



network

The UN Women's Newsletter, Volume No. 7, Issue 4 • October, November and December 2006

Letter from the Focal Point for Women

Dear Friends,

In this issue, it is our pleasure to bring to your screens and desks reports on newsworthy events. We selected those that in particular testify to a strong and significant reinvigoration of global and regional advocacy efforts related to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The European Parliament passed a resolution on women in international politics, and called for the creation of an Institute for Gender Equity on 16 November 2006. The United Nations launched the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women on 27 September 2006. In December 2006, UNICEF published its annual state-of-the-children report, with a focus on the effects of empowerment of women on the well-being of children; and the United Nations Development Programme issued its Arab Human Development Report "Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World".

In Network's customary interview with an eminent person, Mr. Claes Borgström, recent Equal Opportunities Ombudsman for the Swedish Government, contributes knowledge and experience of promoting gender equality in Sweden, a country with near gender parity in government. He expounds on being a male ally, the nature of gender differences and how gender equality is essentially about human rights.

Finally, we note that 1 January 2007 will mark the beginning of the first term of the new UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. We welcome him and look forward to the realization of his stated commitment to gender equality and gender balance. Without the full empowerment of women, no nation or institution can achieve its full potential. And, as Mr. Mahbub ul Haq, the architect of the United Nations Development Programme's "Human Development Report", stated in 1995, in its issue dedicated to gender, "unless human development is engendered, it is endangered".

Sit back and enjoy.

In solidarity,

Aparna Mehrotra

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

UN-related



UN Photo: Mark Garten

Portrait of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the General Assembly Hall, at UN Headquarters in New York

Mr. Ban Ki-moon of the Republic of Korea became the eighth **Secretary-General of the United Nations**. He brings with him 37 years of public sector experience. At the time of his election, Mr. Ban was the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea. His long tenure with the Ministry included postings in New Delhi, Washington, D.C., and Vienna, and responsibility for a variety of portfolios,

including Foreign Policy Adviser to the President, Chief National Security Adviser to the President, Deputy Minister for Policy Planning, and Director-General of American Affairs. Mr. Ban has long-standing ties with the United Nations, dating back to 1975, when he worked for the Foreign Ministry's United Nations Division. That work expanded over the years, with assignments as First Secretary at the Republic of Korea's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York; Director of the United Nations Division at the Ministry's headquarters in Seoul; and Ambassador to Vienna, during which time, in 1999, he served as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Mr. Ban received a bachelor's degree in international relations from Seoul National University in 1970, and in 1985 he earned a master's degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Mr. Ban has received numerous national and international prizes, medals and honours. In 1975, 1986, and again in 2006, he was awarded the Republic of Korea's Highest Order of Service Merit for service to his country. He is married and has two daughters and a son.



UN Photo: Mark Garten

Portrait of United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro

• Tanzanian Foreign Minister **Asha-Rose Migiro** was appointed **UN Deputy Secretary-General** on 5 January 2007, becoming the third person and second woman to hold this post. Secretary-General Ban said he intends to “dele-

gate much of the management and administrative work to Ms. Migiro under a clear line of authority to ensure that the Secretariat will function in a more effective and efficient manner”. Ms. Migiro, who in her new capacity will be the highest-ranking woman at the UN and the second highest among all officials, also served as Minister of Community Development, Gender and Children’s Affairs until she was asked to head the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in January 2006. She entered the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania after leaving her position as senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. Ms. Migiro replaces Mr. Mark Malloch Brown.

• **Ms. Lena Sundh** (Sweden) was appointed the **UN Representative for Human Rights in Nepal** on 19 October 2006. Ms. Sundh is a diplomat who has specialized in conflict management and peacekeeping during a 30-year career for Sweden and the United Nations. Previously, Ms. Sundh was Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

• **Ms. Josette Sheeran** (United States of America) was appointed **Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP)** on 7 November 2006, in succession to Mr. James Morris. Ms. Sheeran had previously served

as Under-Secretary of State for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs, where she was responsible for economic issues, including development, trade, agriculture, finance, energy, telecommunications and transportation. Ms. Sheeran had received numerous awards, including the Press Award for Journalistic Achievement by the National Order of Women Legislators, and a national award for developing and promoting African-American journalists.

• **Dr. Margaret Chan** (China) took over as Director-General of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** on 4 January 2007. Dr. Chan was appointed Director-General on

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9 November 2006 to fill the post vacated by the death of Dr. Lee Jong-wook in May 2006. Dr. Chan pledged to devote herself to improving the health of the people of Africa and women across the globe. She said she believed these would be key indicators of the performance of WHO. In 2003, Dr. Chan joined WHO as Director of the Department for Protection of the Human Environment. In September 2005, she was named Assistant Director-General for Communicable Diseases, having previously been Director, Communicable Diseases Surveillance and Response, as well as Representative of the Director-General for Pandemic Influenza. In 1994, Dr. Chan was appointed Director of Health of Hong Kong. Her term will run through June 2012.

Others

- **Ms. Latifa Al Gaoud** (Bahrain) made history as the Gulf's first woman Member of Parliament on 16 October 2006. Ms. Al Gaoud previously worked as the human resources and financial director at the Finance Ministry.

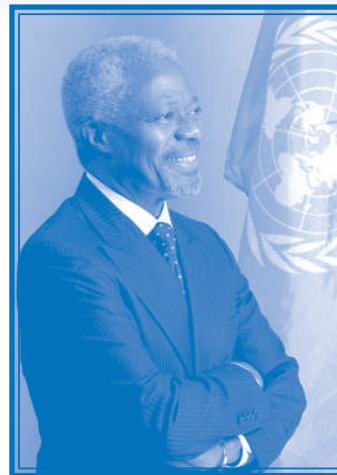
- **Ms. Constance Simelane** (Swaziland) was appointed Deputy Prime Minister on 30 October 2006. At the beginning of 2006, Swaziland granted women equal rights under the constitution. Previously, women in the kingdom were legally regarded as minors under the law, unable to own property or open a bank account without the permission of a male relative or husband. The traditionally low status of women has been linked to the staggering levels of HIV infection: 40 per cent of adult Swazis are estimated to be HIV positive, the highest rate in the world. Ms. Simelane was formerly Education Minister.

