



ADF TODAY

Wednesday, 19 November 2008

Action on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women in Africa

UNIFEM launches Campaign to end VAW

By Zarina Geloo

With a renewed sense of urgency the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) meeting ahead of ADF VI launched the beginning of an Africa wide campaign to end violence against women (VAW).

Against the back drop of a plethora of commitments, made by African countries to address gender violence, the meeting, attended by representatives of civil society, faith based organisations and government departments, said violence against women had reached "epidemic proportions".

Litha Musyimi – Organa Director of Women in Gender Directorate at the African Union (AU) said the gap between policy and implementation was "too large".

"We want to see implementation. We have to empower women and ourselves and come up with creative approaches to address obstacles and cultural barriers."

More importantly, she said "we must unlock financial resources. We must get the funds to trickle down – this is one challenge. Resources need to be unleashed to fight gender inequality and violence"

Giving an overview for the rationale for the campaign, UNIFEM chief of the Africa section Micheline Ravololonarisoa said that despite the progress of recent decades, there were still too many gaps in commitments as well as a low priority placed on addressing violence against women and girls.

Severe under-funding, lack of national capacities and expertise and the scant availability of reliable data were some of reasons there had been inadequate progress in eradicating violence against women and girls.

"Much work has been done, and countries have made commitments, but we are far from our goal. The campaign will promote a more cohesive and strategic approach involving all actors to accelerate the pace of progress towards eliminating VAW," she said.

The campaign's major objectives will be to mobilise and support governments in fulfilling their commitments to ending violence against women



and girls by mobilising a wide range of key actors and to empower women and their communities in stopping violence and demanding accountability. The overriding theme and focus however, will be to end the impunity with which VAW is committed.

The campaign would cover the African continent and operate at two levels – regional and national. Countries would respond to their particular contexts priorities and opportunities.

The campaign will serve as the regional component of the UN Secretary-General's 2008 global initiative *UNiTE to End Violence against Women 2008-2015*. This is the first time the SG has led a campaign. This has shifted the spot light back on the issue around violence against women and girls.

The meeting is expecting the campaign to have at least five outcomes for every country by 2015: comprehensive national laws in line with inter-

national laws; to empower women to know their rights; every country to have a multi sectoral plan; bring all partners together for accountability; and every country to have a prevalence survey.

Aware of the risk of re-inventing the wheel by formulating "beautiful" strategic plans with no resources to implement them, the meeting set up a task force to spear head the way forward.

The task force will produce a conceptual framework for building on the work that has already been done by governments, the United Nations and NGOs in addressing violence against women.

Of particular importance for the task force will be resource mobilisation. African countries will have to show their commitment in a very practical way by putting their own money into addressing gender violence rather than relying on co operating partner support.

What's on the agenda?

The hallmark of the ADF is lively debate and engagement. After the official opening today, the programme mostly consists of breakaway sessions where the following will be discussed:

Violence against women

- Violence against women and girls in conflict and post conflict situations in Africa and the use of rape as a weapon of war.
- Harmful traditional practices and institutions, looking at health implications and female infanticide.
- Early Marriage, early pregnancy, nutritional taboos and practices related to child delivery.
- The extent of trafficking in women and girls and factors that contribute to the trafficking
- Reviewing of national responses towards VAW.

Empowerment

- Economic empowerment through land and property rights.
- Employment; the vital link to women's empowerment.
- Gender and trade.
- Reducing the gender digital divide.
- Social empowerment.
- Gender and AIDS: empowering women, and working with men as well as looking at gender and health.
- Gender, water and sanitation.
- Political empowerment and other emerging issues.

Financing for Gender Equality

- Why financing is important for gender equality.
- Progress and challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Progress made so far in financing for gender equality, budget resource mobilisation and spending, trade revenues and how resources are used.
- The potential impact of the global financial crisis on financing for gender equality.

Conference calls for change we can believe in!

By Rosemary Okello and Colleen Lowe Morna



Thokozile Ruzvidzo. Photo: Rosemary Okello.

As ADF VI opens at the UN-Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) headquarters today, leaders are being told that its time for "business unusual" where gender equality is concerned. Taking place in the shadow of Barack Obama's historical election to be the next US president, the mantra here over the next few days will be "yes we can" overcome gender inequality in Africa.

In much the same way as the Sixth African Conference on Women in 1998 galvanised action for the Beijing Plus Ten review, the ECA is hoping that ADF VI will yield action-oriented strategies ahead of Beijing Plus 15 in 2010.

The ADF conference on "Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Ending Violence Against Women" coincides with the 50th anniversary of UNECA. The more than 400 delegates here represent a diverse group of politicians, civil society representatives, academics, experts and traditional leaders

"It just can't be business as usual," says Thokozile Ruzvidzo, the Officer in Charge for Gender and Social Development at the ECA. "What we want is one or two critical action points; not a shopping list but things that can be done. We are tired of resolutions that are not implemented. There has been so much signing

and so many agreements, yet gender inequality persists because there is still no action in critical areas."

Citing the example of ADF II on leadership, HIV and AIDS that swung politicians into action with a commitment to spend at least 15% of their health budgets on combating the pandemic at an African Union meeting soon after, Ruzvidzo said this is the kind of concrete action that she anticipates out of ADF VI.

In between several phone calls and making sure that last minute touches were put to the programme, Ruzvidzo declined to put a figure on what govern-

ments should be asked to spend on gender equality but said that financing will be a key concern over the next three days. "What we know is that at times of economic crisis like this when governments are cutting spending, gender equality is the first to get cut. We have to be proactive; now."

