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World YWCA

FEATURE:

CEDAW: Women's tool for change

YOUNG WOMEN ON THE MOVE:

Funding gender equality and women's empowerment

HIV AND AIDS:

How CEDAW addresses HIV and AIDS

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President: Susan Brennan **General Secretary:** Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda **Editor:** Kaburo Kobia **Co-ordinators:** Sarah Davies, Sylvie Jacquat **Distribution:** Fiona Wilkie. Articles may be freely reproduced with acknowledgement to World YWCA Common Concern ISSN 1025-4099. All artwork, images and photography is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without permission. ©2008 World YWCA. Common Concern is published in French and Spanish, contact worldoffice@worldywca.org to order.

Editorial

Over 185 countries have ratified the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of all Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and many more have adopted specific laws to support this international bill of rights for women. Governments worldwide are called upon to accelerate the implementation of CEDAW. Such implementation includes passing national laws that promote the rights of women and providing services to women especially in health, education, food security, counselling, transport and even the provision of adequate budgetary allocations for programmes and projects that empower women and reduce gender inequalities. But, for most women in the world, especially in communities and households, CEDAW is far removed from their daily struggle for a life free of violence, poverty, exclusion and disease.

The 2007 World YWCA Council adopted a resolution requesting the YWCA movement to place emphasis on CEDAW implementation as an affirmation of the organisation's commitment to global action for women. This important resolution calls on YWCAs to take part in the monitoring and implementation of CEDAW in their countries and in preparing periodic reports including NGO alternative or shadow reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

This Common Concern weaves the meaning, content and value of CEDAW with the reality member associations face as they run programmes for women in various countries. The feature article on CEDAW walks us through the basics of CEDAW, the meaning of equality and how to achieve rights for all women. It gives us a glimpse of the reporting process and what YWCAs and civil society organisations can do to promote CEDAW.

HIV and AIDS remains a global challenge for women's empowerment. In this edition, we highlight how CEDAW addresses HIV and AIDS, and provide information on how we can all continue to address the issue. The XVII International AIDS Conference to be held from August 3-8, 2008 in Mexico is the largest and most important conference on HIV and AIDS and provides a platform to address global challenges in the response to HIV and AIDS. A World YWCA delegation will attend the conference to ensure women's voices are heard and their concerns included in the response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

The World YWCA celebrates the improved status of women brought about, in large measure, by the resilience of the women's movement and through instruments such as CEDAW. We still have large steps to make, but the World YWCA is committed to improving the lives of women and girls to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights and gender equality worldwide. ■



Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda
General Secretary, World YWCA

The World YWCA celebrates the improved status of women brought about, in large measure, by the resilience of the women's movement and through instruments such as CEDAW.

Briefing

From YWCAs Around the World

In this Briefing, we highlight news from YWCAs around the world. The YWCA is present in 125 countries and 20,000 communities advocating for peace, justice, human rights and care of the environment and has been at the fore front of raising the status of women for over a century.



FEAR OF VIOLENCE PREVENTS WOMEN FROM SEEKING HIV TREATMENT, REPORT REVEALS

Hidden in The Mealie Meal– Gender-Based Abuses and Women’s HIV and AIDS Treatment in Zambia’ is an in-depth and expository report on the challenges HIV-positive women face when seeking treatment. The report, which features the YWCA of Zambia, identifies gender-specific barriers that prevent Zambian women from seeking HIV information or start and continue using anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment. The barriers include violence, the fear of violence by intimate partners and the fear of abandonment and divorce in an environment where women suffer insecure property rights. “These abuses occur in the context of poverty and of a culture that condones male authority and control over women,” the report says.

The YWCA of Zambia runs the only two shelters in Zambia for women experiencing violence in their life or home. Health care facilities in the country seldom address violence against women except in situations where women show visible signs of physical abuse. Women who have sustained injuries as a result of domestic violence are referred to the YWCA shelters for counselling and trauma support services.

In the report, Yeta Mekazu, shelter manager at the YWCA of Lusaka says, “Violence interferes with ARV treatment many times. There are several of such cases among women in the YWCA shelter. One [of the women in the shelter] had a partner who threw away her pills. [He] said to her, ‘if you have to drink medicine, you’re out of this house.’”

The report is available on the Human Rights Watch website: www.hrw.org

THE SPIANS PARTNER WITH YWCA OF BARBADOS TO BUILD YOUTH HOSTEL

In 2007, the YWCA of Barbados launched the 'Saving Today's Children for Tomorrow's Future' campaign. The campaign raises money for programmes that respond to under-serviced youth in Barbados. One of the projects to benefit from the campaign is the construction of a youth hostel for orphaned youth. In addition to housing, the YWCA of Barbados hopes to provide counselling and life-skills training from the hostel.

The YWCA of Barbados has partnered with the Gala Theatre of London and Barbados, a non-profit organisation that brings together Barbadian and British actors to stage high quality theatre performances in Barbados. The Gala Theatre is eager to support the YWCA campaign and is especially interested in funding the youth hostel. Part of the proceeds from the next performance, Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', will go towards the construction of the youth hostel.

AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP SAFARI YIELDS NEW RELATIONSHIP IN FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR

The YWCA of Madagascar and the YWCA of France have established a partnership fostered during the 'African Partnership Safari', an exchange visit preceding the World YWCA Council in 2007. "This partnership is a concrete example of what the Africa Partnership Safari was suppose to achieve," says H el ene Yinda, World YWCA Programme Director for Africa. The objective of the visit was to promote partnership, exchange skills and share experiences.

The purpose of the partnership is two fold: to provide support for the YWCA of Madagascar as they improve their infrastructure and capacity while providing a learning experience for the YWCA of France. The YWCA of Madagascar plans to build a training centre for women and girls that will provide professional training and information on HIV-prevention and human rights. The building will also serve as a safe space for women and girls. Through the partnership, the YWCA of France will provide support towards the construction of the centre.

The partnership kicked off in December 2007 when M elanie Anton, a volunteer from the YWCA of France, arrived in Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar for a one-year mission. While in Madagascar, Anton will experience the local realities women in Madagascar face and gain a better understanding of the YWCA's response. Anton will work with members of the YWCA of Madagascar in developing a strategic plan of action that will define sustainable methods of managing the centre.

"The partnership fulfils the needs of both associations," says Yinda, "For the YWCA of Madagascar, it allows them

to build their capacity and receive direct support thanks to the presence of M elanie. For the YWCA of France, this partnership is a great opportunity to gain a better understanding and comprehension of the reality in the field."

The partnership convened between the YWCA of France and the YWCA of Madagascar is part of the World YWCA Strategic Plan 2008-2012, which encourages bilateral exchanges among YWCAs to maximise learning opportunities, good governance and develop the leadership of women and girls.

YWCA OF BANGLADESH CONTINUES SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY CYCLONE SIDR



On November 15, 2007, Cyclone SIDR hit Bangladesh inflicting heavy damage on property and infrastructure in over 30 districts. The destruction affected approximately 8.9 million people resulting in large-scale humanitarian needs in the country: millions of people became homeless, crops and livelihoods were destroyed and shelter, food, water and sanitation remain in short supply.

The specific needs of women and children are often overlooked in crisis situations. As such, the YWCA of Bangladesh immediately responded with emergency relief followed by a rehabilitation programme. The first phase of the response involved distributing relief food and goods. Since November, the YWCA of Bangladesh has assisted nearly 4000 affected families. In the most affected areas, thousands of families completely lost their source of revenue. The YWCA of Bangladesh provides children with study materials to enable them to continue with their education and continues with initiatives to help women rebuild their livelihood.

From the World YWCA

CEDAW: WORLD YWCA HOLDS RECEPTION

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) held its 40th session in Geneva, Switzerland from January 14 - February 1. The 23 committee expert members reviewed reports from Bolivia, Burundi, Saudi Arabia, France, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Morocco and Sweden. The review considered how governments implement their obligations to CEDAW.

On January 21, the World YWCA, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (Geneva) and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) held a reception to welcome the Committee, which recently moved from New York to Geneva. Natalie Fisher-Spalton, Deputy General Secretary of the World YWCA introduced Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda World YWCA General Secretary to the assembly.

The General Secretary affirmed the value of the Committee's work in advancing women's rights around the world. Gumbonzvanda drew attention to the importance of linking the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security to CEDAW, noting that the World YWCA's work promotes gender equality and women's role in peace building. Gumbonzvanda also emphasised the importance of identifying how HIV and AIDS impacts on implementation of CEDAW.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR WOMEN'S ORGANISATION, WORLD YWCA SAYS

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) convened in New York from February 25 - March 4. The commission explored how government commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment can and must be facilitated through financial and macroeconomic policy.

The World YWCA challenged member states to increase funding for specific issues not fully addressed by the Commission, in particular, to finance women's empowerment in the context of HIV and AIDS; allocate adequate resources through flexible and accessible financing mechanisms for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; and to acknowledge women's investment in their own movement by committing to match contributions to and for women's organisations.

The World YWCA hosted a panel on 'Innovative Approaches to Financing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' at which Susan Brennan, World YWCA President, shared the YWCA's fundraising experience during the Power to Change campaign that raised USD 10 million for a permanent fund to build the leadership of women and girls.

"YWCA's around the world are incredibly resourceful organisations," said Brennan. Lady Comfort Ani, World YWCA Board Member and Vice-President chaired the panel.

At a co-sponsored panel on 'Financing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Fragile States' Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, World YWCA General Secretary argued, "Women in camps could participate in analysing their own risks. They know the reality of what happens there and what takes place."

Jessica Notwell, World YWCA Board member and Vice-President participated at the meetings and lobbied for young women's issues along with Natallia Aleksandrovich World YWCA Programme Director for Europe and Noha El-Shareif, World YWCA intern.

CHANGE CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT PUT WOMEN AT RISK, STATEMENT DECLARES

The YWCA has long been associated with safe spaces for women and girls. From the turn of the 20th century when young women found a safe space in Great Britain, Europe and North America as they served in World War I to the early 21st century when young women found refuge from violent relationships in YWCA crisis centres around the world in Hong Kong, Canada and Angola – the YWCA has been associated with safety and a voice advocating for an end to violence against women.

On International Women's Day, March 8, the World YWCA called on governments, inter-governmental organisation, non-governmental organisation and community groups to ensure women and girls feel secure and are safe at home, school and work.

