orleans. Many people don't know that most of the people that have been evacuated are not back yet because they have no house, nor a job. The pressure needs to stay on the American federal and the local government. That is why women's organizations are so important.

**Africa** only contributes 2% of **greenhouse gas emissions**, but bears 98% of the consequences of such gases. Therefore, African governments should want to participate in this dialogue. However, the research has been done! Africa must take the necessary actions. We only need to think of the disasters in Darfur or Mozambique which have been caused by environmental problems.

After the earthquake in Peru, very close to Lima, the capital was not even prepared to receive the people coming from the disaster area. It is important to learn from countries like Nepal, where the Red Cross trains children and young people to prevent disasters and to react effectively should a disaster occur. The chaos after the earthquake generates much violence, but in communities led by women the reaction was very different. Ideas also emerged that will be useful in future emergency situations (for example, the conservation of water).

In Africa, where there are a lot of problems of sexual violence, the military contingents are composed solely of men. Where are the **female soldiers** if it's about making the people feel safe?

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

Women are organised into women's NGOs and there is the will, potential, dynamism and creativity to act. As a natural reaction, women start to build up after a disaster. They also start taking on leadership positions.

#### Problems

- When there is an emergency, the gender of the excluded woman is forgotten.
- Training availabilities, resources and information on women role models are scarce.
- Because of living in a men's world, women lack basic skills.

#### Recommendations

The self-organisation of women, communication campaigns, the allocation of funds and the definition of criteria are very important. More women must be included in rescue teams and decision-making at all levels of power. Gender mainstreaming must be integrated into projects. ■



# D

## Global workshop on “Access to services”

Wednesday 5 December 2007, 09:30 – 11:30

## D1 Housing

Chairperson **Ms. Cecilia DE WULF-ROUX**

*President of the Housing Fund of the Brussels Capital Region*



Expert **Ms. Wandia SEAFORTH**

*Human Settlements Officer at UN-HABITAT – coordinator of the Best Practices Programme*

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### *Some elements of best practices in improving women's access to housing*

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UN-HABITAT is the United Nations agency for human settlements, mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

**UN-HABITAT collects best practices** by running for the last 10 years an award called “the Dubai Award for Best Practices” for improving the living environment. Every two years UN-HABITAT receives about 600 submissions, of which only 10 or 12 can win. All submissions are put in a database because they are of value for learning.

Housing is a critical issue in **gender mainstreaming** within local authorities. It is called a web of institutionalization because all the elements are very much related to each other, are important and can be used as an entry point for providing housing for women.

This presentation concentrates on 5 elements of that web: policy and planning, political commitment, pressure from political constituencies, men and women's experience and interpretation of reality and the delivery of programmes and projects. Depending on the context, the level of intervention (entry points) can be different, with differing merits for different levels of intervention. The best thing is for different measures to be combined. Initiatives addressing women's housing specifically have historically been led by NGOs and civil society. Now local authorities do so. The governance context assuring a bottom-up process is critical.

Entry points can be the right of adequate housing, the right to own and inherit land and property on equal terms with men (e.g. in Africa), slum-upgrading programmes, housing improvement programmes, livelihood programmes to improve women's incomes and their access to housing, the possibility of being a part of comprehensive policy and programmes. The last area is post-conflict and post-disaster situations which have been very often been used to give women new roles and new rights.



Women's experience of urban life and their specific housing needs can be constrained by the need to balance livelihood activities and home responsibilities, by access to social networks, by safety and mobility considerations and by affordability issues.

With regard to **representative political structures and the pressure of political constituencies**, the rights-based entry points are most often influenced by pressure groups, such as human settlements NGOs. Women's right to housing is promoted and monitored by women's organizations, participatory local and city governance recognizes women's organizations as a constituency and stakeholder so that their role is more effective. When finally women participate, they have an impact on access to services, including housing.

With regard to **political commitment and policy and planning**, it is important to recognize the right to adequate housing. South Africa and Colombia have stated this in their constitutions, but this recognition can also be at the legislative level or in a specific policy. This then has to be translated into enabling policies and legislation including laws on women's rights, policies on subsidies (cf. Monterrey), different ownership formats, cooperative housing,... Measures for traditionally excluded groups including women include specific policies, targeted resources and provision of joint ownership.

**Political Commitment** is very important for going to scale and it requires commitment at high levels, including policies, action plans and specific resources, as well as monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Higher levels learned of local best practices and then translated it into wider programmes. The action on the ground is very important for informing policies so that the detail of the policy is responsive enough. National and regional governments have learned from each other and replicated best practices (cf. the Monterrey best practice).

With regard to the delivery of programmes and projects, **broad-based partnerships have been the most effective**. The role of national and regional governments in providing policy and a regulatory framework is critical for scaling up. The role of local authorities is key for housing as well as infrastructure because they are the closest to the people. Civil society involvement helps to identify women's constraints and possible solutions. Within civil society, women's organizations are very important. ■



Speaker **Ms. Ligia PIMENTA ROSA RESENDE**

*Manager of the “Family Action and Living in Communities” programme of the Municipal Secretary of Assistance and Social Development, São Paulo (Brazil)*

### **Eradicating poverty and vulnerability in São Paulo**

Ação Família – viver em comunidade (Family Action – Living in community) is a public strategy to progressively establish an integral social protection system for vulnerable families and overcome poverty in São Paulo.

Launched in 2005 by the Mayor of the City, the programme today assists 60,000 socially, economically and geographically excluded families – most of them extremely poor, living in the suburbs and composed of a single mother (90%) with an average of four kids, who plays her part of mother, daughter, wife and active, autonomous and capable citizen.

The programme operates in 46 reference centres (Craf) and provides a combination of conditions that make it possible for the families to improve their information, capabilities, motivation and relationship between the family members and other members of their community. The purpose is to improve the quality of their life as well as the life of their communities and make them able to solve their problems and satisfy their needs in the future. Once the programme stops (after two years), they must be able to break the circle of poverty.

To achieve these goals, Ação Família integrates monetary subsidies, psychosocial and educational support and preferential access to a list of social services and benefits for the families (considering the individual and collective demands).

On the other hand, the families commit themselves to improve their living conditions, measured by 21 quality of life standards in 3 dimensions, being family life, community life and the life of rights and duties.

To provide sustainability over the long term to all its actions, Ação Família integrates families and other local actors, such as political leaders and public and non-public institution members in order to create the necessary synergy within their communities and to build up a social network.

Brazil has a population of 139 million people, 54 million of whom are women. About 38% of the population of São Paulo lives in conditions of inequality and poverty; 16% of the population is indigent and 54% of them are women. São Paulo is a very unequal city with both wealth and extremely poor favelas, with the highest concentration of poverty in the Americas. 3.4 million inhabitants are indigent and live on less than 104 dollars per capita per month. 20% of the poorest families live in the outskirts of São Paulo and 337,000 families in São Paulo live in high social vulnerability.

The programme works in an inter-secretarial (together with 11 municipal secretaries, the Municipal Secretary for Human Rights and NGO, signing agreements and decrees,...) and cross-departmental way (health, education, culture, sport, environment, work, accommodation, justice,...) and is giving special attention to the gender issue. In order to help the poorest families, the focus is territorial, giving a special attention to the outskirts of the city, one of the 31 support areas into which the city of São Paulo is divided.

The goal is to help 337,000 indigent and vulnerable families by the year 2011. The selection is based upon 65 socio-economic criteria, like being a single-mother family, having children between 0 and 16 years old, having more than 4 children, having not enough or no employment, living in a risky region or with unsatisfactory infrastructure, etc., in order to attain the most vulnerable families who have never had any access to policies and services.

Social protection agents visit the families and play a key role in the programme, which also works on the self-sustainability of the families, teaching them specific skills and how to create a business plan to sell their products. Other activities include meetings, walks,... A leaflet has been produced about the programme, in which the stories, experiences and dreams of the women can be read.

The programme has been won awards twice already, and 75% of all families perceive a positive impact on their family. ■



Speaker **Ms. Alejandra SADA**

*Secretary for Economic and Social Development in the Municipality of Monterrey (Mexico)*

### ***Housing Improvement and Extension Programme***

The Secretary is responsible for establishing and implementing strategic policies, actions and programmes aimed at achieving economic and social development in the Municipality and for improving living conditions for the population through actions to promote employment, housing, legal security and tourism.

The Housing Improvement and Extension Programme is aimed, above all, at families with few resources. Approximately 70% of poor people in the world are women and children and, at the local level, poverty is also mainly female. Therefore, municipal public policies favour women and their families and must have some gender perspective.

Regarding housing conditions in Monterrey, 89.9% of houses have a proper roof and brick walls, tiled or wood floors; 55.7% have more than two rooms apart from the kitchen and 88.9% have mains water, drainage and electricity.

Women, with or without a family, require a decent home to be able to develop adequately and women who are mothers and heads of a family need government support to access housing programmes. The Housing Improvement and Extension Programme consists of making low-cost packages of building materials available, which very much takes people's situation into account in terms of their assets and capacity to pay. With this programme, the Federal and Municipal Governments aim to help the population through subsidies (for a total of 67.5% of the value of the package), while maintaining the importance of the participation of inhabitants, who must contribute 32.5% of the cost.

The target population are citizens – they must own a small plot of land – with income below 13.6 dollars a day and who live in poverty. The candidate selection process consists of visiting and inspecting residential areas and the candidate families (personal contact), interviewing women or family heads, making socio-economic studies and evaluating the possibilities and location of the housing. The inhabitants then fill out the application and go through the municipal and federal government. Beneficiaries receive the subsidy in the form of a coupon granted by the federal government, which they must sign and return. The money from the Federal Government is then deposited in a housing account (in the Municipality) along with the Municipal Government subsidy. Nobody, apart from the Municipality, handles the money to buy the packages. The beneficiary pays the deposit of 10% and then can pay the rest over 5 months. On receiving the package, a formal record of it must be made to avoid corruption. This programme operates in all states of the Republic and all municipalities (cities) apply it in accordance with their work capacity.

The packages can be for rooms of 16m<sup>2</sup>, bedrooms 3 by 3 max., ceilings, walls, floors, waterproofing, etc. The figures of distributed packages show that it is women who are most concerned to improve housing conditions. For some packages, there are 4 or 5 times more applications from women than men. One of the probable reasons is that in the majority of families, the man works and simply cannot dedicate time to it. 82.4% of subscribers are women and 17.45% are men.

Problems have included people's lack of economic capacity, women's dependence on their husbands when taking decisions, a lack of communication in couples, government bureaucracy and some people's non-ability to save. Also, on occasions, it has not been possible to meet requirements or areas of poverty indicated by the Federal Government have not permitted the poor living in another area to request a subsidy. Many people do not believe in the project because of negative experiences with other governments. The coordination and observance of the laws lengthen the period of delivery of materials to the population.

In 2007, 550 families received a subsidy, so that confidence is being re-established. The fact of paying attention to women improves their self-esteem and their perception of themselves. It generates confidence and encourages them to take other action.

Other programmes in the Municipality to improve housing relate to low-cost wills, low-cost deeds with help from private notaries and governments, which pay 20% or 30% of the total cost. Another programme provides for the sale to and construction of housing for people who are still not property owners. The government in this case pays 15% of the total value of the property. ■



Speaker **Ms. Diana Mirian MILOSLAVICH TÚPAC**

*Coordinator of the Peruvian Women's Centre's Local Development, Political Participation and Decentralisation Programme, 'Flora Tristán', a member of the Woman and Habitat Network of Latin America*

### **Housing, a priority for women before and after disasters**

The **Resolution of the Human Rights Commission in its 61st period of sessions and the Study by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Miloon Kothari**, on women and adequate housing as an integral component of the right to an adequate standard of living, recognised that women, especially the poor and those who are victims of domestic violence, continue to suffer multiple and worsening forms of discrimination and that they are discriminated against in important areas as far as obtaining adequate housing is concerned.

This may make them more vulnerable to different forms of violence, while the lack of other housing options may restrict the ability of many women to leave situations of violence.

It highlighted the serious consequences of discrimination based on sex and of violence against women for the equality of women with regard to property ownership, access to and control of land, and regarding property rights and adequate housing, particularly in complex situations of emergency, reconstruction and renovation. It considered that international, regional and local policies on commerce, financing and investment must be designed to promote gender equality with regard to property, access to and control of land, and property rights and adequate housing, as well as other productive resources, and should not underestimate women's capacity to obtain and preserve these resources.

The report is based on **regional consultations** held in India, Mexico, Egypt, Fiji, Peru and Brazil. It also states that women suffer most when they are forcefully evicted and are left homeless, as both situations expose them to greater violence, and furthermore constitute a violation of their personal dignity and health. They often do not have sufficient resources to rent a place.

The **key factors** affecting women's rights to adequate housing and to land are: lack of secure tenancy; lack of information on women's human rights; lack of access to affordable social services, due to privatisation, and to housing credits and subsidies; bureaucratic barriers preventing their access to housing programmes; the increase in poverty and unemployment; and discriminatory cultural and traditional practices.

Regarding his **mission to Peru (March 2003)**, he mentions that Afro-Brazilian women, native women and women living in favelas and human settlements, continue to suffer multiple forms of discrimination and need special attention from the political world. The Special Rapporteur recommended placing priority on offering services to women and vulnerable communities, using a multidisciplinary approach to protecting of human rights.

The **Commission on Reconciliation and Truth** has found that many women displaced by 20 years of violence continue to have problems in finding housing where they want. Women do not want to live in places of origin that have been areas of extreme violence. This explains why government programmes of return (to the place of origin) have not met with success.