This year's ADF will include a meeting with development partners for the first time, but Ruzvidzo insists that there must also be financial commitment from governments. Outcomes of ADF VI will be presented to African finance ministers meeting here in March next year, providing a key avenue for recommendations on financing to be taken forward.

The conference takes place against the signing in August this year of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that sets 28 targets for achieving gender equality by 2015. This bold action by one sub-regional organisation to bring together all the existing commitments to gender equality and enhance them through concrete targets and time frames could be a trailblazer in moving the agenda forward.

The conference is jointly convened by UN-IECA, the African Union and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Co-chaired by Advocate Beince Gowanias, the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs and Lalla Ben Barker, Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA, one of the ideas on the cards is that the coming decade be dedicated to achieving gender equality on the continent. The Plan of Action, which will be the highlight of the conference, will be adopted on Friday.



Make your voice heard!

ADF Today, a partnership between the ECA and Gender Links will bring you in-depth coverage of all the above themes, starting with our centre-spread today on Violence Against Women (page 4 and 5). To comment on any issue raised in this paper or in the conference please call ADT Today offices on extension 35175 or E Mail the editor on clmorna@mweb.co.za.



Barack Obama brings the colour brown to world politics

By Colleen Lowe Morna

How black is Barack Obama? This is a question that Africans and people of African descent have asked throughout his campaign, and will ask even more now that he is headed for the White House. The answer is that he is neither black nor white. He is brown - the colour of the future.



As one CNN analyst pointed out, only 30% of Americans are purely white, and an even smaller percentage of black Americans purely black. Always on the mark, South African cartoonist Zapiro depicts an ebullient Obama embracing a world in which his mother was white American; his father black Kenyan and his childhood spent in Asia and Polynesia.

Yes, he will be the first African-American to occupy the White house. But, after a George Bush who had only once traveled out of the US (to Mexico) before he became president and a vice presidential hopeful Sarah Palin who genuinely believes that Africa is a country, what Obama offers is a view of the world a wee bit wider than what we have become used to in American foreign policy.

As the Southern African mother of two daughters of mixed race and origins, the colour brown has long fascinated me. A few years ago, Waterford/ Kamhlaba, my alma matter and the school on the hill in Swaziland that pioneered mixed race education while apartheid swirled around us, asked me to write an article on what had changed in the 25 odd years since I had attended the school and then decided to send my daughters there after the advent of democracy in South Africa. I chose to write the article in the form of a letter to my two daughters on their great fortune in being born brown; the colour of the future.

I was born of white South African parents who grew up in fairly typical homes; my father of a well to do family and my mother more working class (and rabidly racist) roots. As young idealists who met at the University of Natal in the fifties, they came to the conclusion that the only way to free themselves from the racism in their blood was to immerse themselves in the simple community life of rural Africa.

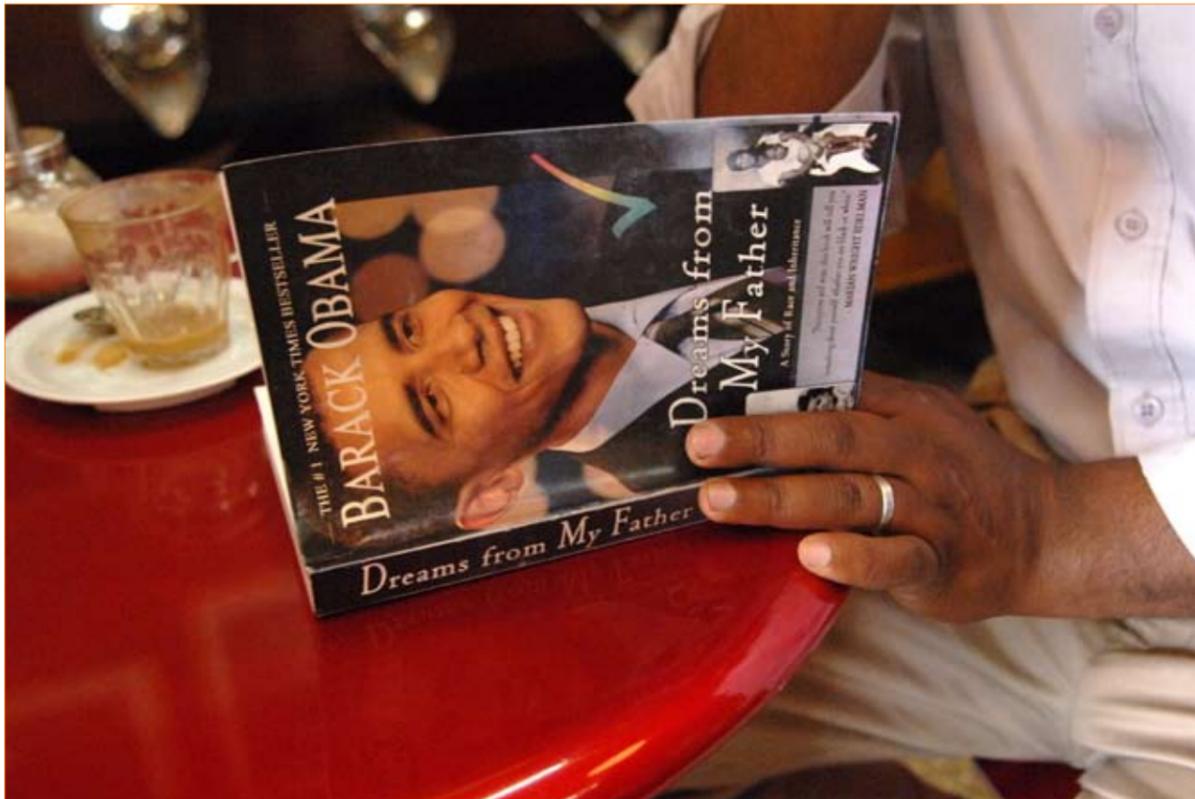
An opportunity arose to take up positions on a Christian mission in a remote part of the then Southern Rhodesia, which they believed would soon join Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) in gaining independence. As their children grew up speaking the local dialect and going through the black education system geared to ensure that only one-eighth of students could ever reach secondary school, they became involved in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, only to be

deported to Botswana in 1976; the peak of many political upheavals in the region.