- **Ms. Nancy Pelosi** (United States) was elected Speaker of the United States House of Representatives on 4 January 2007, and is the first woman in American history to lead a major party in the United States Congress. As speaker, she would be third in line to the Presidency—the closest a woman in elective office has ever come to the White House.

- **Ms. Cynthia Carroll** (United States) is the first woman outsider and non-South African to become Chief Executive at Anglo American, the mining giant based in London.

- **Dame Virginia Etiaba** (Nigeria) was sworn in on 9 November 2006 as Governor of Anambra State. Dame Etiaba is the first female Governor of Nigeria and previously served as Deputy Governor.

FAREWELL



Kofi A. Annan

UN Photo: Sergey Bermeiev

Mr. Kofi A. Annan of Ghana, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, was the first to be elected from the ranks of UN staff. His first five-year term began on 1 January 1997 and, following his subse-

quent re-appointment by the UN Member States, a second five-year term started on 1 January 2002. Mr. Annan had given priority to revitalizing the UN through a comprehensive programme of reform; strengthening the Organization's traditional work in the areas of development and the maintenance of international peace and security; and advocating human rights, the rule of law and the universal values of equality, tolerance and human dignity. He also took a leading interest in mobilizing the international community to fight HIV/AIDS, and, more recently, against the global terrorist threat. During his terms, partnerships with civil society, the private sector and others outside of government were strengthened. He had called for a "Global Compact" to encourage businesses to respect standards relating to the environment, employment laws and human rights. In April 2000, he issued a report on the role of the

United Nations in the twenty-first century, outlining actions needed to end poverty and gender inequality, improve education, reduce HIV/AIDS, safeguard the environment and protect people from violence. The report formed the basis of the **Millennium Declarations**, adopted by national leaders. A “Call to Action” was issued in April 2001, proposing the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund, which has since received approximately US\$ 1.5 billion in pledges and contributions. The **Nobel Peace Prize** for 2001 was awarded in two equal portions to the **United Nations** and to its Secretary-General, **Mr. Kofi Annan**, for their work for a better organized and more peaceful world.

SPECIAL FAREWELL



UN Photo: Stephanie Hollyman

Angela E. V. King

Ms. Angela E. V. King (Jamaica), a former diplomat who became a leading advocate for women's equality, passed away on 7 February 2007. In March 1997, she became the first Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to the Secretary-General. She also chaired the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and oversaw the direction and management of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The Division is responsible for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) and for managing the advancement of women. Prior to becoming the Gender Adviser, Ms. King was Director of DAW. Ms. King brought to this position a wide range of

experience in the economic, social and political work of the United Nations, as well as in administration and in advancement of women. From 1992 to 1994, she was Chief of Mission of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA).

- **Ms. Jeane Kirkpatrick** (United States), who passed away on 8 December 2006, was the first woman to serve as United States Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She was an important intellectual leader of the neoconservative political party in the United States.

AROUND THE UN ...

- **Mental Health Day** was marked on 10 October 2006. It aims to raise public awareness about mental health issues. This year's theme is “Building awareness/reducing risk: mental illness and suicide”.
- The sixtieth anniversary of the **Commission on the Status of Women** was celebrated on 10 November 2006. Former Secretary-General, **Mr. Kofi Annan**, who opened the Commission, said that the women's commission was ahead of its time, and that the world was beginning to recognize that empowering women and girls was the key to development. In 1979, the Commission paved the way for the General Assembly's adoption of the landmark **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**, which 185 countries have ratified to date.
- The **UN Girls' Education Initiative** (UNGEI) conference was held in Cairo, Egypt, in early November 2006. Its theme—**Gender and Early Childhood Care and Education**—placed particular emphasis on supporting families and gender-focused policies, and scaling up the quality of early-childhood-care programmes. At its closing session on 13 November 2006, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, **Ms. Rima Salah**, said that great progress could

be achieved to empower girls if the movement for gender equality begins in the first years of a child's life.

- The **International Day for Tolerance** was marked on 16 November 2006. The importance of the key roles that education and a responsible media can play in preventing the spread of hatred was prominently discussed, noting that any strategy to build understanding must necessarily depend heavily on education—including about different religions, traditions and cultures.

- The **International Human Rights Day** was marked on 11 December 2006. The message that fighting poverty is an obligation and not charity and that poverty is both a cause and a consequence of human rights violations permeated the celebrations.

- The **General Assembly** adopted, on 13 December 2006, the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, the first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century. The Convention is intended as a comprehensive human rights instrument with an explicit social development dimension.

- The **Government of Spain** donated US\$ 700 million on 19 December 2006 to the United Nations to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which include, among its seven goals, that of “**gender equality**”. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which coordinates development activities in developing countries, thanked the Government of Spain for this contribution which confirms its leadership in multilateralism and international cooperation, and highlights its confidence in the UN.

- At a press conference on 21 December 2006, the President of the General Assembly, **H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa**, said, among other things, that the General Assembly will discuss **gender equality in 2007** as a component of the MDGs. Also, it will deliberate on

a set of time-bound targets aimed at slashing poverty and other global ills, and hold a separate debate on relations between peoples of different beliefs. In closing the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, she said that progress was made in many areas of the common agenda; important debates were held on Security Council reform and General Assembly revitalization; and two important international conventions were adopted. She believed that united in partnership, the UN can achieve much more. At the informal thematic debate on development, for example, the Islamic Development Bank announced the creation of a US\$ 10 billion poverty eradication fund, to which even the poorest developing countries will contribute. Turning to some of the key issues for the next year, Sheikha Haya said there would be two more thematic debates: **gender equality** and **dialogue among civilizations**. She called on the press to play its role in supporting tolerance among peoples of different cultures and religious beliefs. “Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women is an integral aspect of achieving the MDGs. In March 2007, the GA will hold its second informal thematic debate on the ‘promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women’”, she noted, referring to the goals agreed to at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000.