It is important to emphasise that the majority of the slum areas and marginalised districts in Latin America are **self-built** (increased value of land in the city), with women playing a fundamental role. In Peru, no local government housing programme exists. The housing shortage situation originates from the serious consequences of the **earthquake**<sup>31</sup> in 2007.

The study on **safety** of the UNIFEM Safe Cities Project, carried out by Flora Tristan, mentions that some women feel unsafe even inside their homes, since burglary is committed even when the family is at home. The Reporter explains that responsibility for protecting and implementing the right to adequate housing continues to lie principally with the state.

It was also concluded that families led by women, especially unmarried mothers living in poverty, represent the most vulnerable group of women in a range of countries (Nicaragua, Argentina, Costa Rica, Australia and the United Kingdom). Families run by women constitute 70% of homeless people in the world; 30% of Argentinean families are led by women and 70% of them live in poverty. Many of them cannot obtain regular income and very often work in the informal sector. ■

<sup>31</sup> The earthquake brings to light two important problems in the main urban centres of the affected area: firstly, tenancies and lack of housing and secondly, the informality of property ownership.

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## Debate and conclusions

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### DEBATE

For linguistic reasons, it should be explained that 'renta' in Ms. Pimenta Rosa Resende's presentation means 'income'.

How does the '**community living**' programme help **housing**? As it is a cross-sector programme, there is room for dialogue where this issue is also discussed. They have attempted to create programmes, they organise specific actions on poor housing (division of the dwelling into more bedrooms, installation of windows) that fulfil some conditions.

The **International Council of Women** recalls that in collaboration with the WIRO Commission a lot has been done already.

**Vie Féminine** states that there are very few **statistics broken down according to sex** on housing in Belgium.

Ms. De Wulf-Roux confirms that the **Housing Fund for the Brussels Capital Region** operates on a social basis and that its goal is to grant loans to people on low income. 6,000 loans are in progress in the Brussels Capital Region. Loans are granted to 850 families every year. The SLRB (Brussels Region Housing Company) does a great deal of work with social organisations in Brussels (e.g. women's organisations and organisations for the disabled). The SLRB is particularly concerned with single women and grants 20-30% of their loans to single women. 25,000 Euros are loaned to people under 30 years of age who can make the repayment over 10 years, interest-free. Half of these are single women. The new Chief Executive Officer is, thanks to the Board of Directors, a woman despite the opposition of some men.

The **system of international finance** is not sensitive to gender nor to women.

Housing **design** is now also being considered, since family structures are changing, but also because it does not currently take much account of women's comfort.

In some **developing countries** it is difficult to look at housing as a basic human right when other important rights, such as basic health care, are not met. You have to find a house within the money you earn. But the question can also be: How can affordable housing be provided? In Uganda a pilot project has been started in collaboration with UN-Habitat on the women land access trust and housing. The perspective must be holistic in that way that it is also about an economic, social empowerment.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Problems

- in many countries, different programs have been started. The goal of these projects is the empowerment of women;
- housing is related to health, to employment, to education and to poverty;

#### Recommendations

- access to housing is more difficult for women because:
- they have no access to credits and ownership;
- they are woman, mother, partner and employee;
- they are often illiterate;
- of bureaucracy;
- they often depend on their husbands for decisions;
- they are often victim of violence and robberies;
- 70% of all the poor in the world are mothers and childrens.

#### Recommendations

- Different stakeholders must work together in order to achieve the goal of affordable housing for women;
- Small and local initiatives must be supported by federal governments and must serve as a starting point for new programmes. ■

## D2 Women and urban mobility



Chairperson **Ms. Maria KRAUTZBERGER**

*Permanent Secretary of Transport and Urban Development of the Senate,  
Department for Urban Planning (Berlin)*

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### ***Mobility questions in Europe***

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Mobility questions have been discussed very intensely in Europe over the course of a year. The European Commission is working on a Green Paper on mobility, and European cities are involved in a consultation process, answering a series of special questions from the European Commission. This consultation process ends in March 2008.

As very often in the traffic sector there were no questions on gender and mobility. This gap must be filled and that is why a workshop on urban mobility is very important.

The situation of the workshop is absolutely unique because of the very different cultural backgrounds of the speakers, the very different professions of the speakers and their different perspectives. ■



Expert **Ms. Diana RUNGE**

*Research Assistant at the Technical University of Berlin, Department for Integrated Transport Planning*

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***Transport is a man, Madame ?, Incorporating Gender into the Work of Metropolis Commission 4***

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The Department for Integrated Transport Planning of the Technical University of Berlin acts as an external consultant for Metropolis Commission 4 on Urban Mobility Management<sup>32</sup>. As a lecturer at the university, Diana Runge educates expert planners on gender.

Transportation is a technical term about how to move people from one point to another as fast as, and at the lowest cost, possible. Mobility is about people's background, social roles, activity patterns, the consequences that arise from travel (not) undertaken. Urban transport is relevant to bringing people together both physically and socially. Physically, because it allows them to visit each other and to do business with each other. Socially, because it is a place where people meet and mix, which fosters social cohesion. Urban transport is also a very complex system in itself because of the different groups of users and varying demands.

In transport policy and planning, gender issues are still largely neglected because dissimilarities and inequalities still exist between men and women in all spheres of public as well as private life.

There are two different ways of framing gender issues in transport :

- Men and women are different, but both have the right to move freely and in an unrestricted way. This framing method also covers the issue of safety : women are weaker and often victims of abuse and violence (framing by difference).
- Inequality relates to the social roles of men and women and can be found in job discrimination or in the distribution of domestic labour. This inequality needs to be diminished and transportation can help to do so (framing by inequality).

The transport demands of men and women are a result of the different social roles that are allocated to them. Women have less access to the labour market, earn less, are less likely to own a car and to hold a driving license, which makes them the prime users of public and non-motorised transport. Men and women also have different travel purposes : men go to work and back and do leisure travel. Women move because of : work, family shopping, escorting other people (children or the elderly) and then leisure. Since these activities are located differently in space, they have different travel patterns. One of them is the very complex idea of 'trip chaining'. As the transport system is still little organised for these demands of 65% of transport users, this causes time poverty, stress and makes them pay more to satisfy their mobility demands.

It is only recently that activities have been initiated in developed and less-developed countries to understand the role of transport in women's everyday life, and to improve mobility opportunities for women as a prerequisite for active participation in society.

Commission 4 of the Metropolis network has made "Gender and Urban Mobility" one of the key topics on its agenda by addressing it in the broader context of "Mobility and Social Cohesion" during its annual meeting in 2006 in Toronto. This was also based on the "Berlin Declaration on Sustainable Urban Mobility", adopted by the Commission during the 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Berlin in 2005.

The presentations and discussions in Toronto revealed the multitude of aspects related to gender issues in transport and the failure of the transport sector to educate, train and employ women on all levels was also addressed.

In Mali, for example, women engaged in the informal economic sector are not allowed to go on public transport with heavy loads. They therefore cannot get to the markets, which limits their ability to generate income. In Kolkata (India), the transport system is not adapted to the 24-hour IT industry. Some IT companies have now decided to give cars and drivers to their female employees.

Are gender issues special issues to be taken care of in an explicit way or can they be incorporated into the larger concept of universal design in which you define standards that are suited to everyone ; not just to women ? With the gender approach you also address the overall social sphere. The universal design approach might generate less opposition but there is a risk of relegating gender issues to being seen as mere problems of the built environment. ■

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<sup>32</sup> Commission 4 was founded in 2002 and has been headed by Berlin – namely by the Senator for Urban Development Ms. Ingeborg Junge-Reyer, who is also Vice-Mayor of Berlin – ever since. The Vice Presidency is currently held by the city of Seoul.



Speaker **Ms. Elisabeth IRSCHIK**

*Chief Executive Office – Executive Office for Urban Planning, Development and Construction ;  
Coordination Office for Planning and Construction Geared to the Requirements of Daily Life  
and the Specific Needs of Women – City of Vienna*

### **Gender Mainstreaming Pilot District Mariahilf**

Shortcomings in public space are frequently felt by women rather than men because they depend more on it. They run everyday errands on foot<sup>33</sup> and close to their homes, they still do most of the supply work for their families and thus are usually out with the slowest road users (children and elderly people requiring assistance). They therefore particularly benefit from good accessibility by foot and independent mobility. This is where gender mainstreaming in traffic and transport has a role to play.

Vienna has a traffic master plan in which the gender mainstreaming issue has been established as a cross-sectional method. It also contains principles and objectives for pedestrians, which is a contribution to gender equality in public space. The quality standards for pedestrian traffic (a minimum pavement width of 2 meters, reduced average waiting time at the traffic lights, speed limit of 30km/h) have been the basis for the project. As in Vienna it is the districts that are responsible for planning, construction and measures in the public space, the project was focused on the district level.

Mariahilf<sup>34</sup> was picked from the 23 Viennese districts that expressed an interest as the "Gender Mainstreaming Pilot District" in 2002. With this project, the City of Vienna has set new quality standards for planning and projects: perspectives geared to gender equality are to become an integral part of all decisions. The Coordination Office for Planning and Construction Geared to the Requirements of Daily Life and the Specific Needs of Women was put in charge of the process and has provided the theoretical and practical background. This office is independent of the municipality (with its own budget and staff) and works on gender-related urban planning. The non-selected districts received a set of maps that show qualities and shortcomings in the pedestrian path network relating to highly frequented destinations which are important for the local level.

Seven municipal departments (urban design, public lighting, traffic organisation and planning) participated in the project. The challenge was to make planning staff sensitive to the different, gender-specific needs of road users. In the first phase, gender mainstreaming master projects were selected to try out methods and planning instruments. On the basis of on-site planning and construction measures, decisions were to be discussed in accordance with the needs of different target groups, and several Consulting sessions and networking meetings were held.

In the second phase, because of the relevance to public space, the municipal departments working on public lighting and traffic planning were chosen as core departments which means that they considered gender mainstreaming as an area-wide issue for the district.

In addition, the coordination office commissioned a survey to transfer the quality standards of the traffic master plan relevant to pedestrian traffic to the pilot district Mariahilf. Shortcomings in relation to the objectives of the traffic master plan were assessed and several measures were proposed.

The measures implemented dealt with the barrier-free design of pavements and stair buildings, widening the space in favour of pedestrians and safe street-crossing. It turned out to be very difficult to change traffic lights in favour of the needs of pedestrian traffic because of the car drivers lobby and the newspapers. In Mariahilf nearly 30 lightning projects were realised and moreover good lighting also improves the visibility of obstacles and, because of the lack of space, the focus is also put on quality in detail, like small measures for small but annoying obstacles. Temporary obstacles, such as outdoor eating areas and construction sites, were also taken into consideration.

To assess the effects of the measures on the different user groups, several planning instruments and methods were developed, e.g. the gender mainstreaming matrix and statistic material shows to increase the awareness, a folder and a brochure were published and the output of the pilot district was extended to other districts in Vienna. ■

<sup>33</sup> In 2003, 60% of all journeys on foot in Vienna were made by women, while 60% of those made by men were by car.

<sup>34</sup> Mariahilf is a very small, high-density district characterized by its city centre nature. Because of the district's decisions on gender mainstreaming and its focus on improving the conditions for pedestrians, it was a clear that there was already an awareness of gender mainstreaming in public space. Mariahilf also has the first and so far only district-level women's commission.

Speaker **Ms. Anne LEEMANS**

*Managing partner of Fontana and Secretary-General of Yellow Design Foundation (Belgium)*

### ***Insecurity in public waiting or transfer areas***

Worldwide 60-65% of passengers (clients) are women who avoid travelling by night or develop an avoidance strategy like using their mobile phone to look busy, travelling accompanied or walking in B-lines. Although statistics show that men are more involved in attack than women, they don't express their fear.

The subjective feeling of security as it resides in our mind is very important. To do research on "perceived" security a non-technical approach is needed. Perceived security is linked to freedom, to not feeling threatened, nor feeling any negative trigger. Also, the presence of other people and human control are important.

The legibility of a space and the intuitive understanding where to go give a feeling of comfort. Quality of sound (music and acoustics) and lighting inspires confidence or otherwise, and the smell of a place puts across whether it is well-kept, hygienic, and the touch and the quality of materials expresses a sense of respect for the passenger.

Independent research done by Yellow Design Foundation in 7 European countries wondered how public transport can attract more clients. The team was multidisciplinary, composed of anthropologists, sociologists, designers, architects, urban planners and engineers. The target group consisted of decision-makers, architects and operators. The research was carried out together with the International Association of Public Transport (UITP), Polis (a network of European cities and regions from across Europe, which promotes, supports and advocates innovation in local transport), the Flemish government and the Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities of the Brussels Capital Region, Brigitte Grouwels. The participating operators were the STIB (the Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles) and the Vlaamse Vervoermaatschappij (VVM) de Lijn (Flanders).

The aim was to develop practical guidelines and recommendations to cover the management and infrastructure of public transport stations. The basic concept was that modern public transportation networks using proprietary premises should be perceived as 'heterotopias'. This concept implies that passengers of all ranks, genders, social, ethnic, cultural, religious and intellectual backgrounds are welcome under the sole condition they respect the rules of the game, e.g. pay for the journey, behave as can be expected in a "Front Space" according to an explicit and implicit body of rules, and that no one group will dominate the space and impose its own behaviour/rules upon other passengers/staff present at a given moment in time. Passengers are to be considered as citizens first, consumers second. The "Heterotopia" status dilutes the risk of tension accumulation and brings extra vitality to public transportation in a sustainable way.