That is how my brother and I found ourselves (on scholarship) at Kamhlaba, which in isiSwati means "small world". At the time, I felt a great ambivalence towards what I felt was both a small and artificial world. Yes, the kids of the rich and mighty, the Oppenheimers and the Mandelas could find common cause in this haven so close and yet so far from the madness around us. But the minute we crossed the border into South Africa we went our separate ways.

A few years later, I met my future husband, a Ghanaian, at Princeton University in the USA in the most antagonistic of circumstances. Then president of the African Students Association (ASA) that had been active in the divest-from-South Africa campaign, he had taken up a case against the university authorities for granting a scholarship to a white Rhodesian.

African American colleagues had even greater difficulties figuring out how to deal with a white African. This was aggravated by the fact that, as time progressed and I gained acceptance in the ASA, African students made it a point that, save for skin colour, I had more in common with them than did their African American cousins.



Sharing the hope at a coffee shop in Addis. Photo: Antonio Fiorente.

During my four years of study in the US, I found my greatest comfort zone to be in the Princeton Inn kitchen where I worked to supplement my meager student grant. Hungry for a link to the continent, working class African Americans like Jim Saunders the chef and Minnie Somers my supervisor took me into their hearts and homes, creating lasting bonds that rose above the narrow confines of race.

When I went to register the birth of my first daughter in Zimbabwe in 1984, the form asked for race of mother, father and child. I put African under each. The young black bureaucrat behind the desk politely changed these to read: "white", "black" and "coloured". I asked that he change these to read "human, human, human". He explained that there was no such category as the human race.

Ten years later, when I had rediscovered my South African roots (albeit with little or no connec-

tion to my white relatives who are dotted around the country) my younger daughter had the experience of being dropped off at a school event by her dad and hearing two white colleagues say: "she is not a real coloured: her father is black!"

My husband promptly made sure that our daughters had the choice of both South African and Ghanaian citizenship. We decided to send them to Kamhlaba, where we hoped that they would gain more of a world view than might be possible in the immediate post apartheid South Africa.

I remember writing in my article for the Kamhlaban (reflecting on what had changed in a quarter of a century) that if you get on the subway in New York or London, you would be hard pressed to find a face that is purely of any race.

I recalled that in the heated arguments that my father often had with my maternal grandfather about his greatest phobia - his granddaughters marrying black men - my dad used to point out that if the Almighty had not wanted it so He would not have created from this mix the beautiful color brown.

If all that Barack Obama succeeds in doing is to show us that between the black and white of race and politics there is a colour brown in which you can celebrate your African roots as well as pay tribute to the white grandmother and mother who raised you without being called an oreo (black

cookies with a white filling) he will have done our world a great service. This I know, is why my family will remain glued to the television through his presidency.

Colleen Lowe Morna is Executive Director of Gender Links. This article is part of the GL Opinion and Commentary Service which offers fresh news on every day news).

Readers of ADF Today are invited to submit letters and opinion pieces to the next two issues of the newspaper. E-mail your comments or articles to clmorna@mweb.co.za

Youth make their mark

By Joyce Chimbi



Evita Pedersen. Photo: Joyce Chimbi.

Young people have come to ADF to make it known that they want governments to take their views seriously.

"I feel disappointment because two years ago, we had the fifth ADF conference and solid resolutions were made, but where are they now?" asks Dabesaki Mac-Ikemenjima, a Youth Development consultant from Nigeria attending a pre ADF VI event on "Youth leadership in Gender Re-Socialization, Ending Violence against Girls and Young Women and Building a Culture of Peace in Africa."

He adds that it has been "over two years since two years since the African Youth Charter was endorsed in July 2006 by the AU head of States and it hasn't been enforced. It's unfortunate that only 11 out of the 54 AU member countries have ratified it. For it to be enforced, four more countries need to ratify it."

"Commitments that are not followed are better not made in the first place, because at the end of the day, they remain what they are; political statements," Dabesaki stresses.

The African Youth Charter acknowledges the contribution of young people in development. But the place of the young people is still a thorny issue with culture dictating that young people be seen and not heard.

ADF VI recognises that youth are key to the attainment of a world free of gender inequality and violence against women. Attitudes of young people are critical to a world where women are not only empowered but also celebrated.

Good practices shared include a National Youth Parliament in Nigeria in August this year to get comprehensive views from young people for input into parliamentary processes.

In Kenya, in addition to the formulation of a gender and youth specific ministry, a Youth Fund has been set up to empower young entrepreneurs.

Liberia, the only African country with a woman head of state, also has a gender and youth specific ministry. "Our president has introduced a gender perspective into government policies," says Evita Pedersen from Liberia. "There is a campaign dubbed "Send your Girl Child to School" as well as free education which has seen the number of young educated people rise sharply."



From left: Zemdema Abebe, Addisalem Tesfaye and Natan Tilahun. Photo: Joyce Chimbi.