AROUND THE WORLD: GENDER NEWS

- The **Global Summit of Women**, informally called the *Davos for Women*, is an annual gathering of professional women leaders in business, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), from around the world that meet for three days of stimulating sessions to exchange best practices in advancing women's economic status worldwide. It celebrates women's leadership by bringing together these outstanding women professionals from all corners of the globe. **The 2006 Summit took place in Cairo, Egypt, from 10 to 12 June 2006** and also featured a pre-Summit ministerial round table that brought together women ministers of varied portfolios to discuss policies that have had a positive impact

on women's economic status in their own countries. The Summit hosted workshops on strategic networking, growing microenterprises into mainstream business through trade, e-commerce and a host of other topics. Past summits in Mexico City, Mexico (2005), Seoul, Korea (2004), and Marrakech, Morocco (2003), have spurred the formation of regional and international networks, and have inspired numerous successful business initiatives (<http://www.globewomen.com/>).

- The **World Bank** announced at its annual meeting in Singapore, on 13 October 2006, a **four-year gender action plan in the amount of US\$ 24.5 million** to enhance women's economic power in key economic sectors in the developing

world. Gender equality contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction. Women's economic empowerment is smart economics and a sure path to development (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/GAPNov2.pdf>).

- The **Domestic Violence Act** was approved by the Indian Parliament on May 2002, and came into effect on 26 October 2006. Under the legislation, men who beat, threaten or even shout at their wives or live-in partners could be jailed for up to a year and fined about 20,000 rupees (235 British pounds). In an attempt to end the thousands of cases in which women are beaten or burned to death, the rules also ban husbands from harassing their wives for larger dowry payments. A United

Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report claimed that up to 70 per cent of married women aged 15 to 49 in India are victims of beatings or coerced sex. Women's groups plan to launch a campaign to educate women about the new law. However, adequate financial support is lacking to enable federal and state governments to pay for protection officers and counselling.

- The **Congress of Argentina** approved a **refugee law** on 8 November 2006. The law provides a framework for the full exercise of refugees' rights. It guarantees the processing of asylum claims in a reasonable time frame and facilitates access to documentation, education, health and employment. This law also contains special provisions for refugee women, children and victims of violence.

- In a partnership between UN agencies and sports organiza-

The Gender Action Plan at a glance

Objective: To advance women's economic empowerment in order to promote shared growth and MDG3—gender equality and women's empowerment.

Duration and budget: US\$ 24.5 million over four years with half the funds coming from the World Bank and half from donor countries, including Germany and Norway.

Rationale: Expanding women's economic opportunities is smart economics. Women's economic opportunities lag behind women's capabilities achieved in education and health. This condition is inefficient, since increased women's labour force participation and earnings are associated with reduced poverty and faster growth. Women will benefit from their economic empowerment, but so too will men, children and society as a whole.

Focus areas: The Gender Action Plan targets women's

empowerment in the economic sectors, most importantly in infrastructure—energy, transport, and water and sanitation; agriculture; private sector development; and finance.

The road map:

- (1) Intensify gender mainstreaming in World Bank and IFC operations and in regional economic and sector work.
- (2) Mobilize resources to implement and scale up results-based initiatives that empower women economically.
- (3) Improve knowledge and statistics on women's economic participation and the relationship between gender equality, growth and poverty reduction.
- (4) Undertake a targeted communications campaign to foster partnerships on the importance of women's economic contributions and to execute the plan.

tions, the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** teamed up with the governing body of women's tennis—**Sony Ericsson WTA Tour**—on 13 November 2006 to *ace out gender inequality to raise both funds and awareness through a “Promoter of Gender Equality” player programme*. The programme aims to strengthen national commitment to women's empowerment and allow them to fully participate in all forms of societal development. Mentoring, scholarship and fellowship projects will be designed to create opportunities and facilitate the environment for success of women and girls.

- **Muslim women** politicians, business leaders, academics, cultural figures and activists met in New York, on 18 November 2006, to try to **improve women's rights**. Organizers of the event said that the advisory council would eventually make recommendations to political and religious leaders on global issues of direct relevance and concern to women, as they believe women's rights should be debated by women scholars, not just men.
- Prominent political leaders around the world, including former United States Secretary of State **Madeleine Albright**, Palestinian politician **Dr. Hanan Ashrawi**, educator and children's champion **Ms. Graca Machel**—wife of the former President of South Africa, Mr. Nelson Mandela, former French Prime Minister **Edith Cresson**, and former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights **Mary Robinson**, were signatories to an open letter, published 12 December 2006, **calling for an immediate Darfur ceasefire, and an effective peacekeeping force to ensure the protection of all the victims of the genocide**. Their statements came as thousands participated in the weekend's international Global Day for Darfur and the Save Darfur Coalition's Weekend of Prayer in the United States. Since the war began, in February 2003, violence has claimed at least 400,000 lives, displaced 2.5 million people and left more than 3.5 million men, women and children struggling to survive amid the violence and starvation. **The letter, published by newspapers worldwide,**

condemned the use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war in Darfur, and demanded its end. Their voices joined those of thousands of advocates in more than 40 cities around the world (www.savedarfur.org).

INTERVIEW

Interview with Mr. Claes Borgström, recent Swedish Equal Opportunities Ombudsman

Claes Borgström was appointed as the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman by the Swedish Government on 22 March 2000. To date, he has been the first and only man to hold the position. Mr. Borgström is an attorney who has been involved with high-profile cases such as the murder of Olof Palme, the former Prime Minister of Sweden. He helped found “Advokater utan Gränser” (“Avocats sans frontières”) in Sweden and was the Association's chairman until 31 August 2000. He has been a member of the Swedish branch of the International Commission of Jurists and of the Swedish Bar Association's disciplinary board, as well as Secretary of the Penal Law Committee of the International Bar Association. He is married with three children and two grandchildren.

Q: Can you briefly describe your role as Ombudsman and its main characteristics?

A: The main mission of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman office is to combat sex discrimination. This is done chiefly by investigating complaints of sex discrimination from individuals and by supervising the promotion of gender equality in workplaces, universities and schools, as expressed in the Equal Opportunities Act. As head of this office, I am an advocate for human rights.

Q: Broadly, what are the main categories of grievances that you receive and resolve? Are there any differences by gender and between the situation in the public and private sectors?

A: When it comes to sex discrimination in working life, the majority of complainants are women. Most

complaints regard sex discrimination in connection with pay, recruitment and layoffs/dismissals.