In a statement released to mark the day, the World YWCA argued that social, cultural and economic factors that put women at risk must change in order to ensure security of women and girls. "Investing in women and girls includes allocating flexible and adequate funds to women, providing appropriate services and ensuring they have equal opportunities," the statement says sighting three areas for immediate action: reducing women's vulnerability in the face of HIV and AIDS; ending violence against women; and involving women in conflict resolution and peace building.

MAKING HIV MESSAGES YOUTH-FRIENDLY

World YWCA participated in the World AIDS Campaign Global Youth Consultation in Amsterdam, The Netherlands from January 29-31. The World AIDS Day Campaign convened representatives from youth

On International Women's Day, March 8, the World YWCA called on governments, inter-governmental organisations, NGO's and community groups to ensure women and girls feel secure and are safe at home, school and work.

organisations from around the world to define ways to increase advocacy on HIV and AIDS, particularly on the global commitment to Universal Access. In 2005, leaders of the G8 countries and United Nations Member States pledged to develop and implement a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010 for all those who need it.

Participants at the consultations considered innovative ways to make this message accessible to youth. The group noted that lack of fundraising and mentoring as particular challenges in engaging youth in HIV advocacy.

KENYA CRISIS: WORLD YWCA RESPONDS

Violence erupted in Kenya after disputed election results were announced on December 30, 2007. The World YWCA immediately responded to the situation by ensuring women's needs are catered for, women are included in mediation efforts and community peace is built by promoting mutual respect and tolerance.

In partnership with the YWCA of Kenya and the Kenya Red Cross Society, the World YWCA carried out Rapid Needs Assessment in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kenya, including camps at the YWCA of Likoni and YWCA of Siaya. The purpose of the analysis was to identify the immediate needs of women and girls.

The World YWCA was particularly concerned for displaced HIV-positive women. The crisis posed a particular long-term risk for women on antiretroviral therapy who, at the height of the violence, fled their homes with little or no possessions. HIV treatment requires a faithful and consistent schedule — skipping drugs can cause resistance and severely regress treatment. The YWCA of Kenya has since helped some women living with HIV by referring them to support networks and medical facilities.

SOLIDARITY VISIT

In February, Dr Geeske Zanen, World YWCA board member and Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, World YWCA General Secretary participated in the Living Letters solidarity visit - a World Council of Churches initiative. "The challenge to turn the negative energy of the youth into positive energy to build a peaceful society is of high importance," Zanen shared in her reflections after the visit, "but it is wonderful to see youth leaders step forward... good initiatives have been started."

Read outcomes of the analysis and download reports:
www.worldywca.org

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: MARCH 7

The World YWCA staff participated in a World Day of Prayer service held at the chapel of the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland on March 7, 2008.

The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women who come together on the first Friday in March to observe a common day of prayer with a special annual theme that focuses on a different country each year. This year, prayers were offered for Guyana. Staff from the World YWCA and World Council of Churches along with women and men from English speaking congregations in Geneva put together a prayer service adopted from liturgy developed by women in Guyana.

An offering was taken to support the Food Processing Training Programme run by a local association of the YWCA of Guyana; proceeds from a bake sale held after the service were also donated to the programme.

Read more on the YWCA of Guyana Food Processing programme: www.worldywca.org



Feature

CEDAW: Women's Tool for change

CEDAW is often referred to as the international human rights treaty for women. What does this convention mean for women and girls around the world? How can women use CEDAW to create positive change in their communities? Caroline Lambert explains.



Caroline Lambert is the Executive Director of YWCA Australia and has for many years been involved in women's human-rights issues. She is completing her PhD on the integration of trade issues into the CEDAW reporting process. She is the co-author of 'Critical Charter: Women and Human Rights Activism in South East Asia' and co-edited 'Global Issues, Women and Justice'.

Everyday women and girls in most of the world are treated differently from men and boys in their communities. They might be paid less than a man doing the same job, or kept at home to look after siblings instead of going to school or they might be stopped from holding a position of responsibility in their local church, mosque or synagogue. Yet, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 prohibits such discrimination. Over 185 countries have signed CEDAW and are required to take special measures to end discrimination against women, including through the adopting new legislation, changing policies and embarking on public education campaigns.

WHAT IS CEDAW?

CEDAW represents the culmination of decades of work by the United Nations, governments, and women's rights organisations and activists. The first World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975¹ called for a treaty for women's rights. On December 18, 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted CEDAW and it signalled the acceptance by the international community of the necessity of an international bill of rights for women. CEDAW is now the most authoritative UN human rights instrument that protects women from discrimination. It is the first international treaty to comprehensively address fundamental rights for women in politics, health care, education, economics, employment, law, property, marriage and family relations.

Member States that ratify CEDAW are required to report to the CEDAW Committee every four years on progress made in the implementation of CEDAW at national level. During the reporting sessions, government representatives are encouraged to engage in constructive dialogue with the CEDAW Committee regarding gaps and challenges. In 2000, an Optional Protocol to CEDAW was passed that authorised the Committee to consider petitions from individual women or groups of women who have exhausted all national remedies for their documented cases of discrimination.

¹ Mildred Persinger, YWCA USA member and World YWCA representative to the UN, chaired the first NGO Forum at the World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975. Read more on her contribution to the UN on page 16.