ADF Today is a partnership between the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Gender Links and the African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWCFS).

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For the online version of the newspaper go to www.uneca.org/adf or www.genderlinks.org.za

OUT AND AROUND IN ADDIS

Eat, shop and be merry

By Mercedes Sayagues



Step outside the conference centre and guess what you'll find? Photo: Antonio Fiorente.

If you are feeling a little short of breath, it's because Addis is at 2,500 mts in altitude. If you are feeling hyper-active, it's because you have been indulging in Ethiopia's gift to the world – aromatic Arabica coffee. If by the end of the week your clothes feel a bit tighter, it's because you have been feasting on the delicious local food. And if your suitcase is several pounds heavier... it's because you're in shopper's paradise – welcome to ADDIS ABABA!

This section of our newspaper will bring you every day streetwise insider tips to make the most of your limited time in this wonderful city. Check the French version for more tips.

Shopping and getting to the shops

Public transport is cheap and safe. A taxi ride in town will cost you Br 20 (Br 9.5=1 USD). A minibus or bus fare is less than Br1, and a great way to chat with locals.

At the corner of Nigeria and Churchill Avenue (10 minutes from ECA by car) is the Old Post Office, amidst dozens of shops to make the most demanding shopaholic go dizzy. Diaphanous cotton

shawls, Haile Selassie, Bob Marley and Barack Obama T-shirts for Br80, girl's dresses, jewelry, wooden carvings, handbags, paintings, stools, you name it, this place will take care of all your needs, gifts and souvenirs at reasonable prices. A bit touristy, but a great way to dispatch all your shopping in less than an hour.

If you have more time, head for the Piazza, the old part of Addis, a melting pot of Italian, Greek, and Armenian influences. The streets are lined with old houses with balconies and lattice work in bright blue and green, and small shops offering all kind of goods, from clothes to electronics and the ornate gold and silver jewelry. We are told there are no tricksters selling you fake gold.

Resting your tired feet

By now you must be tired from all these conference and shopping sessions. Treat yourself to a spa. One part of Addis is built over an ancient volcano and boasts natural mineral hot springs. At the Filuha hotel, bring your friends to share two bubbly Jacuzzis geothermally powered by the springs for Br20. The moon is 66 percent full. Watching

it from a hot tub in the chilly night of Addis is an unforgettable experience.

Otherwise, a massage and sauna or steam bath will set you back Br200 at the Boston spa on Bolde Rd, or for Br100 at the Joia spa on Mescal Flower Rd.

The street gets its lovely name from the yellow mescal flowers that carpet the country after the rains and just before the Ethiopian New Year on 11 September. We'll just have to come back to see it. *Check the French pages for the night life, live music and dancing for all tastes and ages, and our cool slideshow at www.genderlinks.org.za*

Tips for travelers

- Keep some forex to pay the airport tax of US\$20
- Hours of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia at ECA: 9-12:45, 14-16:30
- Sweet tooth: Bilo's pastry at the Old ECA building has delicious millefoglie, fruit tarts and tiramisu for less than Br10. Open 8:30-5.
- Top the pastries with a machiatto or espresso from Kaldis, just above Bilo's.

Who's who in the conference?

By Joyce Chimbi

ADF VI has attracted an estimated 400 delegates from all over the world with titles stretching from eminent persons, to role models, to traditional chiefs to experts and mere participants. Asked what it means to don these weighty designations, here is what some of the participants had to say:



"I don't have any of these titles but I am an expert in my own right, I am knowledgeable in what I do which is to empower community women. I think these names apply even to the most ordinary of people who may be lacking in academic qualifications but everyday, they live within a certain sense of reality which makes them more knowledgeable in this aspect than the rest of us." - Constance Shumba, Young Women Christian Association, Zimbabwe.

"I don't think that everyone can be referred to with these kinds of titles, you cannot simply pick anybody from the street and label them experts, or eminent persons, it's all in their education and experience, your education basically speaks on



your behalf. I however, think that titles are very important because they draw a level of respectability and attention to issues at hand. For instance, people are more inclined to believe in what has been said about certain issues by someone with a title as opposed to someone without one." - Pedro Don Santos, Angola



"Personally, these are basically western concepts. It is more of a media attraction; big titles attract the media; big people are always within the range of a media lens; this ensures that whatever issues they discuss will be considered newsworthy. When you think deeply about certain issues, you realise that on issues of sexual violence, who is more of an expert than the survivor? Who is more of a role model than that ordinary faceless woman deep within a sleepy village who still holds her head high despite the scars she bears from sexual violence as well as other forms of cultural norms that continue to suppress her potential?"

I have pegged so much hope on this forum; I want it to be the solution to inequality and violence against women. The African woman has had enough. I am therefore hoping that we shall hear from the ordinary woman who represents the statistics on gender based violence across Africa. My expectation is that we will not claim to speak for this woman but that there will be a presence of this woman to speak for herself because only she can do it right.

- Helene Yinda from Switzerland, Director of World YWCA Africa.



"This Forum should not be about numbers and figures because one cannot get the success stories simply by using statistics on the fight against gender based violence and inequality; it should be about action, it should all boil down to implementation" - Makda Mikre who works for YMCA Ethiopia

We are within the 16 days of activism, the Conference could not have been at a better time, the theme could not have been more appropriate," says Constance Shumba from the Young Women's Christian Association in Zimbabwe.

ECA's glass ceiling

By Zarina Geloo

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) might well be the host of a major conference on advancing gender equality, but women in the organisation are still up against a "glass ceiling".