In 2005, the ban on sex discrimination was extended to cover a number of areas in society, such as job agencies, social insurance systems, study support, and the provision of goods, services and housing. This has led to a substantial increase in the number of complaints from men, particularly regarding services.

Q: *What mechanisms do you use to resolve issues coming to your office?*

A: As a government agency, we have the right to take legal action against the discriminating party, such as sue them in court. However, according to our instructions, we shall always negotiate for a voluntary settlement between the parties, comprising an economic compensation to the victim of the discrimination.

In our supervising work, we have the right to seek access to whatever information we need to carry out our work. Any employer which does not cooperate may face a substantial default fine.

If we find that an employer does not meet the standards of the law, we can order the employer to better herself or himself by threat of a default fine. This fine, however, is not issued by us directly, but through application to a special gender equality board.

Q: *Traditionally, very few men have been actively interested in gender issues. Please tell us briefly how you became interested in them.*

A: To me, combating sex discrimination and promoting gender equality is a way of promoting human rights. Before I was appointed Ombudsman, I worked as an attorney for 25 years, and I have always had an interest in human rights issues. I worked for the International Court of Justice—Sweden (ICJ-S), and as an attorney at law. I also had the opportunity to promote individual women's rights through court cases.

Q: *Sweden shows near gender parity in Government; to what do you attribute this success, and what must be done to maintain and further increase women's participation?*

A: After the political shift following the 2006 election, the cabinet is composed of a majority of male ministers. But if you refer to government in a broader sense, including the parliament, of course it is nearly gender-balanced.

I think you must attribute this partly to the efforts of the Swedish women's movement and partly to the politicians who have had the courage to enforce reforms, such as the right to public childcare and the farewell to the single breadwinner model, including joint taxation. These reforms made the labour market accessible to all women.

Q: *In contrast to the previous question, statistics indicate that there is a significant incidence of violence against women in Sweden. What do you attribute this to?*

A: I am not sure that the problem is worse in Sweden compared to other developed countries. On the contrary, international surveys suggest a negative connection between gender equality and men's violence against women.

However, data suggests that the problem has increased during the last 15 years, with a steady increase in the number of reports to the police regarding male violence against women. I believe this can be partly attributed to an increase in women's inclination to report the violence and partly to a real increase of violence. This can be seen as a reaction from some men to the fact that men's power over women is being challenged.

Q: *Do you believe that having women in leadership positions makes a difference?*

A: To me, the issue of women on the top is not about a different kind of leadership, it is all about human rights. A more equal distribution of power implies more women on decision-making levels. So, yes, it makes a difference in sheer numbers, which is trivial, and it is also an important symbolic issue. I don't think the leadership in itself will be any different.

Q: *As compared to men, how do you see women's capacity for networking, mentoring and supporting other women's career opportunities? Do you feel women's ability to network is strong enough?*

A: Using the word ability makes it sound like a question of personal skills, which I don't think it is. I can't find any reason to believe that women's ability to network differs from that of men. Networking is all about connections, and the more people there are to whom you can connect, the easier the networking. Consequently, a woman finding herself in a male-dominated world probably finds it more difficult to network than men do. What I find to be more important is that women on the top can support each other.

Q: *How best do you think an organization can communicate the value of a diverse and gender-balanced workforce?*

A: Well, that depends to some extent on the circumstances. Arguments about the benefits for the employer tend to be very effective and popular. However, gender equality is not about profitability or effectiveness, it is about human rights. For that reason, I try to avoid any win-win argument. Human rights apply whether they give the employer any benefits or not.

Q: *Harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of power, has not yet been eliminated. What practices, in your experience, have worked best to address such situations?*

A: Many harassed women tend to put the blame on themselves. Many men don't understand when flirtation or jokes actually become harassment. Therefore, a crucial strategy to combat harassment is through awareness-raising activities. Only with knowledge of the problem can the individual woman see that she is the victim of a structural problem. And only with knowledge can men appreciate that their behaviour can be a form of harassment.

Q: *Do you have any specific recommendations or measures that you have found to be more effective than others to resolve these conflicts?*

A: Yes, knowledge, and, of course, there has to be a strong corporate policy on these matters, rules condemning harassment and a readiness in the organization to tackle any occurring harassment. All employees must know whom to report to in case of

harassment. The employer must take action immediately, bringing the harassment to an end.

Q: *What, in your opinion, constitutes the most important elements for career success? Are these elements the same for men and women?*

A: Putting in a lot of hours is probably very important to any kind of career. For obvious reasons, this is still much easier for men than for women. The short-term solution is that women and men share the responsibility for home and children. Doing that, many men probably will find that making a career is not compatible with family life. And that, I believe, is the long-term solution: that we don't expect parents with small children to take big career steps. On the other hand, most ordinary people don't make a career, they just work.

Q: *What measure of flexible work/life arrangements does your office practise? How many persons avail themselves of these practices?*

A: We have the same arrangements as most other employers in this country, at least when it comes to white-collar work: flexible working hours and the possibility to work at home now and then. When employees go on parental leave (480 days in total, 390 of them with 80 per cent of the pay), we keep them informed about what goes on in the office, and we see to it that they get their share of the annual pay increase. All employees with children under 12 have the right to work part time (75 per cent). When a child is sick, all employees have the right to stay at home and take care of the child, and receive 80 per cent of their pay. In our office, all employees with children make use of these practices.

Q: *What is the role of such work/life measures in ensuring equality in the workplace and in society?*

A: I think it is crucial. However, the Swedish experience is that these practices in themselves are not enough to change the traditional division of labour within the family, nor do they automatically lead to any fundamental shifts in the notion of femininity and masculinity.

Q: *What general advice would you like to give women in the workplace? In life?*

A: Don't put the blame on yourself. Watch out for disadvantageous structures working against you.

Q: *Do you believe women will achieve equality or maybe even succeed to improve the work paradigm to a more balanced one?*

A: Yes, the whole world is moving towards gender equality. There are setbacks and obstacles on the way, but in general we are in the midst of a global process towards the fulfilment of all individual human rights. I am an optimist.

WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

Situation as of 30 September 2006

Inter-Parliamentary Union

The **Inter-Parliamentary Union** has compiled a list of 198 countries showing the percentage of women in descending order. On page 11, we list excerpts from the top-10 countries.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION ON WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

(2006/2057(INI))

Highlights

The **European Parliament** adopted a resolution on women and international politics on 16 November 2006. The report was adopted by 377 votes in favour to 77 against, with 31 abstentions. Despite the acknowledgement that balanced participation by both sexes in decision-making was an essential condition for democracy, the European Parliament deeply regretted that, notwithstanding the large number of political statements and recommendations, programmes of action and specific legislation introduced at the national level, inequality, gender discrimination and underrepresentation of women in politics still persisted in Europe and

worldwide. The percentage of women elected to the European Parliament ranged from 58 per cent to 0 per cent, depending on the member States (with an average slightly above 30 per cent). **The percentage of women elected to member States' national parliaments varied between 45 per cent and 9 per cent.** The European Parliament noted that recent elections have brought women to the highest functions as Heads of State and Government in some of its member States. It congratulated the Heads of Governments that used objective and non-discriminatory criteria for the selection of the members of their cabinets. **The European Parliament went on to draw attention to the fact that the low level of participation by women in centres of decision-making was often linked to work/life issues, to the unequal distribution of family responsibilities, and to discrimination at work and in occupational training.** The Parliament noted there was a need to look beyond numbers, and actually focus on how women who are active in politics influence the shaping of governance and conflict resolution; and how they contribute to ensuring that governance reforms, accountability and the rule of law are realized. Also, member States must actualize measures that aim to reconcile social, family and professional life, bringing both policy and practice in line with the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council and the Lisbon Strategy. The European Parliament called for the adoption of appropriate legislative or administrative measures to support elected representatives in the reconciliation of their family and public responsibilities and, in particular, **to encourage parliaments and local and regional authorities to ensure that their timetables and working methods enable elected representatives of both sexes to reconcile their work and family life.**

The report proposed a number of measures on the national, European and international level. Among other things, it strongly encouraged the inclusion of female police, civilian and military officers in EU and UN peacekeeping missions in

order to enhance communication with women in local communities and with local communities in general. Other measures proposed include:

Appointing more women to top positions in EU external delegations;

Using the EU external relations and development and cooperation policy instruments as vectors for the promotion of women in politics, in particular the participation of women as voters and political candidates;

Promoting educational programmes to make citizens, particularly young people, aware of the equal rights of women to participate fully in political life from an early age;

Encouraging women to apply for high-level positions in the international scene and urging Member States to provide names of female candidates along with the names of male candidates for high-level positions in international negotiations and policymaking;

Analysing and disseminating best practices on international and national measures aimed at enhancing the participation of women in the highest-level positions of international politics;

Appointing more women to diplomatic careers and promoting gender balance for their delegations to the United Nations and other international meetings and conferences.

The European Parliament also called on political parties across Europe to promote balanced participation of both sexes on their lists of candidates. Parties were urged to remove all barriers that, directly or indirectly, discriminate against the participation of women, in order to ensure that women have the right to participate fully at all levels of decision-making in all internal policymaking structures and nominating processes, and in the leadership of political parties on equal terms with men. **The European Parliament welcomed the fact that a European Institute for Gender Equality is to be created**, which is expected to take the initiative to promote greater representation of women in international politics. Lastly, Parliament encouraged the media to recognize the importance of women's participation in the political process, provide fair and balanced coverage of male and female candidates, and also to pay attention to the impact of party programmes on promoting women's needs and rights and democratic representation (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5319412>).

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats	Women	Per cent women	Elections	Seats	Women	Per cent women
1	Rwanda	09/2003	80	39	48.8	09/2003	26	9	34.6
2	Sweden	09/2006	349	165	47.3	—	—	—	—
3	Costa Rica	02/2006	57	22	38.6	—	—	—	—
4	Finland	03/2003	200	76	38.0	—	—	—	—
5	Norway	09/2005	169	64	37.9	—	—	—	—
6	Denmark	02/2005	179	66	36.9	—	—	—	—
7	Netherlands	01/2003	150	55	36.7	06/2003	75	22	29.3
8	Cuba	01/2003	609	219	36.0	—	—	—	—
8	Spain	03/2004	350	126	36.0	03/2004	259	60	23.2
9	Argentina	10/2005	257	90	35.0	10/2005	72	31	43.1
10	Mozambique	12/2004	250	87	34.8	—	—	—	—

IN YOUR INTEREST ...

Reports

- The report of the Secretary-General on **women, peace and security** (S/2006/770 of 27 September 2006) states that **women are critical to the consolidation of peace**. It notes that in today's mostly internal conflicts, the socio-economic fabric of a country and its societal dynamics become a key guide to finding entry points to resolve and prevent conflicts. The report also highlights the role played by women in promoting peace in countries emerging from conflict, and stressed that it was essential to promote the full participation of women in helping to rebuild such societies. It also encouraged more female involvement in UN peacekeeping operations.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2007

Highlights of the report

The State of the World's Children 2007 was issued on UNICEF's sixtieth anniversary on 11 December 2006. **It states that eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women will have a profound and positive impact on the survival and well-being of children.** Gender equality produces the "double dividend" of benefiting both women and children, and is pivotal to the health and development of families, communities and nations; when women are empowered to lead full and productive lives, children and families prosper. According to the report, women's influence in key decisions improves their lives and has a positive effect on the well-being and development of children. Despite progress in the status of women in recent decades, the lives of millions of girls and women are overshadowed by discrimination, disempowerment and poverty. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, and women earn less than men for equal work. Millions of women throughout the world are subject to physical and sexual violence, with little recourse to justice. As a result of dis-

crimination, girls are less likely to attend school; nearly one out of every five girls who enrolls in primary school in developing countries does not complete a primary education. Education levels among women, says the report, correlate with improved outcomes for children.