There are three key steps that a government must take to implement CEDAW:

1. Eliminate discrimination in laws, policies and customs
2. Achieve formal and substantive equality
3. Apply CEDAW to all rights for all women

1 ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION

Governments must ensure laws, policies and customs do not discriminate against women. For example, laws that prohibit women from driving are contrary to CEDAW. Customary or religious legal systems that prevent women from inheriting land on an equal basis to men are contrary to CEDAW.

Furthermore, governments need to take action to end discrimination in both the public and the private sphere through legislation and campaigns to raise awareness on the benefit of allowing women to participate fully in society.

2 ACHIEVE EQUALITY

Governments must take steps to realise formal and substantive equality for women. An example of formal equality is the case of driving restrictions mentioned above — it is a law that explicitly discriminates against women. Substantive equality is broader and a more difficult type of equality to achieve. It goes further than formal equality and asks whether a law, policy or practice has a discriminatory impact. For example, do societal attitudes mean women are less likely to receive treatment or care for HIV than men? A substantive equality framework also recognises that simply eliminating discriminatory treatment will not ensure women's equality; steps must be taken to eliminate the long-term impact of women's inequality.

There are three types of actions governments can take to achieve substantive equality:

- Embrace affirmative action by introducing quotas: political parties could be encouraged to have a given percentage of women so as to increase the number of women in parliament
- Support effective NGO programmes that target women: anti-trafficking initiatives could receive more funding to reduce the number of women trafficked for sexual slavery
- Eliminate negative gender stereotypes and cultural attitudes: public education campaigns challenging the idea that women as 'natural' mothers while men can't care for children could be launched at national level

3 APPLY CEDAW TO ALL RIGHTS AND FOR ALL WOMEN

Governments need to take action to eliminate discrimination in all areas of women's lives, including political participation, health, education, employment, family relations and the legal system. Human rights, such as the right to nationality, freedom of movement and to own property, apply to all women. Married women must have the right to retain their nationality regardless of their husband's situation, moreover all women, regardless of their marital status, must be able to pass on their nationality to their children.

Governments need to take action to ensure that CEDAW rights are available to all women in the community, regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, culture, religion, disability, income status or other factors that have an impact on how people treat women.

WHAT CAN YWCAS AND CIVIL SOCIETY DO?

YWCA's and civil society can monitor the implementation of CEDAW in their country, advocate for changes to improve the implementation of CEDAW and work in partnership with other organisations to hold governments accountable through the reporting process.

Participating in the reporting process is particularly important. Every four years governments have to report on how they have implemented CEDAW. Unsurprisingly, they tend to think they've been doing a good job; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) can provide an alternative viewpoint by developing shadow reports.

WHAT IS A SHADOW REPORT?

An NGOs critique of their government's CEDAW report is called a shadow report. The shadow report is meant to give emphasis on the prevalence and magnitude of the critical issues that women face and of which the government has downplayed or failed to highlight. The CEDAW Committee

reads all reports sent to them and uses them as references during the sessions at which governments report. For example, the YWCA Australia contributed to the CEDAW Shadow Report developed by NGOs in Australia, contributing to community education on CEDAW and providing information on women's rights violations in Australia.

Shadow reports provide a comprehensive assessment of the status of women in all aspects of life. NGOs who write reports represent the voices of women in the community; it is often easier for NGOs to highlight sensitive or controversial issues not mentioned in the government report.

The knowledge that a shadow report will be produced often adds pressure on the government to report more accurately as shadow reports will outline the discrepancies and gaps in the government's report.

YWCA's, with their mix of services and advocacy interests, are able to make excellent contributions to these processes. As women, CEDAW is our tool for change. As women in the YWCA we can channel our energies and experiences into advocating for our governments to make CEDAW real in the lives of our members and the women who use our services.

Reports from the Committee Sessions

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its 40th session in Geneva, Switzerland from January 14 - February 1. Some World YWCA staff members attended the sessions on Bolivia, France and Sweden.

BOLIVIA

Marie-Claude Julsaint:

World YWCA Programme Director for the Americas and Caribbean



"Sexual and reproductive health rights featured strongly in Bolivia's report. The Committee raised ques-

tions on Bolivia's laws on sexual and reproductive health and rights and requested for updates on efforts to amend Article 317 of the Penal Code that provides no punishment in cases of rape, sexual abuse or kidnapping when the perpetrator marries the victim with free consent."

FRANCE

Sylvie Jacquat:

World YWCA Communications Assistant



"Violence against women, particularly domestic violence, was a clear theme in the country report from France. The

Committee requested for more information on violence against migrant women after research presented to the committee showed that violence against women in migrant communities is perpetuated by harmful cultural practices. The Committee also asked for a specific report on the situation of women in French overseas territories."

SWEDEN

Natallia Aleksandrovich:

World YWCA Programme Director for Europe



"The Committee commended the Swedish government for their initiative to bring gender equality to the labour

market and business sector. Although Sweden has recently established a Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, the Committee had concerns about the low percentage of women in high-ranking professions in particular sectors like academics."