In public space we should behave as we are expected to do, associated with the use of the space as designed by architects and designers and different from our behaviour at home (we dress differently, we don't put our feet on the chairs, we don't shout). This is "**front-space behaviour**". "**Back-space behaviour**" can be defined as behaviour one can reveal at home or in another private space, not in public spaces. The use of back-space behaviour in public space causes **ruse and abuse**. Ruse can cause irritation (e.g. the use of mobile phones). Ruse induces the architect to modulate the spaces differently so that ruse doesn't become a relevant nuisance to others (e.g. a separate waiting room). Abuse is about verbal aggression and destruction of the place. This creates a feeling of insecurity and fewer people will use their stations. Existing conventions must be enforced.

For authorities and operators, public transport is a network to link neighbourhoods, to develop a communication between them and to promote social cohesion, but they also provide mobility and community services. A kind of interaction must be created with the users who must feel it to be their neighbourhood. The metro of Sao Paolo, for example, develops cultural programmes, has libraries and exposes art from local people. It is therefore considered one of the safest metros in the world.

The study revealed 3 practical layers of intervention on the Metro Networks' patrimony: architecture (convex open spaces, short walkways, control of the confluences), good-looking and quality equipment (makes people respect you more as an operator) and phenomenological and sensual perception. ■



Speaker **Mr. Houshang KHANDANDEL**

*Deputy of Traffic and Transportation in the Municipality of Mashhad*

### **Recognizing women's issues related to transportation in Mashhad**

Mashhad is the capital city of the Razavi Khorasan province in the north-east of Iran, about 990 kilometres from Tehran and 180 kilometres from the city of Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and 250 kilometres from the city of Herat, Afghanistan. Mashhad is about 200 square kilometres in area and the city lies 100 meters above sea level. Mashhad has 2.5 million residents and is the second largest and second most-populated city in Iran. Every year about 15 million tourists and pilgrims visit the city.

Mashhad's transportation system consists of 720 kilometres of streets. Buses, taxis and the metro – which is under construction – make up the important elements of this system. Currently, minibuses and buses transport 33% and taxis 23% of all travellers. The bus transportation system dates back 70 years, has 2000 active buses and transports 1.2 million passengers daily. The taxi company dates back about 62 years, has 10,000 taxis and transports 90 000 passengers daily. Presently the urban rail (LRT) system is under construction and will be over 70 kilometres long with 4 lines, one of its lines counting 22 stations.

45% of the women in Mashhad are housewives and women represent 37% of all commuters<sup>35</sup>. According to the results of comprehensive studies of transportation in Mashhad, the most important reasons for inner-city travel by women in Mashhad are going to the Imam Reza's shrine (28%), going to their children's school (23%) and to their place of work (11%).

Although women and men have equal rights in social activities, it should be noted that women have a greater need for easy access and physical and psychological comfort because they rely on public transportation much more than men. The increase of their presence in the public transportation system is very important and also their presence in traffic control, driving schools and traffic training centres for children is increasing.

To strengthen the role of women in the public transportation system, special privileges have been considered for women such as special taxi companies for women and more female taxi drivers. Still, there are some problems for women in the use of public transport, such as the shortage of seats, sexual harassments and robberies.

About 17 years ago, as a result of numerous complaints received by female passengers and in accordance with the results of surveys carried out, some initial efforts were made with the aim of providing more security and comfort for women while commuting.

On this basis, buses have been divided into two parts, one for men and one for women, and half of the bus is allocated to women exclusively. There are also separated doors for women to enter the buses and, on some busy lines, some buses have been allocated for exclusive use by women, especially in the case of schoolgirls. Women can use these in addition to the other regular buses. Some lines now run 24-hour services.

In Mashhad's taxi network, the proportion of women owning taxis has increased. More women drivers drive taxis nowadays (206 women drivers), women own over 850 taxis and 20% of the capacity of the most highly trafficked taxi lines are allocated to women drivers.

In the metro, which will be in use in the near future, some carriages and some ticket selling centres will be exclusively for women.

According to a survey undertaken, over 79% of the population agrees with the plan of allocating a part of buses for women-only use. 83% of the people surveyed were satisfied with this plan, which provides security for women. In another survey, which consisted of 47% women and 53% men, over 85% of the people surveyed were satisfied with the efforts and activities of the taxi company.

In order to provide a suitable environment for women, these activities began over 17 years ago in Mashhad and are being used all around Iran. ■

<sup>35</sup> National Census 2006

## Debate and conclusions

Women don't like to take the metro, while 55% of women use it. **What should be done so that women use public transport at night?**

Women do not travel after dark. If stations were of better quality, women would take the metro more often. The relationship between transport and the press is significant. Too often, the press relates that women are attacked in metro stations. The approach should be multidisciplinary, i.e. offer better quality stations, improve the communication between the press and public transportation and encourage women to use public transport at night.

**These examples are applicable to Western countries and not to developing countries.** However, good examples need gender issues to be incorporated from the beginning by The World Bank. The World Bank could, for instance, incorporate gender issues in order to finance projects in developing countries in order to provide a universal concept. There is much research into this in Europe

**In Mashhad** (Iran), the representative of the city considers that a female taxi driver creates a sense of security for women. The husband can take such a taxi as well. Two options are possible: either a woman takes the female buses and taxis or the mixed public transportation. Girls and female students prefer to use female buses. Female buses and taxis are an option for women to enable them to have more social participation. It is an option to empower women because fathers and husbands would not let them out.

This choice was not made for religious reasons but was based on complaints from women about feeling unsafe: they were pushed and stepped on while travelling by bus.

In response, one person says that it is not just social activities that can empower women. An egalitarian division of tasks between women and men is also very important. Another speaker says that segregated transport for men and women reinforces insecurity and does not enable women to be autonomous. Men should be brought up to respect women.

A woman in the audience explains that she has been using the **London** underground for 30 years and does not feel safe after 8 p.m. because of the fear that something could happen during the long walks from the station to her car. The quality of the lights and colours should be improved.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Strengths:

There are some examples of good practice:

- the gender mainstreaming pilot district Mariahilf in Vienna (Austria). The project has a women's commission, a staff and money;
- in Porto (Portugal) the metro station was rebuilt and is well maintained. The citizens get a high sense of ownership due to these measures;
- in Mashhad (Iran), the authorities choose to promote separate buses for women and female taxi drivers.

### Difficulties:

- Only a minority of planners and decision-makers are women;
- Public transport and public space are uncomfortable for women. The concept of perceived fear is important;
- Women are relying more on public transport and non-motorized transport;
- Transport patterns of women (e.g. trip chaining = going from home to school – work – superstore – work – school – home – friends,...) which cause time-poverty and stress. Furthermore, women have less money and pay more for transportation that is not adapted to their needs.

### Recommendations:

- Citizens should participate in the development of planning tasks and in the development of public spaces in metro stations;
- Applying the concept of heterotopia implies that a station is as sensitive to social, cultural and other triggers, trends and changes as any public area in the city;
- Practical recommendations and assessment tools should be developed and applied. ■

## D3 Basic education



Chairperson **Ms. Iri (Hera) VALSAMAKI-RALLI**

*Co-President of Metropolis Women International Network, City Councillor, Athens; Chairman of the Athens Municipal Crèche and Childcare Centre; Representative of the Athens Regional Office of the "Metropolis Women International Network"*

### *The importance of Gender Equality in Education*

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** asserts that “**everyone has a right to education**” and during the **World Conference on Education for All (EFA)** (Thailand, April 1990) delegates affirmed that education is a fundamental right for both women and men, of all ages throughout the world. They recognized basic education<sup>36</sup> as the foundation for scientific and technological literacy and for self-reliant development.

**Universal basic education** is important for equipping nations and individuals with the capacities and tools required to respond to the demands of changing economic structures. It also provides the means to social development ends. Everybody must have the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.

The most **urgent priority** is to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for girls and women. In the last decade, **gender equality** has become one of the most prominent issues in **education reform efforts** worldwide. Gender equality strengthens democracy and serves as a hallmark of an inclusive society. Gender must refer to both women and men and to the interaction between them as it draws our attention to those issues that have brought about unequal relations. Consequently, gender equality can only be achieved through partnership between women and men. **Achieving gender equality requires changes in institutional practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained.**

Excluding girls and women from education increases their vulnerability and affects their participation in civil and political life. **Education is a powerful tool for reducing inequality** as it can give people the ability to take control of their lives. A woman is “empowered” when she is literate, educated, and has productive skills, access to capital and when she has self-confidence.

However, girls are often the first to be taken out of school if the money for **school fees** becomes scarce; the **textbooks** and **curricula** often reinforce traditional ideas of women as mothers and homemakers rather than active, equal participants in public life. Furthermore, textbooks often represent the gender bias present in society’s view of the technical fields and the **teaching style** also perpetuates the gender difference.

Many female students still tend to study **subjects** which lead to careers with lower pay and less status and in the labour market, the gap between men’s and women’s earnings remains and women crowd the lower ranks of trades and professions, but are absent at the top.

The **Greek State** has prepared a **plan of coordinated action** to combat discrimination and to ensure equal rights for men and women during school training and life-long education. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) worked with the Research Centre for Gender Equality (THI) and the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. The Project “Sensitization of Educators of Secondary Public Education and Interventional Programmes for the Promotion of Gender Equality” of EPEAEK II of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs<sup>37</sup> raises the awareness of educators in gender equality matters. Additionally, the **Pedagogical Institute**, responsible for the teaching material used by schools, (1) has taken steps so that women do not appear in offensive stereotypes in inter-thematic integrated curricula frameworks, (2) has established a Committee for Equality and (3) has introduced, as far back as 2000, balanced treatment of the sexes in comprehensive curricula.

**Specific recommendations** for advocacy and practical interventions at both the policy and school levels have to be developed, such as calls for increased gender balance in texts, teachers’ practices, and in school leadership positions. Increased analysis of education statistics and augmented roles for teacher-training institutions, international organizations and NGOs in generating new education policy and practices are necessary. ■

<sup>36</sup> **Basic education** is the **term** used to refer to education considered essential for everyone, ranging from functional literacy, primary and secondary education to vocational education and skills training. The main purpose of providing basic education is to equip people with the basic knowledge and skills to enable them to earn a living and improve the quality of their lives. Basic education is the foundation for acquiring other life skills and progressively raising the levels of knowledge to fulfil individual and social needs.

<sup>37</sup> financed by the European Social Fund and the Public Investment Programme



Speaker **Ms. Albertine TSHIBILONDI NGOYI**

*Secretary General of the Centre for African Studies and Intercultural Research (CEAF&RI), Belgium*

### **Basic Education in the Republic of the Congo**

Even if women are very active in all areas of African society, it is still the case that they are too little represented at high levels where the decisions of the nation are taken. Therefore, it is undeniable that equal opportunities for men and women have a direct link with the education of women and girls.

What are the mechanisms which obstruct the emergence of women and girls into public and private life? What can be done in Congolese African society to achieve equal opportunities for men and women?

The interested female parties have therefore been called on to reply to these questions, that is, a number of women have been interviewed on the following points: Who does the educating? In what educational environment? What type of education is provided?

Every society has its way of educating children. In Africa, education provided for children is education for life. There is discrimination between education provided for girls or boys.

Various reasons linked to education put a brake on greater equality between men and women. There are principally two types of reasons.

#### **Socio-cultural reasons**

Custom dictates that education for girls should be geared to their reproductive role and the fact that they are destined for marriage whilst education for boys emphasises their role as paterfamilias and leaders, even today. Therefore, it has been observed that even girls taught by their educated mothers perpetuate this concept. However, up to primary level, all girls and boys have equal access to education. But once they reach the age of adolescence, there is a significant drop-out from school to the extent that girls are prepared for marriage.

The fact also that the country is at war makes things more difficult insofar as the education system is disrupted.

#### **Socio-economic reasons**

School fees are expensive and families soon made the choice to send boys to school rather than girls. There is a proverb which says 'What's the point of education which ends up in the saucepan?'

We should state that the school results of girls are lower than those of boys, but that may be explained very easily since girls called 'Mummy No 2' have to help their mothers in running the house. There are no childcare facilities in place (day nurseries) which could provide support for mothers.

A significant number of women are functionally illiterate: 70% cannot read or write.

Therefore, the role of women's associations is of paramount importance in the matter of education for women and girls if more equality is desired. Everybody agrees on the fact that more education and literacy lead to more public awareness.

To fail to achieve greater equality between girls and boys is to mortgage the development and the future not only of the Congo, but also of the continent.

The objective of equal basic education for all will not be achieved by 2015. Recommendations for achieving this objective include:

- subsidising the education of girls via the associations;
- facilitating the tasks through support structures or providing necessary financial aid to the family (e.g. through a world food programme, the distribution of seeds)

We do not ask women's associations to set up schools (education is not instruction) but rather to raise the awareness of mothers and women.

Human society is comparable to a bird with two wings, one masculine wing and one feminine wing which must be developed equally so that a bird can fly. ■



Speaker **Ms. Wanda BÉDARD**

*President of the public foundation 60 million girls (Québec – Canada)*

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### ***Empowering women and communities through education***

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Women comprise half the world. Communities, cities, countries cannot do without their talent and potential. Every time a girl is stopped from pursuing her education, every girl and woman who is stricken with HIV/ Aids, every time a girl becomes pregnant, every time a woman's voice is shut down, every act of violence, every time a woman must be afraid to stand up for her rights it's the world who loses. We lose the potential, creativity and ideas to solve problems in a community. We literally lose children who die giving birth at too young an age in bad conditions and the girls who were never born because of selected abortion.