A road map to gender equality

The State of the World's Children 2007 presents seven key interventions to enhance gender equality:

- **Education:** Abolish school fees and encourage parents and communities to invest in girls' education.
- **Financing:** Integrate investment to eliminate gender discrimination into government budgets and plans. Little recognition has been given to the resources required to meet the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **Legislation:** Ensure a level playing field for women through national legislation in property law and inheritance rights, and violence against women, domestic or otherwise.
- **Legislative quotas:** Enact quotas for political participation. Quotas are a proven method of ensuring women's participation in politics. Of the 20 countries with the most women in parliament, 17 use some form of quota system.
- **Women empowering women:** Involve grass-roots women's movements in policy formation at an early stage. Such groups/movements champion women's equality and empowerment, and press for the needs of women and children to be related in policy design.
- **Engaging men and boys:** Educate men and boys, as well as women and girls, on the benefits of gender equality and joint decision-making. This helps to nurture more cooperative relationships.
- **Improved research and data:** Have better data and analysis, especially on maternal mortality, violence against women, education, employ-

ment, wages, unpaid work and use of time, and participation in politics.

The report finds that women do not always have an equal say in crucial household decisions. This can have negative consequences for children. In only 10 of 30 developing countries surveyed did 50 per cent or more of women participate in all household decisions, including those regarding major household spending, their own health care or their visits to friends or relatives outside the home. In families where women are key decision makers, the proportion of resources devoted to children is far greater than those in which women have a less decisive role.

Gender gap in earnings

The report states that estimates based on wage differentials and participation in the labour force suggest that women's estimated earned income is around 30 per cent of men's in countries surveyed in the Middle East and North Africa; around 40 per cent in Latin America and South Asia; 50 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa; and around 60 per cent in CEE/CIS, East Asia and industrialized countries.

The political sphere

Women's increased involvement in political systems can also have a positive impact on the well-being of children. Growing evidence from industrialized and developing countries alike suggests that women in legislative bodies have been especially effective advocates for children. Yet, as of July 2006, women accounted for less than 17 per cent of all parliamentarians worldwide.

Key to strong societies

The benefits of gender equality go beyond their direct impact on children. *The State of the World's Children 2007* shows how promoting gender equality and empowering women—Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 3—will propel all the other MDGs, from reducing poverty and hunger to saving children's lives, improving maternal health, ensuring universal education,

combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability (<http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/>).

- **The Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the rise of women in the Arab world**, sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was released on 7 December 2006. It both commends some States for “significant, progressive changes” in tackling fundamental gender biases prevalent in the region, and cites several obstacles to equitable development, ranging from cosmetic reforms to violent conflict, foreign occupation and terrorism. As such, women in the Arab world are still denied equality of opportunity, and their lack of empowerment remains a critical factor in crippling the Arab nations' quest to return to global leadership in commerce, learning and culture.

- **The world report on violence against children (A/61/299)** was launched in Geneva on 20 December 2006 as a joint initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The International Labour Organization (ILO), a contributor to the study, called for zero tolerance of violence against the estimated 218 million child labourers and approximately 100 million adolescents who are legally employed worldwide. The report provides a global picture of violence against children that cuts across culture, class, education, income and ethnic origin, and that has long and lasting effects. Violence against children takes the form of physical and psychological abuse, discrimination, neglect and maltreatment, sexual abuse in the home, and corporal and humiliating punishment at school. The report further states that violence against children is a violation of their human rights and is never justified, whether for disciplinary reasons or cultural traditions. Legalizing violence against children in one context risks generating tolerance of violence against children in all its aspects. The report calls for a wide range of actions to be taken to prevent violence.

It includes 12 broad recommendations addressing areas such as national strategies and systems, data collection and ensuring accountability. The report is the first comprehensive global attempt to describe all forms of violence against children, its scale and its impact. It aims to bring attention to the horrific scale of all forms of violence suffered by girls and boys at the hands of adults throughout the world (<http://www.violencestudy.org/r25>).

• **Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence: Delivering as One** was published on 9 November 2006 (A/61/583). The report puts forward a series of recommendations in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, including the restructuring of the administration of justice system, to decrease structural fragmentation in the Organization, and increase its coherence to deliver as one, in true partnership with and serving the countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and other internationally agreed development goals. Within the area of development, the report discusses the gender architecture in the Organization, recommending the need to consolidate and strengthen several current structures in a dynamic entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment.

LESSONS FROM EVALUATIONS OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION—SYNTHESIS REPORT 2006/I

Some useful findings

Numerous recent evaluations of efforts to integrate women and gender equality into development cooperation have concluded that progress has been poor. The findings of evaluations undertaken by national and international development organizations between 2002 and 2006 (review of evaluations by the North American Aerospace Defence Command (Norad), the

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Department for International Development (DFID), the European Commission (EC), OECD/DAC, UNDP, ILO and the World Bank) are briefly noted below. The report notes that each of the independent evaluations reaches rather similar conclusions regarding the causes for the lack of progress:

1. The empowerment of women and gender equality have not been given high priority;
2. Insufficient resources have been provided to implement policies and strategies;
3. There has been no systematic reporting of results in this area;
4. Information about gender issues and programmes has not been gathered or used effectively to improve outcomes.

Consequently, gender equality is often incorporated only into women-oriented projects with little success in mainstreaming these activities into other programmes. Most surprisingly, the report concluded that this was due, in part, to the move towards a more comprehensive gender-mainstreaming approach, which obscured the issue. The progress, therefore, witnessed a reduction in resources for the institutional apparatus and training to promote gender issues, and blurred lines of responsibility. In addition, more recently, the decentralization of aid to embassies or country offices and the new aid modalities, with their focus on harmonization and budget support in the context of national poverty reduction strategies, have also diverted attention away from women's and gender equality issues.

Various recommendations were made to better ensure that gender was addressed in development cooperation. In particular, work needed to be more targeted, and activities more strongly prioritized. Most importantly, however, work needed to be focused on the practical implementation of strategies for women and gender equality, especially where promoting gender equality was known to be particularly catalytic in increasing effectiveness and in achieving goals in other areas. To accomplish this, the report recommended that organizations must:

1. Ensure stronger leadership of work on women and gender equality;
2. Provide clearer mandates;
3. Have clear goals for their activities;
4. Organize their work better and more systematically;
5. Invest more resources;
6. Improve training.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETINS, INFORMATION CIRCULARS AND OTHERS

- The information circular **Practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of criminal behaviour, 1 July 2005–30 June 2006**, issued on 31 July 2006 (ST/IC/2006/48), informs the Organization's staff of the most common examples of misconduct and/or criminal behaviour and their disciplinary consequences, including any legal action with due regard to the protection of the privacy of the staff member(s) concerned.
- The information circular **Composition of the Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances at Headquarters**, issued on 5 October 2006 (ST/IC/2006/42), informs staff of the new composition of the Panel.
- The administrative instruction **Staff selection system**, issued on 15 November 2006 (ST/AI/2006/3), informs staff of the new policy in place and both the responsibilities of staff members and the office of Human Resources regarding the new system. With respect to gender, the following paragraphs show changes from the previous administrative instruction (ST/AI/2002/4):

Section 5, Eligibility requirements for consideration at the 30-day mark, para. 5.5 (ii):

“Women staff members who hold a current appointment of any type at the P-3/L-3 level may be considered for vacancies at the P-4 level; women staff members holding a current appointment of any type at the P-4/L-4 level may be considered for vacancies at

the P-4 or P-5 level, *provided in each case that they have been in the service of the Organization for a cumulative period of at least one year prior to application* and meet the requirements of section 5.3, where applicable.”