FURTHER READING ON CEDAW:

'The Circle of Empowerment – 25 years of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women' by Hanna Bate Schopp-Schilling

'Budgeting for Women's Rights: Monitoring Government Budgets for Compliance with CEDAW' published by United Nations Development Fund for Women

FOR RELEVANT AND UP TO DATE INFORMATION ON CEDAW VISIT:

www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/6/cedw

www.iwraw-ap.org/convention

www.hrw.org/campaigns/cedaw/

Understanding CEDAW

The Convention contains 30 articles, including a preamble, background information and rules of procedure. The substantive articles of the Convention include:

- Article 1: Discrimination
- Article 2: Policy Measures
- Article 3: Guarantee of Basic Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
- Article 4: Special Measures
- Article 5: Sex Roles, Stereotyping and Prejudice
- Article 6: Prostitution
- Article 7: Political and Public Life
- Article 8: Representation
- Article 9: Nationality
- Article 10: Education
- Article 11: Employment
- Article 12: Health
- Article 13: Economic and Social Benefits
- Article 14: Rural women
- Article 15: Equality before the Law
- Article 16: Marriage and Family Life

The 41st session of CEDAW will take place from June 30 - July 18.

The following countries will present country reports:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Finland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| Iceland | United Republic of Tanzania |
| Lithuania | Yemen |
| Nigeria | |
| Slovakia | |

The 42nd session of CEDAW will take place from October 20 - November 7.

The following countries will present country reports:

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| Bahrain | Madagascar |
| Belgium | Mongolia |
| Cameroon | Myanmar |
| Canada | Portugal |
| Ecuador | Slovenia |
| El Salvador | Uruguay |
| Kyrgyzstan | |

Take Action

Women's security depends on economic justice

Article 13 of CEDAW calls on member states to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in economic and social life. Drawing on its experience in advocating for economic justice for women, the YWCA of Jordan contributed to a shadow report on Jordan's implementation of CEDAW. Leila Diab, YWCA of Jordan General Secretary, explains why CEDAW is important for the women of Jordan.



Under the Jordanian constitution, men and women have equal rights. However, the constitution does not offer women the explicit right to live free from violence. Social customs continue to confine family property to the men of the family, exerting pressure on women to waive portions of inheritance, especially property, in favour of their brothers. The consequences of this inconsistency can lead to violence.

The YWCA of Jordan participated in the CEDAW process with other women's non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Jordan. Together, they issued a shadow report that reviewed how the Jordanian authorities are dealing with violence against women and economic justice. The review showed that civil society has more success in breaking the silence on sensitive issues confronting women. By lobbying with decision-makers and increasing debate in the media, civil society challenged the government

to reform legal rights and offer better protection for women and girls.

The YWCA of Jordan feels that CEDAW can be effective in challenging legislation that violates women's economic justice. Every day, members of the YWCA of Jordan work with women who live with the consequences of failed legislation. They offer legal aid and counselling services with particular emphasis on violence against women and child abuse. Through the YWCA of Jordan's Family Counselling Centre in the Baqa'a Palestinian Refugee Camp, the association helps women increase their awareness and participation in social activities. The YWCA of Jordan wants to improve women's access to health, education and family planning services and also help them acquire income-generating skills. Due to poverty many of the women need support in social, psychological and physical areas of their lives.

"Participating in the CEDAW process was enriching as it helped

the YWCA of Jordan identify ways to overcome obstacles that women in Jordan face," says Leila Diab, YWCA of Jordan General Secretary, "In order to empower women, the association needs to continue networking on local and international levels." The YWCA of Jordan already has a strong relationship with the Jordanian National Commission for Women, one of the first semi-governmental commissions established in the Arab world to promote women's issues.

"Women's NGOs provide valuable information which is often lacking or insufficient in the government reports on CEDAW", says Muna Makhameh, a lawyer and member of the Jordanian Council of Women who helped the YWCA of Jordan with their shadow report. "The participation of NGOs increases state accountability and transparency in the reporting process, thus enhancing the domestic implementation of the Convention, which is a very important step in improving women's lives." ■

A holistic approach to sexual and reproductive health rights

God bestowed a great gift on woman: that of bringing new life into the world through child bearing. This gift gives women a significant amount of responsibility and even power. Women were born empowered, so why is women's reproductive health such a controversial issue?

Article 12 of CEDAW focuses on women's access to health. Traditionally, this access was primarily focused on the needs of women as mothers. In many cases women's health care access is limited to pre-natal, intrapartum and child health care and does not encompass family planning and sexual health. While maternal health care is an integral part of sexual and reproductive health, it is not the only element of women's sexual health. Holistic women's health care involves integrating women's health concerns beyond reproduction, sex education and prevention of sexually transmitted infections; it includes access to information and services that focus on sexuality, maternal mortality, parenthood, abortions, gender-based violence and healthy relationships.

Gender inequality is evident in health care systems that are insensitive to women's multiple roles. This shortfall hinders some women, particularly rural women, from accessing adequate sexual and reproductive health care. In many countries, health care is not sufficiently integrated and public sexual and reproductive health services are only offered during regular working hours and at specific clinics — automatically eliminating many working class women from access.

Furthermore, health care is often seen as an extension of the traditional role of women. Consequently, many health care workers, the majority of which are women, are subject to poor working conditions and wages dis-

proportionate with their work duties. One might argue, that this in itself is a breach of Article 11 of CEDAW, which makes reference to the right to equal remuneration and equal treatment in respect to work of equal value.