In 2001, Ms. Bédard was filled with horror after having read about the fate of women and girls in Afghanistan and found that the answer to their destiny is basic education. Ms. Bédard wanted to support basic education for girls and sought information, attended conferences, kept reading and researching and became a volunteer for UNICEF in 2002 and got more involved in the organization, still as a volunteer at that time.

In 2005 Ms. Bédard visited Mozambique as a volunteer with Unicef, where she saw phenomenal projects in the field that were managed by men and women of the community who had decided to do something to alleviate the misery. Sustainable and effective projects the success of which was closely tied to the level of education in the community.

In February 2006 the *60 million girls* foundation was officially incorporated and registered a charity in Canada.

Of the 110 million children of primary-school age who do not attend school each year, 60 million are girls. The goal of the foundation is to see that those 60 million girls receive the education they have a right to every year. *60 million girls* has chosen to invest in the women of tomorrow.

*60 million girls* is a grassroots organisation that finances one major education project each year to the tune of 100,000 dollars. The project can be any innovative, effectively run, efficient and community-centred programme that strikes down the barriers that prevent girls from getting to school. To find the project, the foundation researches potential projects, visits in the field, attends conferences, networks and speaks to the government specialists and NGOs.

*60 million girls* asks individuals, families, small businesspeople, civic associations, groups and schools for donations, has no major galas, events or products and exclusively works with volunteers (less than 1% administration costs) and has created a network of individuals and groups from Montreal who believe that investing in girls' education is investing in a just and fair world. *60 million girls* receives no government funding. The foundation does not have field projects of its own, but works with partners who have the expertise in the field, with the same philosophy and who are specialists in programme development.

The women in the Committee are students, retired women, mothers, teachers, businesspeople, translators, artists, web designers, accountants, neighbours, friends of friends who are dedicated, passionate, determined and focused. There are also men who support the foundation in all kinds of ways.

In the past 3 years, *60 million girls* raised 100,000 dollars that was used to fund the construction and supply of a satellite school in Burkina Faso with UNICEF. In 2006, the foundation raised another 100,000 dollars and worked with the Stephen Lewis Foundation to support girls orphaned by Aids in the Umoyo Training Centre in Zambia. In 2007, the foundation funded a school project in the Maasai Mara region in Kenya with Free the Children (FTC). Today, these three projects have enabled close to 1000 children to attend school.

30 volunteers now work for the foundation. The fundraising has increased by over 50% in 2007 in comparison with the preceding year. The foundation's next step is to launch a campaign aiming to bring the cumulative fundraising effort to a million dollars by 2010. The campaign is called "I count". "I count" because I went to school, but equally important "I count" because my actions and opinions can help to change the world.

Whether these children can ever see the right to education realized depends greatly on people's collective priorities in life. Like the anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." ■

## Debate and conclusions

### DEBATE

In Sub-Saharan Africa, many things have been done, many resources have been distributed, but there are still gaps between girls and boys. Solidarity is needed to attain the **Dakar Objectives** (Education for all 2015, Dakar 2000).

Elimination of illiteracy primarily affects mothers and this elimination of illiteracy needs to be linked to day-to-day life in order to produce **functional literacy**.

In Senegal, the **Mothers Education Network** supports mothers so that they can help their daughters with education.

The situation of **pregnant** girls is another problem in view of the fact that these girls are expelled. In Senegal, thanks to a great deal of lobbying, the circulars, which made the expulsion of pregnant girls compulsory, have been withdrawn. Remedial mechanisms must be found.

It is true that for reasons of family honour or in accordance with religious and cultural customs, a girl must be a virgin when she gets married, and it is the mother who is responsible for this. Whilst being important, customs must be adapted to communities in transition. For this reason, it is important to also educate elderly women as it is they who do the educating.

Education opens women's eyes and makes men afraid, but in the new society in which we live, we cannot be concerned with this. An educated woman becomes a partner in the construction of the country.

**Home helps** are little girls (sometimes under 10 years old) forced by their parents to go into town in search of a dowry. They work in very bad conditions and are often victims of sexual abuse. If they get pregnant, they are dismissed.

One of the reasons why parents do not send their children to school is **the distance to the school**. Local projects and the involvement of the community are important.

**How do 60 million girls select their projects?** Selection is made according to a set of criteria. This year's project provides the construction of a school, a water supply in the school, a library, a day-care centre for younger brothers and sisters, a food programme, separate latrines for boys and girls, an alternate source of income for mothers (they receive a goat, for example, of which the half of the revenue goes to the school and the other half to the mother). Another number one criterion for a project to be selected is community involvement. In 2007, the community provided land for free and helped with the construction.

There is every year one big project that is selected because it is easier to follow the evolution of the project and donors are more inclined to give money if they can see what is happening. Therefore it is also important to know who is the partner in the field, whether it is possible to visit the project, etc. In the future, the organisation hopes to support 2 projects a year.

**Pre-school education** is not included in all countries as an element of basic education. The main objective is too socialise children and make them understand that there are other people with other skills and needs.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths

On this item, not only theory and practices but change mechanisms have to be mentioned. The priority is to work with educators, girls and mothers.

#### Problems

The social context and customs of a community can hinder education projects. Many girls give birth too young and are illiterate.

#### Recommendations

There must be training; gender boundaries must be transgressed, education must be free and access to education must be improved. The media should raise public awareness, the perspective must be bottom-up and solidarity is essential. Young mothers must be educated and data must be produced. Contextuality and customs must be adapted to the new community. ■

## D4 Health

### Chairperson **Ms. Jeanne Françoise LECKOMBA LOUMETO**

*Minister for the Advancement and Integration of Women in Development in the Congo-Brazzaville; Chairperson of the National Network of Women Ministers and Members of Parliament; Municipal Councillor for the Municipality of Brazzaville and Department Councillor; Chairperson of the National Committee of Women Department Councillors*

### **Health in the Congo-Brazzaville**

The Congo-Brazzaville has not remained on the fringes with regard to issues of gender. From the point of view of women's health and the promotion of the status of women, the Congolese Government, through the Ministry of Ms. Leckomba-Loumeto, is translating into facts the commitments made at regional and international level through the implementation of activities such as :

- Setting up of 'gender' focal points in all ministries, public enterprises and *sous-prefectures* in the departments and cities. The mission of these focal points is to monitor the inclusion of the gender dimension in all development plans and programmes concerning all areas of public life, and of health in particular ;
- Large-scale dissemination of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women ;
- Finalisation of the national 'gender' policy ;
- Training of members of parliament on gender matters and budgeting from the gender angle ;
- Setting up of a network of women ministers and members of parliament whose mission is the training and inclusion of women in full participation at all levels of the decision-making process ;
- Drawing up of a guide for women for the elections and also the training and support of women candidates in general and local elections ;
- Strengthening of women's abilities in order to ensure their empowerment by setting up and supporting women's savings banks and credit unions in cities and in rural areas ;
- Training of educator peers for actions on the prevention of AIDS and endemic diseases. On this subject, it should be noted that the HIV prevalence rate is 4.2%. The National Council for the Fight against AIDS, whose Chairman is the Head of State, is active in the field, as is his wife, the Chairwoman of the Organisation of African First Ladies against AIDS, which leads the actions on mother-to-child transmission ;
- Carrying out of awareness campaigns on breast and uterine cancer, on high blood pressure, prenatal care, diabetes.

We can see that progress has been made, but there is still a great deal to do to improve women's health. Therefore, several factors must still be taken into account, for example: access to information, access to planning services, the quality of services, the empowerment of women. As far as access to information is concerned, the right of women to take decisions requires diversified and quality training on health and the aspects of reproduction. Access to reproductive health is important because too many women still die as a result of pregnancy and half of pregnant women in developing countries are anaemic. Furthermore, it is planned that 17 November will be declared a national day in the fight against maternal mortality. The aspects still impeding women's health are also due to :

- a lack of resources ;
- the distance to health centres from women's homes ;
- lack of infrastructures and medicines.

From the point of view of contraception, its practice greatly depends on the strength of marital power. This is due to the survival of certain traditional beliefs which are being challenged more and more thanks to the application of the principle of gender equality declared by the Constitution of 20 January 2002 and the Family Code of 1984.

The road towards equality is still long and difficult, but through dissemination actions and related legal instruments, we can internalise more the concept of gender and gender equality. We can achieve this with a bit more solidarity between women throughout the world.

These actions must be reinforced by education and awareness actions but also by the responsibility of women at all levels: government, parliament, civil society (NGOs, associations, foundations, etc.). ■



Speaker **Mr. Ivan HERMANS**

Senior Policy and External Relations advisor, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health and maternal mortality**

**Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5** aims to *Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio*. The **indicators** are (1) the maternal mortality ratio, (2) the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel and (3) universal access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2015. The last indicator was eliminated from the list of MDGs in 1999 due to pressure from some religious groups and some powerful countries. After a lot of fights within the General Assembly and ECOSOC, this indicator has been obtained, which is important because it encompasses the whole of sexual violence, prevention of unwanted pregnancies and the sexual rights of women.

Since the reception of all the MDG goals, **MDG 5 has progressed the least**. This is strange because it is about maternal health, families and (healthy) women at the core of their families. Maybe this has to do with **population growth**, which means making a state more powerful. Family planning policies are seen as a Western agenda imposed upon developing nations, a kind of neo-imperialism, whereas the only goal is to prevent them from the problems that arise when economic growth is slower than the population growth.

The higher the **prevalence of contraception**, the lower the **maternal mortality ratio** (cf. Gabon, South Africa, Cape Verde and Botswana). This **correlation** is undeniable, but contraception remains a big problem in most countries in Southern Africa. Annually, contraception averts 52 million unintended pregnancies, and saves 1.5 million lives.

In developing countries, **sexual and reproductive ill health** is 1/3 of the global burden of disease among women and 1/5 of the burden of disease among the population overall. At health planning exercises it is too often put aside because of being a very sensitive issue. People do not make the link between talking about sex and the enormous burdens for societies when, for example, mothers die when giving birth. Maternal deaths each year add 1.5 million infant deaths because it is they who care for the children.

The better the **economic development**, the more population bearing will diminish, provided that the growth is distributed between rich and poor. The better off women are economically, the later they give birth.

Over 500,000 women/year die from complications from pregnancy and childbirth. In Sub-Saharan Africa 1/16 vs. 1/3,800 in the developed world. This figure is only an estimate and the causes are the problem of brain drain and the cost of providing contraceptive services to the 201 million women in developing countries.

Other **causes of maternal mortality** are severe bleedings and a series of indirect causes (e.g. transportation), the lack of basic obstetric services in rural areas, which makes urbanization not such a bad thing for women. Child marriages resulting in girls giving birth too young is another undeniable problem.

In countries with strong government leadership, effective pro-poor policies and strategies, a good planning, a good execution and a good evaluation of actions undertaken, **progress** has been made. The adequate and permanent financial and technical support from the international community is fundamental. The estimated amount needed is 3.9 billion dollars a year. Most of the strategies developed, however, are documents that remain unimplemented or are only implemented in some districts, not nationwide.

Maternal health is a multisectoral issue, other problems being the **cultural and transportation delay**. It might not be the habit that women go for prenatal care. Prevention by working with men and with grassroot organisations is the most important but very difficult challenge for UNFPA. Few donors want to pay for this work that has no tangible results. Very often roads are too bad to be used and clinics are too far to be reached on time in an emergency case. Besides, **real, medically trained doctors** are often not present in the clinics.

In the period 1995 to 2003, **financial resources** for family planning were halved, investments in reproductive health are stable but not going up, investments in HIV/AIDS rise tremendously because it is not seen as part of the reproductive health agenda. Often HIV/AIDS is funded at the expense of maternal health. Research budgets go down.

Some results are that UNFPA got a global fund to combat **obstetric fistula**. Since 2003, 30 countries completed needs assessments and some countries now have programmes. Training doctors in curing fistula is very important for the quality of health centres. Nigeria, Pakistan and Rajasthan developed a good national campaign and there were major public awareness campaigns in the UK and Belgium.

The **connection between urbanization, growing cities and maternal health** is important. The UNFPA State of World Population report 2007 stated that half of the world population will be urban in 2008 and all future demographic growth will be urban and will occur in developing countries, something which is scary for countries like Uganda and Ethiopia. Due to this population explosion in Africa and Asia and the lack of population growth policies, the consequences for maternal health will be pernicious. ■



Speaker **Ms. Semiye TAS**

*Midwife, psychiatric nurse, psychotherapist and sexologist (Belgium)*

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**Can you discuss sexuality and relationships with immigrants ?**

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For every individual, the meaning of the word 'sex' is tied up with their personal experiences and beliefs, but is also dependent on social and cultural conceptions. As such, that meaning can be different in different societies. There is, what is more, no unambiguous definition of sex, even though the word calls to mind terms such as perception, lust, sexuality, emotions. A person's environment determines what is and is not possible when it comes to sex (e.g. remaining a virgin, no sex before marriage, unfaithfulness, sexual preference, etc.).

Sex education often covers purely technical aspects such as contraception, sexually transmitted diseases and so on, but not enjoyment or pleasure. Where can you find out about them? Television does cover these areas, but they are often portrayed in an extremely positive light so that for many that "first time" will almost inevitably be a let-down. Moreover, people hardly ever talk about the fact that good and safe sex is good for your health (e.g. positive effect on heart and blood vessels, cholesterol level, stress, natural painkiller, etc.).