The previous requirement in para. 5.5 (ii) was for “*a cumulative period of at least one year accrued over the two years immediately preceding the application*”. This requirement was removed.

Section 9, Selection decision, para. 9.2:

“If the head of a department/office who has not met the gender targets set out in the departmental action plan proposes to select a male candidate where an equally qualified female candidate exists, the proposed selection decision must be justified to, and approved by, OHRM.”

Previously in para. 9.2, the head of a department/office was only required to “*take into account the Organization's human resources objectives and targets as reflected in the departmental human resources action plan, especially with regard to geography and gender*”.

Section 9, Selection decision, para. 9.3:

“In order to facilitate achievement of gender parity goals set by the General Assembly, female candidates shall remain on the roster for three years after the first day of the month following the selection decision.”

Previously, the roster was valid for one year for all candidates.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- A survey conducted by **Opinion Research Corporation and REF Insights**, in two phases (13-17 July 2000 and 3-7 August 2006) and commissioned by Liz Claiborne Inc. and Redbook magazine **on domestic violence**, revealed an

information gap that may prevent Americans from taking action when they witness domestic violence. Approximately two thirds of Americans say it is hard to recognize domestic violence despite its prevalence, and want more information on what to do when confronted with it.

- **A small revolution was launched during a conference of high-ranking Muslim theologians** in Cairo on 24 November 2006, where Muslim scholars and academics from Germany, Africa and the Middle East spent two days discussing **female genital mutilation**. After lengthy discussions, it was agreed that this practice was irreconcilable with Islam. The painful and often deadly practice of female circumcision affects millions of women in Africa and the Middle East. The goal of the conference was to declare this form of circumcision to be incompatible with the ethics of Islam as a global religion. Ms. Mushira Chattab, the Egyptian first lady's special ambassador and chairwoman of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, called upon the legal scholars at the meeting to take a clear position against female circumcision. All three major monotheistic world religions define man as a perfect creation of the Almighty, and condemn doing any harm to God's creation. **The academics and scholars in attendance declared genital circumcision to be a deplorable custom without any basis in religious texts, and called upon the parliaments in the countries where the practice is common to pass laws making genital mutilation a crime.** The Grand Mufti of Egypt, Mr. Ali Jumaa, signed the resolution the next day and declared that he firmly believed that the fight against this terrible custom would succeed (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,452790,00.html>).

- As part of the annual **16 Days of Activism to Eliminate Violence against Women** that started on 28 November 2006, 22 African countries have recommitted themselves to ending violence against women and children in a colloquium that took place in Benoni, South Africa. They agreed to work together to build partnerships, establish a common

vision and take common action to end violence. Speaking in New York, Mr. António Guterres of the Office of the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** said that the presence of a massive culture of neglect and denial about violence against women and refugee populations was central to the scourge. The empowerment of women, or rather, its unfortunate lack, needed to be urgently addressed, to become one of the central objectives of modern, democratic systems and tolerant societies. In citing some of the forms that gender-based violence takes, it noted:

- **Bride-burning;**
- **Sexual violence as a weapon of war;**
- **Genital mutilation and breast-ironing;**
- **Date rape and child marriage;**
- **Spousal abuse.**

It also proposed a number of necessary measures ranging from overall publicity to urgent legislative reform.

- **Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero**, Spain's Prime Minister, spoke to delegates from the **Council of Europe** on 29 November 2006, to **launch a campaign against domestic violence in Europe**, calling it one of the worst forms of human rights abuse. According to the Council, almost a quarter of women in Europe have suffered physical or sexual attacks. Some of the "risk factors" include a patriarchal culture, gender stereotypes and low income. The Council of Europe said that stopping the complicit silence surrounding domestic abuse was one of the main goals of the campaign.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

- A panel discussion, "**Women, Peace and Posts**", was held in New York, on 25 October 2006, to discuss the current situation and future steps to better support operations where women continue to be underrepresented at all levels, as civilian decision makers, in civilian police, troops and as military observers. As of 30 June 2006:

- The overall representation of women in Professional posts assigned to peace support operations stood at 24 per cent. At the D-I level and above, however, women's representation was a mere 10 per cent;
 - No UN peace operation is headed by a female Special Representative, and only one—the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan—has a woman Deputy Special Representative;
 - Women make up about 5 per cent of civilian police and about 1.9 per cent of military contingents in peacekeeping missions (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/wps/calendar_of_events.pdf).
- The UN **High-Level Conference on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-Governmental Organizations Personnel** was held in New York on 4 December 2006. Almost 150 different agencies and country representatives, including diplomats and other officials, gathered for the event. The goal was to strengthen the ability of the UN and its partners to prevent such exploitation and abuse, in accordance with the Secretary-General's Bulletin entitled *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse*. The Bulletin applies to all UN staff, as well as to uniformed personnel. DNA sampling, new international pacts and assistance to victims were among the measures discussed. It was noted that UN staff found to engage in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse would be fired. A uniformed peacekeeper accused of raping a young girl would be investigated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Peacekeepers found to be in violation of this policy would be repatriated and barred from future peacekeeping service, at the very least. In addition, there would be follow-up with the country regarding disposition of the case. These efforts require adequate funding, concrete steps and benchmarks. The creation of **a culture of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel in peacekeeping, humanitarian and development activities** is essential.