In a staff establishment of over 1,152, less than a third (310) are women, according to a count conducted by *ADF Today*. Going by a list of employees, there are about 48 women in professional positions and 268 in the general service positions which are local and clerical in nature.

"It's like in most UN offices, there are more men in the higher levels than there are women," says ECA Chief of Communications Myriam Dessables.

Other professional staff at the ECA shrug their shoulders at the gap even though the ECA adopted the goal of gender equality as a development objective. The African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD) is charged with promoting gender issues.

Known for its policies and the outcome documents around the ADF notably the conference on HIV/AIDS where the summit of leaders from Africa took on the recommendations wholesale, the ECA is definitely expected to walk the talk of gender equality when it comes to cracking glass ceilings.

A female security officer guarding the entrance to the conference centre said in defence of the organisation that whenever there is a vacancy, women are encouraged to apply. "It's up to women really to take up the opportunities when they are offered. I don't know why there is this gap at top levels."

Declining to disclose her name because she is not allowed to speak to the media, the officer said that while there are more men than women in the ECA security department, the gap is slowly closing. She attributes this to an awakening of gender equality.

"People are a lot more aware of treating women equally and giving them the same opportunity, of course there is resistance in some quarters and even here at the organization, but this is slowly changing."

Not enough for the small wiry figure that has been climbing ladders fixing electrical appliances. As she dashes about from room to room, she massages her shoulders and points out its hard work carrying huge cable rolls and equipment.

"I am reluctant to ask for help as my colleagues will tease me for being out of my place. They will tell me to get an easier job, so I continue," she says in halting English.

The electrical company employs mostly men who have no qualms about helping each other carrying equipment, but she is careful about how she asks for help in case she is seen as weak.

Sheirif Mengistu who is employed by the cleaning crew at the ECA feels a little bit of the same way. "Cleaning is woman's work but I have to have a job, so I do this."

Interestingly, he says he would not clean anywhere else but for the UN. "People here understand gender and don't see anything strange about a man cleaning, but in other organisations outside, it would be very difficult for me to do this kind of work."



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS

Attention aux définitions

By Mercedes Sayagues

Attention aux définitions: violence domestique n'est pas synonyme de violence perpétrée sur la base du genre, a remarqué Montserrat Boix, du Réseau Femmes Espagne-Afrique, à la réunion de l'UNIFEM sur la campagne africaine pour éliminer la violence contre les femmes, qui s'est tenue lundi.

C'est plus précis d'utiliser le terme violence envers le genre, qui est d'ailleurs celui utilisé par les Nations Unies, a-t-elle dit. La violence domestique inclut aussi l'agression et l'abus des enfants et des vieillards, des problèmes importants, mais qui réclament des solutions et des politiques différentes.

Tandis que le terme violence envers le genre aborde le problème de fond – la relation du patriarcat avec les femmes.

«Pour éviter de mélanger les choses, il faut clarifier, conceptualiser et délimiter le problème,» dit Boix.

La violence envers le genre s'exprime dans plusieurs espaces, pas seulement dans le ménage. C'est une violence structurelle. Mettre l'accent sur le plan domestique, c'est ignorer les facteurs au niveau macro,

Selon Boix, les secteurs conservateurs préfèrent parler de violence domestique parce que cela confine la femme au foyer et permet aux gouvernements d'ignorer d'autres violences: un espace urbain dangereux, un salaire inférieur pour le même travail, le langage stéréotypé ou dégradant dans les médias, la pauvreté de plus en plus féminisée, et la grande interrogation actuelle: quel sera l'impact de la crise économique mondiale sur les femmes? Est-ce que les budgets et les programmes pour les femmes seront les premiers à être coupés?

Boix, journaliste de profession, travaille au sein du Réseau depuis sa fondation en 2006. Le Réseau cherche à partager les expériences de l'Espagne et des pays africains dans le domaine de la femme.

Words count!

Domestic violence is not a synonym for gender-based violence and should be used sparingly, said Montserrat Boix, of the Spain-Africa Network, at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem) meeting held on Monday.

The term gender-based violence, which is the one generally used by the United Nations, is far more precise, she remarked. Domestic violence includes the abuse and aggression of children and the elderly, important problems, yes, but that require a different set of policies and solutions than those of women.

Instead, gender-based violence touches on the root problem – the relationship of patriarchy and women.

“We need to conceptualize, clarify and delimit the problem to avoid confusing the issues,” said Boix.

Gender-based violence manifests itself in many spaces, not only the family. It is a structural violence. To emphasize the domestic area ignores the macro factors and blurs issues that are specific to women.

According to Boix, conservatives like the emphasis on domestic violence because it confines women to the family and allows governments to ignore other violence against women: a dangerous urban space, less pay for equal work, stereotyped or degrading language in the media, the growing feminization of poverty, and today's pressing big question: how will the global economic crisis affect women? Will budgets and programs for women be the first to be cut?

Boix, a journalist, has worked with the Network since it was founded in 2006. The Network shares experience of action on women's issues between Spain and African countries.

For more information, go to:
<http://www.reddemujeresporunmundomejor.org>
<http://www.escueladefeminismo.org>



Take back the night march, Sixteen days of Activism 2007. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna.

Sixteen Days of Peace

By Adwoa Osei

ADF VI takes place on the eve of the Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence from 25 November (International Day of No Violence Against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day). Coinciding this year with the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the global theme of the campaign is: Human Rights for Women equals Human Rights for All.

During the campaign, numerous events and activities take place to raise awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue, highlight its effect on communities and empowering victims and survivors to speak out. This campaign encompasses a range of other significant dates including: 1 December (World Aids Day); 3 December (International Day for the Disabled) and 6 December (Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre).