The speaker is a midwife, psychiatric nurse, psychotherapist and sexologist by training and speaks from her experience of holding group sessions about sexuality and relationships in Belgium. She is of Turkish origin herself and her group sessions are primarily aimed at immigrant women and men. Her group sessions are very interactive, visual, hard-hitting, diversified and give due consideration to the feeling of safety within a group.

Within the Turkish and Moroccan community, young people get little or no sex education. Sexual experimentation is, after all, prohibited for young Muslims since sex out of wedlock is not permitted.

For the women in the group sessions (predominantly immigrants, but some Belgians do participate too) it is therefore not always a given that the often technical information about contraceptives, anatomy, sexually transmitted diseases and so on will be completely grasped. They likewise often do not have many questions themselves about contraceptives, but rather the questions that preoccupy them relate more to relationships, such as why do I not feel like sex, why do I feel pain sometimes when we make love, why is my husband unfaithful and what can I do about it, et cetera.

On account of their culture and upbringing, immigrant women are less intimate with their bodies than men. Girls, after all, are not permitted to experiment with their bodies and are punished for doing so, while that is much less common for boys.

Women are also given very strict guidelines about virginity, and that means that it is only on their wedding night that they are freed from all their taboos. However, women are often so underprepared that they experience much less pleasure in the sexual relationship than the men.

**By way of conclusion**

However spontaneous you make the link to children and young people in education about sexuality and relationships, adults are also confronted with questions about sexuality and relationships. Furthermore, it is important that it is not only technical aspects relating to STDs, sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancies, contraception and so on that are given an airing, but also more emotional questions and concerns in connection with experience of sexuality and relationships.

At the end of the day it is difficult for immigrants (as well as for other groups) to talk about sexuality and relationships in a direct and explicit way. To be able to discuss with them sex and relationships it is important to use stories and metaphors. ■

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Speaker **Mr. Stéphane HEYMANS**

*Belgian Projects Manager, Belgian Projects for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)*

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***Women without documents: what sort of health care for which health problems ?***

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The 'Health Care' projects of Médecins Sans Frontières started in 1989 and are located in Anvers, Liège and Brussels. The objective is to provide treatment and standard health care. All the facilities of the Belgian system are used in order to achieve this. The principles are genuine health care, the general medical practitioner is still the person who looks after the patient long-term and mental health is an integral part of health care. In order to achieve these long-term solutions, it is essential to carry out more structural work at the political level.

At the legal level, since 1996, the royal decree on 'Emergency medical aid' has stipulated the arrangements for health care for illegal immigrants in Belgium. This decree covers the reimbursement of the care provider. The term 'Emergency medical aid' is often confused with a simple medical emergency which involves ad hoc immediate medical treatment. Whereas emergency medical aid has been implemented to enable action just prior to the moment when the situation has deteriorated. The body responsible for organising the care and its reimbursement is the CPAS. The data collected by the latter can only be used to provide assistance to people. In the Brussels region, the time needed to obtain emergency medical aid is estimated to be several weeks.

Morally, undocumented immigrants are under a lot of pressure not to assert their rights. It can be difficult for these people to fight to obtain the application of the right to emergency medical aid. Moral support is of paramount importance.

This legislation can be an integration factor. Any form of discrimination, even administrative, undermines health and health care as a fundamental right.

For undocumented female immigrants, pregnancy can be one of the health problems which requires specific care and monitoring. Lack of information from the women themselves creates problems. The use of contraception does not appear to be sufficiently widespread. Abortion is too often the means of contraception. With regard to specific pathologies in the gynaecological field, prevention is problematic. The doctors must inform the patients on certain preventive methods. But they work in a framework restricted by administrative constraints. Undocumented female immigrants suffer from pathologies linked to work (tendinitis and overwork). They suffer from exploitation due to their status. These pathologies are linked to the general climate of insecurity and extreme precariousness in which they live. Labour legislation protects all workers, but unfortunately this protection remains mainly theoretical for the moment.

Due to the fact of their migration, women are often dependent on an individual who has agreed to look after them. This protector then becomes the abuser. The lack of legal residency makes any legal action very unlikely and women who agree to sue are rare.

Specific child medical care is recognised and provided by all the players. On the other hand, food and housing for children is a worry for their mothers, just as children remaining in the home country are a source of stress.

These women can feel alone, they do not always wish to share their vulnerability. Health centres and carers can provide significant support. Lack of official status is the major determining factor in the health and mental health of undocumented female immigrants.

**Conclusion**

Health care for undocumented female immigrants is currently possible in Belgium. It is essential that every frontline player be able to put emergency medical aid into practice without having to go through an intermediary and that each one should actually utilise the existing tools and participate in their improvement.

Disseminated information is important, both for carers and for potential patients. The CPAS has a central role to play in the dissemination of correct, clear, understandable, in short, usable information.

With regard to mental health, efforts are being made to inform and train the professionals, but there is still a long way to go.

The whys and wherefores of immigration are of paramount importance. We must ask ourselves how to improve the situation in these countries or the relations we have with them. ■

## Debate and conclusions

In many developing countries, women are familiar with numerous health problems (high blood pressure, cancer, anaemia, AIDS, etc.). These are due to **endemic diseases, epidemics and poor living conditions** in general. **Mortality**, especially amongst young women, is also linked to sexuality and pregnancy, particularly due to the fact that there are still problems with the acceptance of contraception, especially by men (taboos, socio-cultural pressures, religious influences, prejudices, etc.) which often constitute a brake on an improvement in women's health. Health policies should therefore involve men more, raise their awareness and train them.

**Thus, women's health appears to be closely linked to opportunities for contraception, abortion and sex education.** For example, in African and Latin American countries, lack of respect from men leads to serious health problems linked to the raping of girls and violence. In Latin America, many women hide their health, depression and drug addiction problems. The promotion of mature sexuality is a health factor and a factor in developing better relations between partners. It has proved necessary to work with religious dignitaries. **Monotheistic religions accord little interest to women's sexual health.** But contrary to perceived ideas, the Muslim religion does not necessarily produce the greatest opposition, the influence of the Catholic religion is more negative in the Philippines.

But **lack of health care and infrastructure** and also the **means of travel** are equally obvious. Despite the existence of legal instruments, the Millennium goals and international aid objectives, the financial investment to alleviate these problems is vastly insufficient and the **5<sup>th</sup> Millennium goal** appears to be **under-financed**. The awareness and action programmes at various levels and in various countries are numerous (e.g. gender focal points, MSF) and are producing positive results (e.g. the training of doctors, free tests, the fight against obstetric fistulae, vaccination programmes, etc.). But budgetary aid is often appropriated by men. It should go more directly to women and be managed by them. Priorities must also be better defined.

The best health services exist where there is good governance (planning, management, implementation) and in cities (empowerment, health care, etc.) as in Europe, where the global population appears to be better off, benefiting from better living conditions and health care. However, the emergence of new poverty and very precarious situations is producing new public health problems. These affect illegal migrants in particular, who lack social protection and who have difficulty in obtaining health care. Even though they are familiar with multiple physical and mental health problems, they have to face oppressive administrative procedures in order to obtain appropriate care.

For example, in Belgium, health care is strongly linked to the residency situation, hence the precariousness of illegal migrant women's health. Lacking sufficient financial resources, they cannot easily access health care for abortions or for giving birth in good conditions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to health, it is therefore necessary:

- to proceed step by step with all partners, to work on cultural aspects by involving men and to trust people's wisdom and knowledge;
- to develop an integrated global approach taking account of all factors (food programmes);
- to increase financial aid, to better manage and distribute it in terms of priorities (link between women's health and development) in order to improve access to health services and to conduct information and awareness campaigns, to train the doctors and the various players;
- to develop projects which empower women;
- to develop family planning with attention to sexual health and to reproduction but without limiting sex education to reproduction. ■

## D5 Gender and resource allocation



Chairperson **Ms. Mercedes María de MORAES RODRIGUES**  
*General Attorney for the Municipality of Porto Alegre (Brazil)*

### *Financial responses to inequality between men and women*

According to the 1995 human development report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), no country in the world offers equal opportunities for men and women. 70% of the almost 1.3 thousand million poor people in the world are women. Two-thirds of the 885 million illiterate adults registered by UNESCO are women. Women occupy 36% of formal employment in the world, but receive between 30% and 40% less salary than men.

The economic challenge continues to be there. But women are also responsible for 53% of the total work (often informal) in developing countries. In the industrialised countries, this percentage is 51%. Women are responsible for two-thirds of all humanitarian work, not including work for which they receive no salary. Despite all of this, they continue to earn less than men and represent a large proportion of illiteracy in developing countries.

Regarding violence, more than 14 million women have suffered some form of sexual mutilation and more than 60 million women have died in recent years because of some kind of sexual violence. One woman contracts AIDS in the world every minute and every two minutes a woman dies of this disease. According to the World Bank, every day 1000 women die from complications in giving birth, 90% of them in developing countries.

These challenges require the **participation of women in designing policies and setting budgetary priorities**, the latter being the central theme of this workshop.

In public policies, for each specific inequality and vulnerability there is a response that translates into monetary form the prevailing principle of equality and of eradication of discriminations, evidenced in the opposing interests of the different groups who make up society. The same can be done in companies, unions and NGOs.

**Porto Alegre**, capital of Rio Grande do Sul State, located in the extreme south of Brazil, has an area of 496.1 km<sup>2</sup> and is made up of nine municipalities. It has one and a half million inhabitants, of which 50.12% are women. The per capita income of the Municipality is equivalent to 3,300 Euros. A large proportion of Porto Alegre's population is economically vulnerable and almost half the population subsists on approximately 5,904 Euros a year.

Porto Alegre enjoys the advantages of a city in terms of cultural, commercial and health infrastructures, but suffers from few of the disadvantages of major urban centres. Its population growth is relatively stable. The cultural infrastructure is diverse and it has three Universities and four University Centres, Event Centres and Theatres. The hospital infrastructure is one of the best in the country.

The administration assigns significant financial expenditure to the provision of public services. The management model attempts to integrate the actions of different City Council bodies, creating transversal government actions. The city budget is drawn up by assigning resources to government programmes.

The **'Women's Porto Alegre' programme** has specific actions to promote generation of improvements in women's income and health. Other programmes in the area of health also seek to make a strong impact on gender questions, including Family Planning, Prevention of Uterus and Breast Cancer, etc.

With the focus on the gender question, the **'Committee for Implementing a Municipal Plan for Public Policies on Women'** was created. It is made up of 14 Secretariats, including Housing, Health and Education and is coordinated by the Attorney-General's Office for the Municipality. The Committee will make possible joint action with emphasis on the specificities of the feminine condition, giving even more support to the Women's Porto Alegre programme, the main principal of which is to generate income and health.

The Committee promotes relations between the Administration and the Municipal Council (representatives of civil society and women's movements). This group defines requirements and priorities in Assemblies specially convened for the purpose and in Municipal, State and national Women's Conferences. ■



Expert **Ms. Joya DE FOOR**

*Co-Chair of the Women's Public Finance Network, Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada and City Treasurer of the City of Los Angeles (California – United States)*

### **Introduction to gender and resource allocation**

Gender & Resource Allocation is a truly **international phenomenon**. But how does gender influence the allocation of resources? What does gender equity and gender resource allocation mean?

There is **not one universally accepted definition**, not even a single understanding of the entire concept. Traditionally and historically, people think of households, whether they would be traditional or not, or the typical interactions between men and women. Looking at familiar resources, girls can be discouraged to study and to become smart, for example.

In other domains today, it is not uncommon for gender inequity to be evident in the pursuit of capital, the selection of investments, the allocation of budgets and the acquisition of assets. In some areas of the United States, for example, women often face more stringent requirements as they seek capital to start or expand their businesses. In some instances, women were required to seek a guarantor or a co-signatory and men not. The loan would then be more easily approved. Policy makers also approve higher salaries more easily for men than for women.

Are women directed to select or acquire some inferior assets or are some of their assets ignored based on their gender? Unfortunately, in many instances (e.g. real estate), the answer is yes.

#### **How should resources be allocated ?**

Some **primary considerations** should be supply and demand, need and desire, the ability to pay, the ultimate disposition of the resource. Gender should only be a factor if a legitimate business purpose is served. There remain instances where the interjection of gender is extremely detrimental to women.

**Are women in any way complicit in the lack of gender equity in resource allocation and do women proactively address the allocation of resources in the gender-right manner**, thinking about, for example, a situation in the classroom (sciences, mathematics) or in the workplace (allocation of workforce budgets)? Many medical trials, for example, have not included women. It took specialists years to realize that symptoms of heart attack in men differ from those in women. As a result, women have gone undiagnosed or misdiagnosed, sometimes resulting in death. Are medical resources being allocated in a gender-neutral manner?

Neither are all women on a daily basis proactively promoting gender equity in medicine, in business, in education, in government, in safety, in technology.

Does there exist a **gender-blind resource allocation model**? There does not. There cannot be a single universal model because communities, needs and challenges are very unique. It is, however, important to begin a working definition of this concept and to develop a general framework for the work of gender equity in the allocation of resources. The best practices presented in this forum are different examples of successes from around the world.