WORK/LIFE

Flex-time news

It is said that the future of the workplace will be determined by the feasibility of flexibility within it. In December 2006, a woman lawyer achieved a milestone at the law firm of Weil, Gotshal & Manges in Washington, D.C., when she was promoted to partner—but not for the usual reasons: money, prestige, power, job security; rather, because she is one of two lawyers at the firm to be given a brand new title: **flex-time partner**. Several organizations have issued guidelines allowing flexible working arrangements to better balance work and personal life, acknowledging the sea change in work methods made possible by technologies which make physical location relatively irrelevant in most instances. Yet, in spite of policies and promises, work/life balance has yet to be truly accepted without taboos. Nevertheless, law firms are increasingly recognizing the need to retain and promote their women lawyers, and accept work balance as a basic requirement. True flexibility means tailoring each job to fit each worker.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- Recent research on women and stress found that women who did not use their weekends to recuperate were nearly three times more likely to die from heart disease and stroke than those who did. In addition, Dr. Nieca Goldberg, MD, a cardiologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, has noted that many of women's leisure activities were actually quite stressful: shopping, watching the news, and catching up on chores—to name a few. So please, consider getting enough rest—it's heart-health essential (*More* magazine, November 2006).
- The controversy about the recently licensed **vaccine to prevent the human papilloma virus (HPV)**, types 16 and 18, continues. Dr. Howard Zucker, Assistant Director-General for Health and Technology and Pharmaceuticals of the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, told an international conference in London, organized by six

non-governmental organizations (NGOs), “Stop Cervical Cancer: Global Health Strategies”, on 12 December 2006, that new vaccines against HPV in the developing world could save hundreds of thousands of lives if delivered effectively. The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** has also stressed that mobilizing resources for strengthening health systems and purchasing HPV vaccines, both nationally and internationally, must become a priority. Cervical cancer is the second most common type of cancer among women, with deaths projected to rise by almost 25 per cent over the next 10 years.

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, the **Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)** and the **World Bank** had given, on 14 December 2006, a guarded welcome to the United States trials in Africa showing that male circumcision halves the risk of HIV infection in men in heterosexual relationships, warning that it should never pre-empt other preventive measures such as the use of condoms. The health agencies said that proper guidelines would be necessary to prevent people from developing a false sense of security that consequently increases high-risk behaviours and which, in effect, negates the protective effect of male circumcision. Noting that the trials' results will likely heighten interest in male circumcision from Governments, non-governmental institutions and the general public, the agencies said they would define specific policy recommendations for promoting the necessity of circumcision.

- The **Government of Chile** liberalized, on 17 December 2006, contraception policy by making the so-called **morning-after pill** available free at State-run hospitals; it is noted that the age of consent in Chile is 14 years of age. The pill, also known as Plan B emergency contraception, has long been available at private pharmacies catering to the most affluent neighbourhoods. President Michelle Bachelet, a doctor and a feminist, framed the issue as one of social justice, and

felt it her duty to guarantee that all Chileans had real options in this area, as in others.



According to the latest figures published today in the **UNAIDS/WHO 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update**, the global AIDS epidemic continues to grow, with an estimated 39.5 million people living with

HIV and 4.3 million new HIV infections in the past year. This yields worrying evidence of a resurgence in infection rates in some countries that were previously stable or declining. In sub-Saharan Africa, the AIDS infection rates are about 2.8 million (65 per cent). Also, significant increases were noted in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where indicators show that infection rates have risen by more than 50 per cent since 2004. In 2006, 2.9 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses.

- **The first-ever global conference on Women and AIDS: Women's Leadership Making a Difference on HIV and AIDS** will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 7 July 2007. The event is organized by the World **YWCA**, one of the largest women's organizations in the world, which has made AIDS a global priority for its work with over 25 million women and girls in 125 countries, and is co-convened with the International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS. It has also the support of the UNAIDS Global Coalition on Women and AIDS and UNFPA. The Summit seeks to mobilize urgent responses to rising HIV infection rates among women and girls in every region of the world, as well as exploring such issues as poverty, violence against women, children's rights and access to decision-making and resources. Up to 80 per cent of new infections occur in girls and young women. For more information and to register online, visit www.worldywca.org

RECOMMENDED READING

The Other Half of Gender: Men's Issues in Development was edited by Ms. Maria C. Correia and Mr. Ian Bannon and published by the World Bank in June 2006. This book brings the gender and development debate into full circle—from a much-needed focus on empowering women to a more comprehensive gender framework that considers gender as a system that affects both women and men. It draws on a slowly emerging realization that attaining the vision of gender equality will be difficult, if not impossible, without changing the ways in which masculinities are defined and acted upon (ISBN: 0-8213-6505-3; ISBN-13: 978-0-8213-6505-2; SKU: 16505).

Sex and the Seasoned Woman by Gail Sheehy contains interviews carried out with approximately 400 women, from the ages of 45 to 91. The dominant theme of the book is that women feel a burst of vitality after 50, and that older is bolder.

WEBSITES

<http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23631>: Synthesis Report 2006/1. Lessons from evaluations of women and gender equality in development cooperation. Aasen, B. Department for International Development (DFID), UK (2006).

E-mail received from a former UNDP colleague on 15 December 2006

Dear Aparna and Rebeca,

Thanks for the newsletter, which I find very interesting. I am forwarding it to a number of friends and colleagues. Incidentally, one of the reasons why I left my D-1 position in 2001 with UNDP was because I needed to create a better environment for my family. My work was extremely demanding; and because I could not sacrifice the quality and dedication, I had to choose. It should be noted that my boss and department head in the Governance Division was very supportive, a rare and encouraging find in the system—a real team-builder. However, in most of the system, if you are a good performer you are not groomed and encouraged to seek higher-level positions. It is rather left to messy politics, and this creates a world of uncertainty and competition that is not healthy, as opposed to good competition. For the last few years, I have been working as an independent consultant at the international level, which is also demanding and tough, but it keeps me growing and involved in the issues that are dear to me. Keep up the good work.

*Best regards,
Rebeca Ríos-Kohn*

You can read **network** online at
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/Network>
To receive hard copies of **network**, please send an
e-mail request to *network-newsletter@un.org*

You can find a monthly list of senior
vacancy announcements (P-5 and above)
at *<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/>*

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