CEDAW is a treaty for women's rights and women's rights include sexual and reproductive health rights. Countries which are signatory to the Convention have an obligation to ensure that resources are allocated to legislation, programmes and strategies aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

While YWCAs and Non-Governmental Organisations, have the right to submit alternative reports on CEDAW, true advocacy and activism goes beyond submitting a watchdog report every four years. Women's rights requires a holistic approach; one that incorporates both government and non-government sectors. As an organisation that advocates for the rights of women and which offers services and programmes aimed at enriching the lives of women, YWCAs must recognise that compliance with CEDAW is our responsibility, too. ■



Icilda Humes

World YWCA Board member, is the Human Development Coordinator for the Women's Department of the Belize Government. Here, she discusses women's sexual and reproductive health rights as defined in CEDAW and actions YWCAs can take to ensure a holistic approach to women's health.

Inadequate reproductive health care limits female labour productivity — in some cases by **20%** costing the world 250 million years of productive life per annum, according to an Alan Guttmacher Institute 2004 study.

Nearly **60%** of the reasons given by women in Latin American and the Caribbean for either not entering or leaving the job market relate to their care-giving obligations, according to a 2007 statement from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Out of \$69 billion of overseas development assistance made available in 2003, only \$2.5 billion or **3.6%** was earmarked for gender equality as a significant or principal objective, according to a 2007 Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit (CPSU) Policy Brief.

If men and women had equal influence in decision-making, the incidence of underweight children less than three years old in South Asia would fall by up to **13%** resulting in 13.4 million fewer malnourished children; in Sub-Saharan Africa, an additional 1.7 million would be adequately nourished, UNICEF studies show.

Young Women on the Move

Funding gender equality and women's empowerment

Noha El-Shareif attended the 40th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York from February 25 - March 4. "It was a rich, rewarding and spectacular experience for me and many who attended," says El-Shareif. "The opportunity to meet and learn from women of all ages, cultures and various NGOs was an unforgettable learning experience."



Noha El-Shareif is a member of the YWCA of Canada and served as the World YWCA short-term intern for March. In this piece, she shares some insights from her experience at CSW.

The theme for this year's CSW was 'Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women', a topic of grave importance for societies around the world. Throughout CSW, panelists and participants discussed whether empowerment of women is defined as providing women with capital so they are able to contribute to their family's income to help reduce poverty or have the ability to educate their children. Or is empowerment increasing women's income by putting capital in their hands and providing them with greater self-esteem and control to have the ability to leave an abusive partner?

I had the opportunity to attend various sessions on this particular theme and to discuss how financing would help achieve gender equality and empowerment of women. Micro-financing programmes (also known as micro-credit) are among the key strategies that help women overcome poverty. A number of NGOs spoke of their success in initiating micro-financing programmes around the world while various members from the United Nations and NGOs questioned whether micro-financing

programmes alone can empower women.

At various other micro-financing sessions, panelists argued that lending should be part of the micro-financing process. Women who participate in micro-financing are not helped solely through a loan and may end up in further debt which leads to further poverty or even violence with a partner if their project is not successful. It is for these reasons that micro-financing must include savings and insurance for women receiving loans. A system must be created that helps women understand the concept of financing as well as place appropriate structures for the process to be more successful.

By the closing of CSW, it was agreed that putting power in women's hands is the biggest challenge to improving women's lives globally. In spite of progress around the world in women's political participation, legislation, education and income the basic problems that have dogged women for centuries remain. Even in wealthy and developed countries, like Canada (my country), there remain areas where women are unprotected against violence or extreme poverty. Women in the Aboriginal



People communities in particular suffer¹. So widespread are the disadvantages, it makes it difficult to isolate the worst places in the world for women to live. While some surveys rate women's problems by quality of life and others by health indicators, human rights groups point to countries where violations are so severe that even murder is routine. In Guatemala, an impoverished female faces domestic violence, rape and the second-highest rate of HIV after sub-Saharan Africa².

One of the most important lessons I have learnt by participating in CSW is the importance of achieving gender equality and the need to empower women on a global scale. Gender equality and the empowerment of women have a ripple effect on all societies around the world. The lack of funding for gender equality and empowerment of women continues to hinder the ability of 3.3 billion women and girls around the world to achieve their full potential. ■

1 Women and The Economy, A Project of UNPAC, retrieved March 2008 www.unpac.ca/economy/index2.html

2 Amnesty International, UK, Violence Against Women in Guatemala, retrieved March 2008, www.amnesty.org.uk

Findings from the AWID study called 'Where is the money for women's rights'?

showed that 'most women's organisations are small: two-thirds of this survey sample have annual budgets of less than USD 50,000. In 2005, 729 women's rights organisations worldwide had the collective income of only USD 79 million. More than half of the survey respondents are receiving less funding since 2000. This explains why

67%

of the survey respondents expressed that they find it more difficult to raise funds than five years ago (only 16% find it easier) with over half of the organisations having to use more staff and resources for fundraising efforts. On average, organisations say they would need twice their budget to do all they wanted to do in 2006.¹

1 AWID Where is the money for women's rights? The Second Funder Report, June 2007

Leading Change

Women take the lead in social change

The World YWCA's long struggle for the empowerment of women positioned the organisation as an important partner for the UN in providing substantive contribution to the early work of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and subsequent consultations that produced the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established in 1946 to prepare recommendations on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. One of CSW's major accomplishments was the UN General Assembly's adoption of CEDAW in 1979. The process of compiling the convention was facilitated by the first global conference on women, the 1975 International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City. The conference included a forum for non-governmental organisations, the NGO Tribune, chaired by **Mildred Persinger**, YWCA USA member and representative of the World YWCA to the UN. Three others conference on women followed: Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing 1995; two of which were chaired by YWCA representatives. **Elizabeth Palmer**, World YWCA General Secretary (1955-1978) chaired the 1980 NGO Forum in Copenhagen and **Dame Nita Barrow**, World YWCA President (1975-1983) chaired the 1985 NGO Forum in Nairobi.