Since the campaign's inception in 1991, the Sixteen Days has helped to raise awareness about gender based violence around the world.

The UDHR60 campaign offers an opportunity to advocate for a world free from violence, discrimination and injustice. Over the past 60 years, women have created groundbreaking global and local efforts to challenge gender inequality and feminist approaches to human rights are being developed and used around the world.

Women's advocacy has brought about pioneering change in areas such as education, health, law, and political participation as well as interpretations of the human rights framework itself. The global frameworks for realising women's rights have been spelled out in the Women's Convention (CEDAW), and in documents from other UN processes, such as the Vienna Human Rights Declaration, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Women have successfully demanded state political will to create meaningful change, but the implementation and resources to fulfill these promises are still lacking.

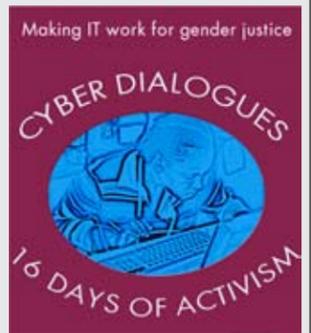
In Africa, activism related to and awareness about the impact and consequences of gender based violence has grown dramatically over the past two decades. A wide spectrum of organisations, networks and political stakeholders have collectively acknowledged that gender based violence is a critical issue and set the wheels in motion with national action plans that among other targets aim to step up prevention programmes to end all forms of gender based violence.

The annual campaign will continue to highlight important issues raised in the past years, including the intersection between HIV and AIDS and GBV as well as highlighting other timely issues such as human trafficking and xenophobia. Key civil society demands include:

- Ring-fencing a clear funding budget for work against gender based violence.
- Setting clear timeframes for achieving targets in the fight against gender violence.
- Producing gender based violence indicators to measure the progress made.

Switch on for gender justice

Delegates to ADF VI can participate in the first Sixteen Day Cyber dialogue on Funding to End Gender Violence by logging onto www.genderlinks.org.za on Thursday



20 November at 13.00 Ethiopian time. If you click on the chat facility of the website you will find instructions on how to join the chat with citizens and experts from around Africa on this key discussion. Alternatively, come to Caucus Room 10 on the second floor of the ECA conference venue where staff of *ADF Today* will set you up at a computer and help you join the chat.

Time to set targets and indicators for e

By Colleen Lowe Morna

Organisers of ADF VI agree that if the meeting underway in Addis Ababa this week is to make a difference, it must come up with concrete targets and indicators for ending gender violence. That raises another challenge: what are current levels of gender violence, and how would one go about measuring if they have subsided?

It's a very real challenge that Southern African governments are facing following the signing in August of the Protocol on Gender and Development that has 28 targets for achieving gender equality in the region, including halving current rates of gender violence by 2015.

At least eight of the 15 Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries have developed multi-sector National Action Plans for ending gender violence. They now face the task of gathering baseline data on current rates of violence so that they can monitor progress in reaching the 2015 and the ultimate target of ending this scourge.

Over the course of the year, experts and governments in South Africa, Mauritius and Botswana have been working with Gender Links (GL), a Southern African NGO based in Johannesburg, on a pilot project to develop indicators for measuring gender violence.

Shortly before the ADF meeting, GL entered an agreement with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for sharing the research findings and collaborating in a continent-wide initiative on gender violence indicators. The partnership is a demonstration of the benefits of civil society, government and multilateral agencies working together in devising meaningful measures for this flagrant human rights abuse.

The first major challenge that researchers face is how to define gender violence. In similar work on GBV indicators, the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) has decided to focus specifically on Violence Against Women (VAW). SADC researchers have kept the definition as gender violence more broadly, if only to show through the research the extent to which this really is primarily a case of VAW.

The biggest data collection challenge is that the majority of cases of gender violence are never reported and a large number of those that do get reported are withdrawn. The “One in Nine Campaign” in South Africa draws its name from research conducted by the Medical Research Council (part of the indicators task team) which shows that only one ninth of all cases of gender violence are reported.

As police statistics only cover reported cases, they only tell part of the story. A further complication is that the only specific statistics that most police services have on gender violence concern sexual assault. Statistics on domestic violence are hidden away in such categories as “criminal injuria” and “assault with intent to do bodily harm.” Even femicide (the killing by a man of an intimate female partner) is not recorded as such. The only way to obtain this information is through docket analysis.

When engaged (as has been happening in South Africa) there is a willingness by police to create categories for domestic violence and femicide so that at least this data can be accurately obtained. Since all deaths must be reported, police data on femicide (referred to in countries such as Botswana as “passion killings”) should provide accurate information on at least this form of GBV.

But that still leaves the many cases of sexual and physical assault that do not get reported. It also leaves out the many forms of GBV that seldom enter official statistics, like economic, psychological and verbal abuse.

For this, the best way to obtain accurate information is to conduct a prevalence survey. This means taking a sample of the population and administering a questionnaire on experiences of GBV, over the last year as well as over a lifetime.

Such surveys are only as accurate as the sample size is representative of the population. A budget question that arises is whether to undertake dedicated GBV studies, or to tag these onto existing studies, such as the census or health surveys.

The Southern African indicators study group has argued forcefully for a dedicated study. This is because researchers for GBV studies need to be carefully trained in order to obtain information that is often painful and may need to be accompanied by counseling services.