May it never be forgotten that dynamic cities need women. ■

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Speaker **Ms. Nadège CHELL**

*Chairperson of RESO-Femmes, Commitment & Support Network for Women's Organisations (Switzerland)*

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### ***Allocation of resources in Mali – Gender and allocation of resources***

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First of all, we need to recall the historical and political context of Mali, this Sub-Saharan African country 5 times the size of France. In 1991, the regime of President Traoré was overthrown by the active participation of women side by side with the trades unions and students. This fight was the opportunity for women to make their entrance into the Malian public sphere and this is why their involvement in public life always makes reference to this. Women really want to participate in debate and this gives them a very dynamic collective feeling.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the most important point at the moment is not gender but actually the status of women. In fact, even more than elsewhere, the concept of gender in Africa is identified as the female gender and is not very well understood. Furthermore, it seems that this concept is not understood in the same way in English- and French-speaking countries. Before speaking about gender, African women want to obtain the same civil rights as men ; this is an essential prerequisite for them. It could even be said that Sub-Saharan African women practise gender on a day-to-day basis,

The new government in place in Mali has organised decentralisation with the commitment to open the debate to civil society and to women in particular. It is they who represent local communities and therefore play an essential role in the reconstruction of the country. In fact, Malian women have set up all kinds of local associations (NGOs) which operate essentially in the areas of health, education and the environment. We could say that women have been the best ambassadors for environmental problems in Africa for 30 years. All these associations are truly the cement of civil society in Mali.

How can African women, particularly in Mali, gain access to resources ?

First of all, we need to be aware that enormous disparities exist in this country where the majority of the population are concentrated in the cities. In this country where decentralisation has been desired by the government and the infrastructure is rudimentary, local communities are the basis of civil society, which explains the reason for the great disparities between them.

In Mopti, for example, which has 140,000 inhabitants, 80% of the women are illiterate. How can women's access to resources be ensured in this municipality ? By placing them in a true situation of participation in civil society through access to the new technologies. This is the way they could participate in the management of the local community. ■



Speaker **Ms. Sharon ALLEN**

*Executive Assistant to Nancy A. Boxill, Fulton County Commissioner (Atlanta, Georgia, US)*

***The Role of Municipal Government Procurement in Fostering Women's Entrepreneurial Growth in the South-Eastern US: A Case Study of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta Region***

By 2007 the number of **women's businesses in the USA** has grown to 10.4 million firms, and 41% of all US firms are 50% or more owned by women. 12.8 million people are employed by women business owners. Sales for the year 2007 are expected to be in excess of \$1.9 trillion.

Over that past two decades the rate of **growth** in the number of **women-owned firms** is about double the national average (42% vs. 24%). The rate of growth of large firms owned by women (>100 employees and/or >\$1 million in sales) is also higher than the growth in similar firms in the general economy.

**Women entrepreneurs contribute immensely to the economy of the State of Georgia.** They own 38.9% of all privately held firms in the State of Georgia and this number has grown by about 85% in the last decade. Georgia ranks 9th among the 50 states and Washington D.C. in number of women-owned, privately held companies and Georgia has the second highest growth rates in the number of women moving into business ownership across the country.

**Fulton County and Atlanta** are the **economic centre of the South-Eastern United States.** Transportation is a key element in Atlanta's business success – the city serves as a rail and air hub – and the population rate in the area has doubled over the past 20 years. Fulton County is expected to reach 1.9 million residents by 2010. Atlanta has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the USA, including Delta Airlines, Coca-Cola, and UPS. Many smaller businesses serve as vendors to these larger corporations.

40.3% of the **companies** in the Fulton County and Atlanta region are 50% or more **owned by women** and the total number of companies is 193,735. The sales generated amount to \$37 billion and employment levels are just under 200,000 people.

The United Nations, through UNITAR and CIFAL, held two international conferences on Gender in Atlanta. The first one was the "**Gender Equality for National and Local Governments 2006 Workshop**". Commissioner Nancy Boxill and Mayor Shirley Franklin of Atlanta were key sponsors and contributors to both conferences.

From the 2006 workshop, Commissioner Boxill learned what other municipalities were doing to achieve the UN 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium Development goal of the promotion of gender equality and empowerment for women. She gained a clear understanding of the need to refocus and apply a renewed energy to the work of achieving improved gender equality in the Fulton County Government.

At the closing ceremony, all participants signed **The Atlanta Declaration** on gender equality for local actors. The subscribers committed on behalf of their government or of whom they represented to follow a specific action plan for the achievement of gender equality.

On December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the full board of commissioners passed a resolution in support of the Atlanta Declaration Goals. By February 2007 a Gender Equality Action Plan, based on gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming, was created. A consultant guided the government – who did not receive the initiative well – in the process of applying gender mainstreaming and budgeting. Therefore, a gender analysis was identified to encourage and institutionalise a gender-informed approach to public policy.

During the "Gender Equality and Government: The Americas' Forum" in August 2007, Fulton County shared its approach on gender equality and in September 2007 the Fulton County government adopted the "**Fulton County Policy on Gender Equality**". Actions included the creation of a focus group and the organisation of gender budgeting and mainstreaming training sessions.

Future plans include a two-day training session with women in August 2007 to strengthen the pilot project, an outreach programme for women business owners and a new database on female businesses. A very significant accomplishment is the establishment of the gender equality initiative as a line item in the budget. ■

## Debate and conclusion

It is right to deplore the lack of information on the **practical tools** developed as part of **'gender budgeting'** (budget analysis and budget breakdown formulae).

**African women** have **real economic power** because they are at the heart of all local initiatives and they stick together even if they still always come up against problems of access to financial and material resources.

In many countries, such as in Tunisia, it is mainly women who have access to **microcredit**, but they frequently need to use this money for other purposes. So would it not be pertinent to take this daily reality of women into account at world level ('bottom-up')?

On the other hand, access to resources also currently represents **access to information through the Internet**, which has become an essential means of communication.

It is of paramount importance that women participate in **decision-making on the allocation of resources**. Furthermore, it has been proven (Swedish study) that when men decide on the distribution of resources, they always give priority to men.

In Quebec, it has been demonstrated that the involvement of women in the economic sector (public and private) could positively influence the perception of the role of women by men, including those who take the decisions. The perception that women have of themselves is also of paramount importance and the role of schools is decisive in this respect.

Women must be able to attain their **economic independence**. At the European Union level, the Treaty of Lisbon stipulates as a target a rate of 60% of women in work, yet without making this compulsory. Two countries are definitely striving to get things moving. India is dedicating 10% of its budget to women's and children's development and is asking every public body to produce a report on the situation of women by making recommendations and proposing solutions. South Korea is applying a differentiated budget analysis in order to influence the allocation of resources in favour of women in areas such as work, mobility, etc.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Positive points:

Women participate more in areas of financing policy, they utilise the possibilities of networking and, by taking part in local politics (citizenship), the possibility exists of improving the representation of gender issues.

#### Negative points:

- perception is still traditional (family, companies, civil society, governments);
- micro-credits are too expensive for women;
- there is still little participation by women in political decision-making;
- infrastructure problems persist;
- the notion of gender is not sufficiently clear in the different communities;
- there is a lack of instruments and information on technology/computing. Difficulty of access to information.

#### Recommendations:

- models and tools need to be created to quantify and identify problems in allocating resources. Micro-credit systems should be regulated in public policies;
- the budget should be used as the basic tool;
- especially at local level, women must take part in political decisions. Power must be shared between the genders;
- advantage should be taken of the solidarity between women and the mindsets of men and women changed;
- positive discrimination and financing of women's projects is necessary;
- international conferences must be decentralised and organised in Southern countries as well;
- local authorities must be obliged to write annual reports on the situation of women and to put forward solutions;
- women's access to technology and computing (Internet) must be made easier;
- City members must be supported to create gender budgeting (money is needed to apply gender mainstreaming), by the dissemination of gender budgeting instruments on its website, for example. ■



# F

## Mayor's Panel

Wednesday 5 December 2007, 15:00 – 16:30



Moderator **Rita Rachele DANDAVINO**

*Coordinator for the International Women's Network of Metropolis, Montreal, Canada*

The Mayors' Panel constitutes the last session of exchanges of the Forum. The panellists, all women, come from cities of various sizes from diverse continents therefore ensuring a very interesting geographic and cultural representation. The Mayors' Panel comprises six women: Ms. Saida Allagui, Chairperson of the Municipality of Mornag, Tunisia (North Africa); Ms. Maite Arque i Ferrer, Mayor of Badalona, Spain (Europe); Ms. Françoise Foning, Mayor of Douala V, Cameroon (Sub-Saharan Africa); Ms. Arti Mehra, Mayor of New Delhi, India (Asia); Ms. Marina Sequeiros Montesinos, Mayor of Cusco, Peru (Latin America); and Ms. Luz Borrero, Deputy Chief Operating Officer of Atlanta, United States (North America) on behalf of Mme Shirley Franklin, Mayor of Atlanta who is unable to attend. Some women have long political experience whilst others are newly elected.

The Mayors' Panel will take place in three sections. Firstly, the panellists will give a brief summary of their city and the great challenges they face in conjunction with local and demographic issues. Then they will identify two or three priority themes from the Forum themes, in which they are more directly involved in their cities. Finally, a discussion on female leadership and gender equality at city level will follow, taking into account their own experience as mayor.

In view of the **economic challenges**, the panellists place great importance on training and on employability support for women and also for young people. They are in favour of programmes for developing women's managerial skills (especially in conjunction with the financial aspects) and support and advertising programmes for enterprises run by women or at the start-up of small family businesses by emphasising the fields of expertise or technical abilities of women. *The development of partnerships, the promotion of education and training opportunities are the first steps towards the achievement of equal rights between men and women.*

Amongst the **urban environment challenges**, the panellists stress the impacts on women's lifestyle and development opportunities in water and waste management. Sensitive to issues linked to pollution, energy consumption and the consequences of climate change (including drought in certain areas in Africa), the panellists consider cities and women to be essential partners for sustainable development actions right from the start. However, these actions are of paramount importance in order to ensure the safety of women in urban environments and to counter the violence to which they are subjected (conjugal violence, sexual exploitation, female foeticide).

**Access to services** is essential for women's integration in urban life, particularly new arrivals. The challenges vary according to the size of cities, their level of development and the cultural realities. Legislative support is sometimes required to ensure equal access to services for all, men and women. For example, women's urban mobility is dependent on safe and affordable public transport adapted to their needs. Access to housing for women, a major concern, is linked to laws governing access to property and finance. Health problems (AIDS and tuberculosis) require concerted actions by government bodies in order to include women. The panellists are aware of their role in budgetary decisions in order to ensure the development of the whole population.

**Female leadership** arouses great interest from the public. Aware of the importance of their role as responsible politicians in their cities and also as women occupying public positions not yet vested equally in society, the panellists demonstrate intense commitment towards their cities and their populations. They face challenges that are not always obvious. Their path leading to political public life follows experience in public management, political involvement from a young age or even entrepreneurial success. This path is not without snags, anxiety, distrust on the part of some individuals for whom the woman's role is still in the private domain. A common point: they dare to take their place by standing in local elections. With the prestige of office come the challenges and responsibilities. No challenge is insurmountable to them. These women mayors know that they must still demonstrate their management and visionary capabilities more than their male colleagues. Looking for a consensus with compassion and solicitude for the population, they share a dynamic and pragmatic approach which amazes many people. The six panellists confirm that women can and must play their role in cities for the wellbeing of humanity.

Taking account of their cultural environment, these women are models and sources of inspiration. The future is in the hands of the dynamic women of this world! ■



### **Ms. Maite ARQUÉ I FERRER**

*Mayor of Badalona, Catalonia – Spain (Europe)*

The city of Badalona has 230,000 inhabitants and is adjacent to Barcelona, between the sea and the mountains, making it a city with very little space.

From 1979 to 1999, Ms. Arqué i Ferrer exercised various responsibilities, almost all of them to do with education, health and social services, and she also worked on sport and environment matters at another stage. Each term of office lasts four years and can be repeated without any kind of limitation. She has also been a Provincial Councillor, as Chair of the Social Services Commission, in charge of the de-institutionalising of the care of children, the elderly and the disabled.

Ms. Arqué i Ferrer has been the city's mayor since 1999 and during her second term she also shared responsibility within the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, which has an area of 600 square kilometres, comprises 36 municipalities and has more than three million inhabitants, 1,600,000 in the city of Barcelona, 230,000 in Badalona and the rest in the other 34 municipalities.

Within the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona there are three institutions :

- An entity which manages transport (public and contracted to private companies), which Ms. Arqué i Ferrer chaired for four years. In a city with a great deal of immigration, public transport is extremely important.
- An Environment entity, which manages the water cycle (supply and purification) and refuse.
- A Commonwealth of Municipalities (a voluntary grouping of municipalities) in which the municipalities manage town planning and public spaces (especially large parks and beaches) and the construction of housing.

On the non-political side of her work, Ms. Arqué i Ferrer has created and helped bolster women's groups. In Badalona there is a network of entities run by very strong and important women working on solidarity, self-help and voluntary activities. The star project involves the hosting of immigrant families by local women.

It is also important for women to have proper training in new technologies to prevent them being marginalised or suffering from a new kind of illiteracy. It is the municipality's job to make these technologies available to women by setting up classes with easy programmes to enable them to communicate with one another and find basic information, e.g., about how to set up enterprises.

Coming from the world of citizen participation, Ms. Arqué i Ferrer was clear from the outset that within her responsibilities she wanted to work for women. When she joined the Barcelona Regional Council she was the only woman among 56 councillors, which meant, for example, that at end-of-year parties the accompanying partner's gift was always given to her and invitation letters were always addressed to "Ms. Arqué and wife" instead of "husband". The only problem in her work was with the preceding mayor when he realised that she might be his replacement. Spain has since progressed and the new law that makes gender parity lists obligatory is very important. ■



**Ms. Arti MEHRA**

*Mayor of New Delhi, India (Asia)*

The subject of this forum has acquired great significance in the prevailing scenario all over the world, especially in India where the highest post, the President of the Republic of India, has been attained by a woman, Ms. Pratibha Devisingh Patil. The President also happens to be the supreme commander of the armed forces.