Persinger, Palmer and Barrow were well-known and well respected within the international women's movement and the UN communities and this explains, in part, why they were chosen to chair the NGO Forums during the Decade for Women (1975-1985)¹. The World YWCA's long struggle for the empowerment of women also positioned the organisation as an important partner for the UN in providing substantive contribution to the content of the Convention on women and the work of the CSW. The YWCA's multifaceted emphasis on its Christian basis, on youth, and as an international membership movement gave it a broad base and wide viewpoint. From the early post World War II years, the World YWCA's unique experience of working at the grassroots enabled it to speak on the position of women around the world – from the poorest nations to the wealthiest.

"The World YWCA has made an impact on the women's movement" says Persinger, "if you look at the resolutions the UN passed on women's rights you will find the same language in the

resolution the World YWCA passed at its World YWCA Council long before."² As early as 1959, the World YWCA issued a statement voicing concern on the status of women and girls in the society. "Men and women as persons have the same civic, economic and social rights and responsibilities" the statement reads, "The YWCA should work towards the removal of customs and practise which are inconsistent with the principle and affect of the dignity of women".

"We were 20 years ahead of our time. In fact it was too soon – no one paid attention," says Palmer reflecting on the statements from the 1959 World YWCA Council in Mexico.

But the movement did not wait on the world to listen – instead it put to practise its convictions based on Christian principle. This attitude of 'doers' rather than 'sayers' saw the movement establish programmes on education for women and training to prepare women to take leadership and access decision-making.

Early on, the training offered by the YWCA was structured to give more



Mildred Persinger

YWCA USA member and representative of the World YWCA to the UN

Elizabeth Palmer

World YWCA General Secretary (1955-1978)

Dame Nita Barrow

World YWCA President (1975-1983)

than basic knowledge. "YWCA training does not simply provide skills," Barrow often said, "it stimulates people to think and to work out solutions to their problems with some concrete skills."³ Developing solution has been at the core of the World YWCA's notion of empowerment. Empowering women for the World YWCA has meant equipping them to become instrument for social change.

In 1958, a young Persinger attended a World YWCA seminar in Geneva, Switzerland. "The varied lectures, briefings, international experiences and brilliant leaders we encountered gave me the confidence to deal with UN issues,"⁴ she says. By 1975 when the UN agreed to hold an international meeting on women, Persinger was well equipped to plan the historic event. With only four months to prepare the unprecedented event, Persinger drew

on her experience, exposure and skills developed through the YWCA. "The YWCA made a professional out of me by giving me important work I had to learn how to do."

At least 100 panellists and 7000 delegates attended the historic NGO Forum in 1975. "They had an experience that changed their lives and encouraged millions of women to change the world," says Persinger, "Despite attempts to prevent dialogue and the development of a common agenda 7000 participants, mostly women, managed to agree on common goals and strategies to achieve them."⁵

The goals set forth at the first NGO Forum established a global shift towards viewing women's rights as human rights. Mildred Persinger, Elizabeth Palmer, and Nita Barrow collectively raised awareness of women's global status and made ad-

ressing women's needs a new priority within the UN system.⁶ Today, the World YWCA continues lobbying at the UN and participating and contributing to the international women's movement. ■

1 Garner, Karen. World YWCA Leaders and the UN Decade for Women. *Journal of International Women's Studies* Vol. 9 #1, 2007: p. 212-233.

2 El-Shareif, Noha. Interview. March 2008: UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York

3 Seymour-Jones, Carole. *Journey of faith. The history of the World YWCA 1945 - 1994*, Allison & Busby, London, 1994.

4 Szirom, Tricia Dr. *Women Leading Change*. Unpublished manuscript, 2005.

5 T. Szirom, p.35.

6 K. Garner, p.227

At least 100 panellists and 7000 delegates attended the historic NGO Forum in 1975. "They had an experience that changed their lives and encouraged millions of women to change the world," says Persinger.

HIV and AIDS

How CEDAW addresses HIV and AIDS

This excerpt from **Bringing Rights to Bear**, a recent publication from The Centre for Reproductive Rights, explores how CEDAW is addressing the spread of HIV and other sexually transmissible infections (STIs).

The CEDAW Committee has often expressed its general concern over the increasing prevalence of HIV and other STIs, noting specific instances where infection rates were higher among women than men. It has asked governments to take a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach in responding to HIV and AIDS. The Committee has frequently recommended the implementation of a multifaceted and holistic preventive programme. Specifically, the Committee has called on states to collect reliable information and disaggregated data to determine the prevalence of women infected with HIV. It has also recommended broad-based awareness raising, as well as practical prevention methods such as education about sexual health services for both males and females and promotion of condom use.