The team has, however, argued that one cost cutting measure could be to combine GBV attitude and population surveys since these use similar methodologies. An additional advantage is that by obtaining information on the incidence of gender violence and perceptions on the matter from the same people, it is possible to draw correlations between experiences and attitudes. For example, what are the differences in the way that a perpetrator and a survivor of GBV view the issue?

Questions will also cover knowledge and experiences of service provision. The questions will be both quantitative and qualitative.

Other research tools proposed include analysis of political commitment through monitoring of

A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY

Speaking out against gender violence

By Debbie Walter

Survivors of domestic violence, rape, and any form of sexual, economic, or physical abuse rarely have the opportunity to speak out in the media or have their experiences positively documented. They are talked about and for, with their voices mostly silent. This is even more apparent in the case of marginalised communities.

Each year, journalists and media around Africa work together to produce first hand accounts or "I" Stories by survivors of gender violence. For many who participate, this is often the first time that they write or speak about their experiences to anyone. What they share – the slow realisation of a deteriorating relationship, social and cultural expectations, concern for children, feeling like there is nowhere to go, decisions to leave and the challenges of standing alone, demanding change, and the overwhelming desire to speak out – echo thousands of more voices across the country and the region. The following are excerpts from the series of I Stories to be launched in Namibia, South Africa and Mauritius:

"I am 17 years old and I am a person who is living with HIV. My parents were alcoholic and now they are dead. I am the only one who must look after my sisters and brothers. My youngest brother has tuberculosis. I cannot love and care for all of them because I am weak. I am sick. I am always crying and praying to God for somebody who will look after me. I need help for the baby that I am carrying. I do not have a mother or father. I lost them and do not want to lose the ones that I love." **Izan Namases* - Raped, pregnant and HIV positive - Namibia**

"It was on a Wednesday the same year, I remember, when he pretended to have gone to work while the children went to school. He came back home. I was alone. He told me that he wanted to talk to me while the kids were away. He told me he liked my body. I laughed at first because I thought he was joking. But I realised that he was serious. I asked him how he could like my body, I was his sister.

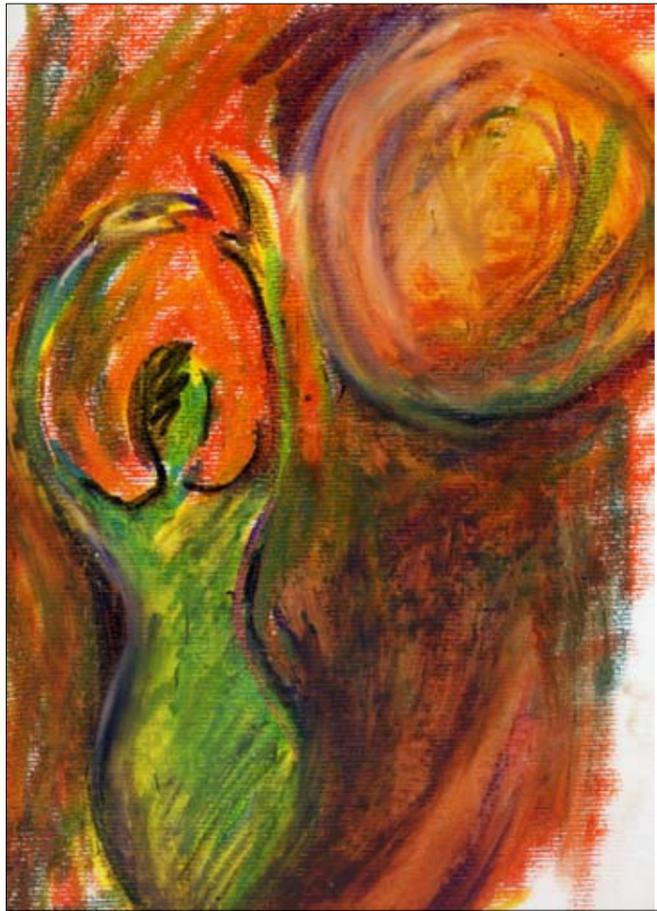
He said he was jealous that other men would like my body. He started touching my breasts and private parts. I was worried and continued to ask him what he was doing. He said I must not worry be-

cause he was going to pay me. He said if I told the story, he would kill my parents and me. He took my clothes off, threw me on the bed, and raped me. After he raped me, he gave me N\$200." **Kitty- Treated like a slave, raped - Namibia**

"In March 2000, my mother was admitted to the hospital because she had a problem with her pregnancy. While she was in the hospital, at night my stepfather used to pull off my underwear and enter my female parts with his finger. When I cried, he would cover my mouth with one hand. Sometimes I would ask one old lady who lived next door to lock us in from outside and give the keys to my stepfather and tell him we went to my aunt's house. We would then take our blankets and sleep under the bed so that he could not get us." **Sharleen - How bitter my pain was - Namibia**

"I was born 27 years ago in a little village called Gatumba, 15 km from Bujumbura in Burundi. I am a product of a teenage mother forced to marry the man who impregnated her and later had three more children with him. I grew up in a very violent home. Gender based and sexual violence was daily bread in my life. My father assaulted my mother every day in front of the entire family and no one said anything. Sometimes he would force my mother to have sex in front of me. This puzzled me because it didn't seem normal, nor did my mother like it. When she talked to her family and elder women, they said that is how you build the house! You must stay; he will change." **Pascal Akimana - Honouring my mother and sister - South Africa**