We had the fortune of having women as prime minister of the nation, chief ministers and governors of the provincial states. The first female Secretary-General of the United Nations was also from India and the very fact that a woman can rise from grassroot level to become the president of the largest democratic nation speaks volumes, not only for the present scenario, but also for the centuries-old traditions and values of the society, the society that has women as 'shakti', 'Durga', the goddess of power, 'Lakshmi', the goddess of wealth and prosperity and 'Sarasvati', the goddess of education and wisdom. According to Indian philosophy and values, where women are worshipped the god presides.

But from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Mughals and the British ruled India, the position of women deteriorated. Ideologically, women were considered as a completely inferior species having no significance and no personality. Socially they were kept in complete submission, they were denied all rights, were suppressed and oppressed.

Thousand of women took part in the freedom struggle and, under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, they faced batons and guns, they stood steadfast against exploitation, but it was only after India's independence in 1947 that women truly came into their own as equal partners with men.

The constitution of India provides equal rights for all irrespective of caste, credo and sex. The fundamental rights guarantee the equality of men and women in every walk of life. It cannot be denied that dynamic cities really do need women and we have to re-orient the policies and actions with gender equality in mind.

In India, the empowerment of women in politics is gaining ground. The Bill to reserve 33% of parliamentary seats for women is under active consideration for approval. It is only a matter of time until it becomes law. India would then become the first country in the world to guarantee a 1/3 representation of women in its highest law-making body. It is already the first country to have introduced a 1/3 reservation for women at grassroots level, such as in municipal corporations and municipalities. The municipal corporation of New Delhi is the largest in the world, with a total of 217 municipal councillors, 92 of whom are women.

Exploitation of women has not yet been completely eliminated and women are not yet provided with the best facilities. In order to ensure and strengthen further equality between men and women we still have miles and miles to go. The mindset of the society needs to be completely overhauled.

Ms. Mehra is proud to be the Mayor of India's capital city Delhi, a city of 15 million citizens, a city which has an area of 1500 km<sup>2</sup>, which 2 million people come to visit every day for tourism, business, trade, medical facilities and education and where 3 million people live in slums below the poverty line. Approximately 3.5 million vehicles circulate on the roads of Delhi and every day about 7000 metric tons of garbage is produced. Big city, big prestige and big challenges.

The message of climate change is urgent and not acting would be criminally irresponsible. Climate changes are already having a tremendous impact on cities – impacts that will become more frequent and more severe. Local governments are being responsible, having established greenhouse gas reduction targets and implemented measures to achieve those targets. Local governments must accept an important responsibility, given that more than 70% of all the world's energy is consumed in cities.



Ms. Mehra approves all efforts to cut air pollution, to provide more clean water and to support alternative fuel initiatives. Delhi has the largest bus fleet in the world running on clean fuel, Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). With its 250 km network, the metro system is the largest and newest in the world. There are more and more Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL) and energy saving devices. And soon a pilot project on LED light systems will be introduced to save energy.

New Delhi is bringing in the very expensive plasma technology for solid waste management and the city is encouraging solar systems by subsidizing the cost. The city also has a holistic approach towards e-governance for paperless offices.

However, women tend to be more nurturing and would take drastic measures to curtail emissions and greenhouse gases, to ensure a brighter future and a cleaner environment for our children. Society needs to see women more as dynamic promoters of social transformation. Women's ownership rights have a powerful influence on their ability to control the environment and contribute to economic development.

All members of society must voluntarily, willingly and happily contribute to gender equality. Imbalances, whenever prevailing against women, must be corrected in the best interest of human society, and the earlier the better. The future is in the hands of the dynamic women of the world! ■



### **Ms. Françoise FONING**

*Mayor of Douala V, Cameroon (Sub-Saharan Africa)*

This Mayors' Panel is very important to enable women mayors to exchange their experiences and to communicate with others.

The city of Douala V is a city within a city, an up-and-coming city for which Ms. Foning has been elected member of parliament for the fourth time. However, she has resigned in order to stay in the town hall in view of her other international assignments. The city of Douala V has 1 million inhabitants and Ms. Foning is in her second 5-year term of office.

Ms. Foning's ambition is that unemployment amongst young people be reduced via a self-employment programme for 3000 young people and a project for 2000 women, which started in January 2008. The project consists of setting up small businesses and small companies to support the family and to pay for their children's education. The town council will provide essential products and will donate these products free-of-charge to all impoverished women. Every day, sales will bring them some money for the family, whilst another portion must be paid to the cooperative finance bank set up by the town council. Three times a year the bank will be opened up to enable each participant to have reserves.

Another ambition is to supply potable water to everybody via 50 boreholes of which 10 have already been implemented. 650 street lamps have been installed to reduce aggression. 200 health centres have just been set up in partnership with a French NGO.

The NGOs in the city have been approved by the town council and Ms. Foning is doing the lobbying and promotion and looking for partners for them at international level.

The municipality has also set up a municipal police force for which the municipality is looking for partners to make it more efficient.

As far as social housing is concerned, the municipality has provided a 100 hectare plot of land and the government of Cameroon has built a road to open up the city of Douala V, but three more roads are required.

The government of Cameroon is in the process of setting up independent municipalities so that they can make loans without too many constraints. Cameroon is way ahead in this matter.

Ms. Foning concludes by stating that she is always looking for partners who have better ideas for making all the inhabitants of Douala V happy. ■



### **Ms. Marina SEQUEIROS MONTESINOS**

*Mayor of Cuzco, Peru (Latin America)*

Peru has around 28 million inhabitants and is divided up politically into regions, so it has central, regional and local government. There are about 2,000 municipalities, 196 of which are provincial. The rest are district municipalities.

Cuzco was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1993 with three surviving cultures: the pre-Inca, Inca and Spanish. Cuzco also has the fourth wonder of the world, Machu Picchu.

Cuzco is in southern Peru, in the Andes mountain chain at an altitude of approximately 3,500 m above sea level, and has about 650,000 inhabitants. The Province of Cuzco has seven districts and Cuzco as the provincial capital has 350,000 voters, 51% of whom are women. Of that 51%, only between 25% and 30% vote because the rest are illiterate.

Cuzco is extremely male-chauvinistic! From the time of the Incas there was never a female ruler.

Now is the first time there has been one in the person of a mayoress, which has meant that, at the Inti Raymi Sun festival, in which the Sun God orders the Inca to tell the city's mayor how to rule throughout the coming year, the whole libretto has had to be feminised.

There are now no other provincial mayoresses in Latin America and only a few district ones. In 1996, Ms. Sequeiros Montesinos gained the position in the San Miguel district of the Republic's capital city. At the time, there were six mayoresses in the capital; today there are none.

In San Miguel, Ms. Sequeiros Montesinos dynamised the economy from below, from local government level. In Peru, development and policies have traditionally been the preserve of central government, but the solution does not always come from above, so local government, in addition to providing services to the population, is now also trying to solve the serious problems facing them, such as infrastructure, access to basic services, and creating the conditions for the people's full development.

Based on that experience, the law on municipalities has been changed so that it now covers two important aspects: providing services to the population and fostering integral and sustained development of the potentiality and comparative advantages that any population has.

It is the woman that shoulders the economic problems of her city or country. It is she who, whether she has resources or not, must solve the food, education and health problems that affect her family. It is the woman who has to work miracles. In Peru, much of the population have no earnings.

Poverty typically affects women. That is why the few women who are in local government have the responsibility of working hard to enable women to gain training and skills so that they can harness their potential and become involved in the production of economic resources.

In the policies she has implemented and is implementing, the mayoress is deeply convinced that women need to be trained because training a woman yields a very good rate of return.

Training a woman solves family problems and trains the whole family. The government has provided women with facilities for realising their potential, with social programs they can participate in near home, enabling them to enter the economic circuit by organising women-based family businesses.

The government also provides training in handicrafts saleable to tourists, and gives them working capital, exempts such activities from municipal taxation and affords them technical assistance in producing marketable products.

Cuzco also has many problems concerning safety and polluting transport. Every day 50,000 cars generate a great deal of pollution in the historic centre. 70% of the citizen inhabitants live in the surrounding areas and have no access to property. ■



### **Ms. Saida ALLAGUI**

*Chairperson of the Municipality of Mornag, Tunisia (North Africa)*

Ms. Allagui is in her second term of office, after having been the vice chairperson during her first term of office.

Mornag is a suburb to the South of Tunis, which is located 16 km from the city of Tunis and about 10 minutes from the city of Tunis, particularly due to the existence of the motorway to Hammamet. The city of Mornag covers about two thirds of the total area of the governorate of Ben Arous which makes it the largest city of all the municipalities of this governorate.

The city comprises 5 urban areas covering the 2400 hectares of the city of Mornag. The municipal area of the municipality covers 2400 ha and is divided into a 2270 ha agricultural area and a 130 ha urban area. The name Mornag is attributed to the plains situated to the south of Tunis, between the mountains of Bou Kornine, Jebel Rassas and Zaghouan.

The number of inhabitants is 33 137, there are 7334 houses and 7044 households.

The city comprises 36 towns and the rate of connection to mains electricity, and potable water and sewage systems is 97% and 98%. And I have just left an important national project for approximately 1 billion to complete the last town and to connect it to the sewage system. The city has about 6 cultural, about 15 educational, 4 sports and 8 religious establishments.

The municipal council comprises 22 members including 7 deputies who chair sectorial committees: economic affairs, administrative and financial affairs, public works and town planning, health, hygiene and protection of the environment, social and family affairs, the committee for cooperation and external relations and the youth, sport and culture committee. Mornag also has a municipal council for children. And it is the same for all cities and all municipalities in Tunisia.

The municipality staff comprises a total of 57 executives, technical and administrative officers and manual workers.

A mayor or a municipal council in a small town has to do a bit of everything. The civil administration is nearest to the citizens. This administration is computerised and on line throughout the Republic. Citizens may retrieve their birth certificates from any municipality thanks to the National Madania 1 project.

The civil service officers are the chairperson of the municipality and the deputy mayors.

With regard to cleanliness, the respective services collect about 17 tonnes per day and 6500 tonnes of household rubbish per year. The objective of the current cleanliness programme is to improve the cleanliness of the city, to reduce expenditure, to save energy and to ensure selective collection for recycling. These actions are part of a national programme which covers and helps the municipalities.

With regard to public lighting, the city has 1745 lights and an annual consumption of 130,000 dinars p.a. There is a presidential and national energy-saving project (-40%) in the public lighting sector comprising the installation of voltage regulators throughout the network.

The city of Mornag has also attempted to make additional savings by installing solar energy in certain areas.

Another presidential project aims to increase the green space per citizen to reach 15 m<sup>2</sup> per person by 2009. Currently, in Mornag, this space is approximately 13.13m<sup>2</sup> whereas in 2005 the city only had 7.56 m<sup>2</sup> per person.

The town plan has been approved by the decree dated 12 December 2006. The urban area is 130 ha and the increase in urbanisation is limited to 50 ha in order not to harm agriculture. The city has also opted for high-rise construction. An industrial zone has been created to enable the processing of agricultural products from the fertile area in which the city is situated. The city of Mornag is number one in the production of table grapes and it is well ranked in the production of other fruit, oil and wine (Châteaux de Mornag). The industrial zone will enable the creation of jobs, an increase in revenue for the city and also the creation of an organised and sustainable development framework.

Municipal investment plans are for 5 years and are increasing from one plan to the next, from 575,000 dinars for the Seventh Plan (1987-1991) to 1,620,000 dinars for the Eleventh Plan (2007-2011). The most important projects are : the repairing of roads, the construction of the town hall, the construction of a cultural centre, a municipal stadium and an indoor sports hall.

In applying some national programmes and participation by all citizens, there are some experiences which are worth mentioning : energy-saving, Agenda 21 started in January 2008, the "Mornag, garden city" project, the "Mornag and information" project and the "Mornag and good citizenship" project. All these projects require significant investment greater than the municipal budget. The municipality is called upon to overcome all these problems and to meet these challenges and the municipal council has decided to realise certain projects by means of concessions to private developers.

Mornag is looking to open up to the outside world and to exchange as much experience as possible. ■



**Ms. Luz BORRERO**

*Deputy Chief Operating Officer of Atlanta, United States (North America)*



on behalf of **Ms. Shirley FRANKLIN**

*Mayor of Atlanta*

Ms. Borrero expresses Ms. Shirley Franklin's regret that she could not be present and acknowledges the presence of city council member Anne Fauver and of the Director of International Relations for the city of Atlanta, Claire McLeveighn.

Ms. Borrero presents a programme that functions in the context of the city's economic development plan.

According to the Center for Women's Business Research, in 2006 there were an estimated 7.7 million privately held firms in the US and approximately 30.4% of all privately held firms were owned by women. Ownership by women, in this context, is defined as 51% or above ownership of the company. These companies generated more than 1.1 trillion dollars in annual sales.

42% of women-owned firms sell their products or services to governmental agencies or large corporations, as compared with 61% of men-owned firms.

The 2002 census of business owners and the Center for Women's Business Research show that nationwide in the US, 46% of African-American business owners are women.

During the past 10 years the number of women-owned firms in metro Atlanta has significantly increased with an average growth rate of 14%. 160,000 women-owned businesses in metro Atlanta generate nearly 26 billion dollars in sales and employ about 125,000 people. Women have a growing role in the economy of metro Atlanta.

Metro Atlanta has approximately 5 million people. The Metro region is composed of 10 counties, of which the city of Atlanta is the economic centre. The city of Atlanta has approximately 500,000 inhabitants, and during the daytime the population of the city grows to approximately 1 million people because of employment migration to the city.

Metro Atlanta ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the number of privately held majority-owned firms in employment and it also ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in sales in the region.

One of the US organizations that is helping women entrepreneurs grow their businesses is called "Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence". Through its programme, this organization provides access to funds, mentoring programmes, marketing opportunities and technology tools that women entrepreneurs utilize to help grow their businesses.

"Count me in" launched a programme called "Make mine a million", a programme to inspire 1 million women entrepreneurs to reach annual revenues of 1 million dollars by the year 2010 and one of 2007's award recipients, RenovoData, is based in the city of Atlanta. RenovoData is a technology firm that provides data back-up solutions to assist companies before, during and after disasters. It is a women-owned disaster management company which is a very important aspect of safety and security in the US.

This company and other women-owned businesses have grown into a dynamic part of Atlanta's economy. In the state of Georgia, it is estimated that firms privately held by women generated more than 25 billion dollars in sales and, among the 50 states of the US, Georgia ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in 2004 in the number of privately held firms.

In an effort to provide solutions needed to incentivize economic growth and security for women involving a policy, access, implementation, education and leadership, several initiatives have been brought forward by the city of Atlanta government. The office of contract compliance monitors all competitive procurements by the city to encourage and ensure female business participation.

Through an aggressive equal business opportunity programme, female businesses have been provided an opportunity to compete for the city's business. In 2006, 14.3% of the dollars that were earned by female business enterprises, were earned through this programme. A total of 38.43% of participating dollars were earned collectively by minority firms participating in the programme. Today, 42.6% of the firms certified by the office of contract compliance are female-owned firms.

In 2007, a small business development pilot programme was launched. The programme was designed for business owners interested in advancing their businesses or enhancing their knowledge to pursue better opportunities in the multi-million dollar clean water programme, a water rehabilitation programme. Out of the participants receiving certificates in this programme, 47% were female-owned firms.

The city's department of procurement has provided annual events for educational forums and business development network opportunities for women. On average, 200 people have registered. Working jointly with the city of Atlanta's Commission on Women, the department event consists of panel discussions and workshops and also provides opportunities for female entrepreneurs to meet and advance key decisions. These efforts have resulted in information that is provided to women who seek the advancement of their firms and who seek leadership advancement within the city. The city of Atlanta's website has been updated periodically to link procurement opportunities to make these opportunities available to women entrepreneurs.

Finally, in 2007, following the CIFAL Gender Equality Conference, the city of Atlanta city council and the administration jointly adopted a resolution that commits them to raising awareness on gender sensitivity in the city of Atlanta and within the administration of the city. Building partnerships, promoting educational opportunities and training courses are the first steps in manifesting the promise of equal rights for men and women alike.

The most important programme today for women who work for the city of Atlanta is the financial literacy programme that is especially designed for women who work for the city and who earn less than 30,000 dollars a year. It is our intention to advance these women's careers by enabling them to make better financial decisions for their future. ■

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## Debate

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On the subject of being a female mayor, Ms. Mehra believes that a person is born with leadership qualities. The first time Ms. Mehra was elected was as vice-president of the student union at the University of Delhi with its 150,000 students. Since then, she has always wanted to do something for society, but knew that someone can only become a leader if they have the vision and the wisdom to solve the problems in society. Since 1982, Ms. Mehra has held different positions in Delhi.

Ms. Foning has been serving the population for 40 years as a mayor without being a "traditional" mayor (she is currently carrying out her second mandate), given that her door has always been open to everyone. She likes helping others and has adopted over 450 children, paying for their studies and finding them jobs. The problems that she experiences as a female mayor are with those who cannot do what she does and who fight against her. They seek to discourage her. But she continues because she likes to help.

On the question of whether women approach power differently from men, Ms. Foning explains that being a woman makes it possible to deal better with problems. It is easier to put oneself in the place of someone who is suffering. A woman acts as a mother. It must also be said that the enemy of woman is woman: if women were better supported by women, they could go even further. Ms. Sequeiros confirms this and says that, in her opinion, women are more effective and less corrupt and work harder and faster to find non-discriminating and fair solutions for everyone. It is women who know best that children today are the future of all countries.

Ms. Allagui confirms that, in Tunisia too, people are starting to realize that positions of power are for both men and women and that it is competence that matters. After 30 years of service as head of a team working on traffic in the Tunisian capital, she realizes that working solely with local government is not enough for a project to succeed. She had to take charge of various associations and is a member of the Board of the Order of Engineers, on the basis of results given that people are beginning to understand. Love for others is crucial in this respect. Ms. Allagui is one of 5 female mayors in Tunisia and the first in her region, a region that has welcomed her with open arms.

Do Ms. Sequeiros and Ms. Foning also receive financial resources from their countries' central government? In Cameroon, councils receive a subsidy from the central government, EMCF, to be redistributed. Very soon, councils will no longer depend on this State subsidy as the President of Cameroon will decentralize council responsibilities with the aim of bringing them closer to the population. In Cuzco province, the budget comes from two major sources, namely the council's own income and a percentage of revenue from tax from the Camisea Gas Project and the mining activities of Cuzco province. These are not sufficient and Cuzco province is fighting to receive in addition 50% of the VAT from all commercial transactions carried out in Cuzco province. With this money, the local government could resolve the major problems of insecurity and solid residues caused by the large influx of tourists. With the small amount of money paid by the population of Cuzco province, these problems cannot be resolved.

In Delhi, Ms. Mehra thinks that it is important that municipal corporations and municipalities become self-dependent. Delhi has one big source of money, namely house-tax collection; other revenue comes from parking, advertisements and licences to run hotels, restaurants and other establishments. An overall share comes from the federal government. Delhi does not receive subsidies or donations, but does take loans for bigger projects.

These women have shown great fighting spirit and a determination to succeed in their projects as women mayors. They can be proud of themselves and many other subjects close to their hearts. They should be congratulated and wished every success in continuing their work. ■



## FINAL DECLARATION & CONCLUSION



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## Final Declaration

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We, the participants in the first international forum "Dynamic Cities Need Women", gathered in Brussels, from December 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> 2007, at the invitation of the Brussels Capital Region and the Metropolis Women International Network,

**CONSIDERING** the fact that nearly half of the world population is urban, and the majority of the people who live in cities are women;

RECOGNIZE the essential role that women play in all aspects of urban life and their contribution to a sustainable development that benefits all;

**AFFIRM** that equal opportunities for participation of men and women in all aspects of public and private life are universal and fundamental rights;

**CONCLUDE** that significant progress has been made since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 but that there is still much to be done in all parts of the world to ensure the full equality of women in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals and the Habitat Agenda on the equality and development of women;

**APPEAL** to the relevant authorities and institutions in all countries to develop and implement policies and plans and act on the following priorities:

- removing all remaining customary and legal barriers and ensure the enforcement of laws pertaining to equality between women and men;
- ensuring women security of tenure and equal property rights;
- promoting equal access of women and men to all levels of education and vocational training;
- enhancing the opportunities for women to play a full and equal role in technology, and in the economy, both as entrepreneurs and as employees,
- providing the necessary support to allow women and men to choose how to combine their careers and family life, including ready access to childcare services and care for the elderly;
- ensuring equal access of women to health care services that respond to their specific needs as women and to the social protection of unemployment benefits and pensions;
- guaranteeing a balanced representation of women and men in political life and in all public authorities, at all levels, to enable women to play an active role in the decision-making process;
- according women an equal role in the development and management of cities to ensure that housing, infrastructure, water and sanitation, social services and transport systems take into account women's needs;

- integrating gender equality in the development of all areas of public policy, and allocating budgets taking into account the needs of both women and men; and striving to achieve this through a participatory process.

- making cities safe for women by providing a secure environment in public spaces, workplaces and homes through appropriate design, allocation of resources and provision of response mechanisms; and by putting women in all positions in the police and judiciary;

- combatting all forms of violence against women, both inside and outside the home and providing support services such as medical and psychological aid, shelters and legal services;

- developing policies that provide protection to women in vulnerable positions, including women affected by wars and disasters, refugees, migrant workers and ethnic or religious minorities and handicapped women;

- taking effective action against female foeticide/infanticide, child marriage, genital mutilation and trafficking in human beings;

- increasing the involvement of women in providing result-orientated solutions to climate change;

### **APPEAL to women in all countries:**

- to form networks to strengthen their position and enhance solidarity;

- to take an active role in shaping their own future and in the sustainable development of cities and societies that benefit all;

### **APPEAL to men in all countries:**

- to recognize the essential role and contribution of women in society and address the specific needs and perspectives of women;

- to work together with women in partnership to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all;

### **ASK Metropolis to:**

- encourage local, metropolitan, regional and community authorities to develop a gender agenda based on gender statistics;

### **ASK the Metropolis Women International Network to:**

- provide for a follow-up committee including UN-Habitat and other partners;

- prepare for the next International Forum;

### **ASK the co-presidents of this Forum to:**

- transmit this declaration to all relevant authorities and institutions.

This final declaration has been signed by both the co-presidents of the Forum and representatives of each continent :

**Ms. Brigitte GROUWELS,**

Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities,  
Brussels Capital Region,  
Co-President of the Forum

**Ms. Francine SENÉCAL,**

Co-President of the Metropolis Women  
International Network,  
Co-President of the Forum

**Ms. Mame BOUSSO SAMB DIACK,**

Deputy in the National Assembly  
and mayor of the City of Dakar,  
African representative

**Ms. Claire McLEVEIGHN,**

Director for External Affairs  
and International Relations  
in the mayor's office, City of Atlanta,  
North-American representative

**Ms. María Ignacia BENÍTEZ PEREIRA,**

Regional councillor, Santiago  
Metropolitan Region,  
Latin-American representative

**Ms. Vandana CHAVAN,**

Former Mayor of the City of Pune (India),  
Asian representative

**Ms. Irini VALSAMAKI RALLI,**

City councillor, Municipality of Athens,  
European representative

**Ms. Hiam KALIMAT TUGUZ,**

City Councillor, Municipality of Greater Amman,  
Middle Eastern representative

**Ms. Wandia SEAFORTH,**

Coordinator UN-Habitat Best Practices  
& Local Leadership Programme,  
representative of UN-Habitat




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**Conclusion by Ms. Brigitte Grouwels,**

*Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities of the Brussels Capital Region and Co-President of "Dynamic Cities Need Women"*

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This report provides a synthesis of the many interesting panel discussions and plenary sessions of "Dynamic Cities Need Women". I'm inclined to say "you had to be there". But this is a good second best. I was struck by five major themes which could be observed throughout.

First there is the basic need for "safe cities". Cities – and women in those cities – cannot prosper without security. And the best, most basic measure of a city's security is how safe or unsafe women feel in the public spaces, the workplaces, on the public transport and in the homes of that city.

Economic and social issues are essential for women all over the world. Access to individual property and the security of those property rights are essential elements for women all over the world. As are individual social and economic rights, including access to education, healthcare, social and economic benefits, etc.

Rights are only meaningful if they can be enforced and if everybody knows about them. That is also why women's access to information is crucial. This begins with the basic need for literacy and runs all the way to the ever more crucial access to sources of information like the Internet.

At a time when issues linked to climate change dominate a large part of the international discussion, it is not surprising that women's role and interest in environmental policies and the sustainable development of cities was an important theme at our forum.

Finally, there is no substitute for female participation in all aspects of leadership and decision-making. Women must have an active voice and role in all aspects of urban life and politics. Fortunately, more and more women do play a prominent role in more and more countries and cities. But we still have a long way to go to reach a truly balanced participation of men and women in public life.

This report, and the forum of which it is the summary, provide us with many important insights into the above-mentioned issues. Credit for this must go to many more people than can be mentioned in this brief conclusion. I sincerely want to thank all the participants and speakers of "Dynamic Cities Need Women". Special thanks go to our keynote speakers: European Commissioner for Equal Opportunities, Mr. Vladimir Spidla; the Tunisian Minister for Women and Family Affairs Ms. Sarra Kanoun Jarraya; and UN Under-Secretary-General and UN-Habitat Executive director, Ms. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka. My colleague, Brussels Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Guy Vanhengel, helped provide funding and administrative support to make the forum a success.

"Dynamic Cities Need Women" would not have been possible without the continuous hard work of numerous people within the Ministry of the Brussels Capital Region, especially within the Directorate of Equal Opportunities and the Directorate of External Relations, my Cabinet and that of Minister Vanhengel, and the Secretariat of Metropolis and its Women International Network. I would like to thank especially Mr. Amara Ouerghi, General Director of the International Institute of Metropolis and Ms. Rita Rachele Dandavino, Coordinator of the Metropolis Women International Network, who helped coordinate everything within Metropolis; Ms. An Van Goey who coordinated the forum's programme within my Cabinet; and Ms. Liesbet De Keersmaecker, also of my Cabinet, who coordinated this report.

"Dynamic Cities Need Women" was a joint effort of the Brussels Capital Region and the Metropolis Women International Network. Its President, Ms. Francine Senécal, Vice-Mayor of Montreal, was the indispensable partner and an important driving force for this forum. I thank her for our sound collaboration and look forward to working with her and the Metropolis Women International Network in the future.

**Brigitte Grouwels**