"Freeing myself from a psychopathic lover came at a great cost to me; having lost my house, part of my ear, my self-worth and my dignity. It is



still not easy for me to cope with that situation, but I am trying very hard to face my giant. In the name of love, I again found myself trapped with a psychopath, but because of God, who is the source of my life and destiny, He gave me another chance to prove to the world that He alone "can turn my scars into stars"; "my pains into other people's gains" and "bad into good." **Gugu Mofokeng - Losing everything and finding myself - South Africa**

"I work sometimes at night, so it is difficult for me to always be there to protect her. Last week, it was Sunday around 9pm. My wife heard my daughter crying out, and when she rushed to see what the problem was, she found that this man had pushed his way into the toilet, where my young daughter was inside. We hoped the police would assist us, and arrest the man. However, after listening for a short time, the officers told us that they are sick and tired of us foreigners. They said, "If the xenophobia attacks can come again, it's better, then you will all go back to your countries." **Alain Kasanda* - Xenophobia means no protection - South Africa**

"One day when he hit me, she made me run into the guest bedroom and closed the door. It was around 8pm. She is still very small, but she stood at the door for almost two hours. I kept on telling her to come and sleep, but she could not. She told me "if I leave the door, Papa would come in and hit you." I realised that she was not going to sleep so I told her, let's go to her uncles house. It was around 10pm. I put her on my back we walked to her uncle's house and slept there." **Saphia - For the sake of my child - South Africa**

"I felt very dirty. I felt guilty. I wondered what my fault was. Is being a girl a free ticket to rape? Where had I gone wrong? Had I asked for this? Was this what I had to receive when I was looking for love? I started to punish myself by not eating properly. I stopped attending my classes and avoided to talk to my friends. I was simply isolating myself. There was always the 86 87 fear of getting raped again. However, I did not know that the nightmare was not over yet. As I was not eating properly, my parents took me to a doctor. I was anorexic. He gave me vitamins and I was supposed to get better but in vain. Then, I was asked to have an HIV test done. I had started to get out of the trauma of the rape. Nevertheless, the worst was to happen. The results came. I was HIV positive."

* Not her real name.

(To get copies of the I Stories publication E Mail: knowledge@genderlinks.org.za)

"Notre crise, c'est le déficit de capacités"

Par Mercedes Sayagues

Un entretien avec Micheline Ravololo-narisoa, chef de la section Afrique du Fonds de développement des Nations Unies pour la femme (UNIFEM), dans le cadre de la consultation sur la campagne africaine pour éliminer la violence contre les femmes.

Les questions fondamentales de la campagne incluent la violence contre les femmes et les filles dans la famille; le viol et autres formes de violence sexuelle dans la communauté; l'abus des filles à l'école et dans les mariages précoces; les pratiques traditionnelles néfastes, et le lien entre la violence contre la femme et le VIH/SIDA.

ADF: Pourquoi cette campagne, maintenant?

MR: Parce que le moment est bien choisi: pour la première fois les Nations Unies considèrent la violence contre les femmes comme une question de développement, de sécurité et de paix. Les Etats membres ont donné aux Nations Unies un mandat spécifique pour examiner un problème auparavant considéré comme étant du domaine privé, qui maintenant nécessite des actions publiques. C'est historique, c'est plus important que la victoire de Barack Obama.

ADF: Quelles sont les objectifs principaux de cette campagne ?

MR: Mettre la violence contre les femmes à l'agenda du développement; saisir et maintenir l'attention des décideurs, des politiques; compiler des statistiques; faire de la prévention; assurer l'accès à la justice, proposer des services et des ressources aux survivants; et surtout, en finir avec l'impunité.

ADF: Comment est placé l'Afrique pour faire face à ce défi ?

MR: Aujourd'hui, en Afrique, on a plusieurs instruments pour traduire cette volonté de mise en oeuvre. Notre crise, c'est le déficit de capacités, le "comment faire"? A l'est de la République Démocratique du Congo, les juges et magistrats utilisent des livres de référence de 1973, qui n'ont pas suivi l'évolution de la pensée. Ils n'ont pas les outils adéquats pour rendre justice. Il y a une faible capacité des systèmes judiciaires en Afrique pour sanctionner le viol et les crimes contre les femmes, pour mettre en place un état de droit.

ADF: Quel autre problème relevez-vous en Afrique?

MR: La dualité du système de droits coutumiers et modernes. Le grand défi, c'est de résoudre leur coexistence parce que le système coutumier confirme la primauté du patriarcat.

ADF: La violence contre les femmes a lieu aussi dans l'espace public. Qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire?

MR: L'urbanisation rapide de l'Afrique demande des mesures de protection des femmes dans leur déplacement à leur lieu de travail ou pour chercher de l'eau. Il faut une planification urbaine, rendre les villes plus sûres, éclairer les rues, rapprocher les hôpitaux des habitations, éliminer les taudis qui mettent la femme en danger perpétuel. Les femmes, toujours plus nombreuses, qui travaillent dans le secteur informel, subissent la violence de la part des fonctionnaires des douanes, de la police. Pourtant, leur travail contribue à l'économie nationale et familiale.

ADF: Votre dernier mot?

MR: Je dis toujours aux femmes de s'organiser au lieu d'agoniser.

Ending gender violence



Demanding accountability on gender justice. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna.

statements and actions by leaders and media monitoring. The pilot study, due to start next year, will be conducted in three metropolitan and surrounding areas including the City of Johannesburg, with a view to cascading it nationally and regionally in 2010.

Preliminary work has been supported by the

UNIFEM Trust Fund on Ending Violence Against Women. The ECA, which has developed the Africa Gender and Development Index (AGDI) is keen to engage with the study as part of its mandate to develop more specific GBV indicators. ADF VI could give added impetus to this critical initiative.