The Committee has addressed some of the factors contributing to the spread of HIV. It has acknowledged the link between violence against women—including rape and incest—and the high prevalence of HIV and other STIs in women. It has also recognised the connection between low economic status and HIV prevalence. In one case, the Committee expressed alarm about the rising infection rates among women and the direct link between harmful traditional practices and the spread of HIV. The Committee has highlighted the vulnerability of certain groups at greater risk of contracting HIV, such as young adults, women and girls

who have been trafficked and, most frequently, sex workers and noted increasing rates of infection within these specific groups.

With respect to treatment, the CEDAW Committee has expressed concern over the lack of care for people living with HIV, particularly women and girls. The Committee has recommended the introduction of proactive measures and incentives to attract health professionals to areas in need of health services, as well as the allocation of resources to respond to HIV, AIDS and STIs. The Committee has frequently commented on sex workers' need for access to health services and in one instance, commented on the need for more information on the situation of women in trafficking and prostitution and HIV infection.

The Committee has emphasised that people living with HIV must be guaranteed equal enjoyment of their human rights. While the Committee has not comprehensively addressed issues of discrimination, on at least one occasion, the Committee has requested that state parties adopt measures to eliminate discrimination against women and girls living with HIV. It has criticised the use of mandatory HIV testing as well as widespread attitudes contribute to the prevalence of HIV among sex workers.

The CEDAW Committee has recognised the gravity of rights violations relating to HIV and AIDS and is generally strong in making concrete recommendations on specific



measures for the prevention and treatment of HIV.

Human rights violations contribute to the spread of HIV and STIs. Governments have a duty to address these human rights violations and to adopt measures to prevent infections, as well as to protect the human rights of people living with HIV. Governments must ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information, counseling, testing, and services while also working to eliminate discrimination related to HIV and AIDS.

CEDAW has two general recommendations that specifically address the issues above:

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 15:
Avoidance of Discrimination against Women in National Strategies for the Prevention and Control of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

In its General Recommendation 15, the CEDAW Committee applies a gender analysis to the issue of HIV and AIDS and asks states parties to increase public awareness, particularly among women and children, about the risks and effects of HIV and AIDS. It calls for states parties' special attention to the rights and needs of women and children, including their particular vulnerability to HIV; it recommends

that states parties ensure participation of women in the primary health care system; and it asks states parties to include information on the effects of HIV on women, as well as measures taken to address the needs of HIV-positive women and to prevent discrimination.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 24:
Women and access to health care, including reproductive health as a basic right.

In its General Recommendation 24, the CEDAW Committee asks states parties to report on how they have addressed preventable illnesses that affect women, such as HIV and STIs. In particular, the committee acknowledges women and adolescent girls lack adequate access to information and services necessary to ensure sexual health, including HIV prevention and treatment.

The Committee also acknowledges the role unequal gender power relations play in making women and girls more vulnerable than men and boys to HIV. The Committee identifies sex workers, women who have been trafficked, and adolescents as particularly vulnerable, and calls upon states parties to ensure adolescents' rights to sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services by properly trained personnel in specially designed programmes that respect their rights to privacy and confidentiality. ■

XVII International AIDS Conference

On the Path to AIDS 2008

Over 25,000 participants and 3000 international media are expected to attend the XVII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2008) from August 3 to 8 in Mexico City, Mexico. AIDS 2008 will be the first International AIDS Conference ever held in Latin America and international planning committees are already hard at work developing an exciting programme. The theme, *UNIVERSAL ACTION NOW* underscores the urgency of the pandemic and the need for individual and collective action to bring about a solution.



AIDS 2008
XVII INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE
Mexico City, 3-8 August

CONFERENCE HUBS: AIDS 2008 NOW AVAILABLE TO THE WORLD

Although thousands of people will attend AIDS 2008, financial and geographical barriers will prevent millions more who would have liked to participate from attending. This year, the conference organisers have introduced an innovative initiative that will allow millions of people to benefit from the discussion, debate and information shared at AIDS 2008. Through an internet link, selected sessions from AIDS 2008 will be broadcast worldwide. With good facilitators, conference hubs will allow for focused regional discussion on issues related to HIV and AIDS. Member associations and partners are encouraged to apply to host a conference hub.

HOST A HUB

To host a conference hub you will need:

- A venue with adequate seating
- A computer, a projector, a screen and a decent sound system
- A good internet connection
- The ability and resources to advertise the hub to your target group

Please note that the conference organisers do not provide any funding for the hubs. However, they will promote official hubs through the AIDS 2008 web site and provide technical guidelines.

If you are interested in setting up a hub, please review details and guidelines listed on the AIDS 2008 website: www.aids2008.org.

ATTEND A HUB

If are interested in attending a hub, visit the AIDS 2008 website for a full list of venues. Registration for hubs will start in May. Conference hubs are a great way to make the conference cheaper, more widely available and allow anyone to take part in AIDS 2008.

EVENTS TO LOOK OUT FOR

MEXICO YOUTHFORCE PRE-CONFERENCE, JULY 31 TO AUGUST 2

In order to promote and strengthen young delegates' meaningful participation at AIDS 2008, the Mexico YouthForce is coordinating a three-day pre-conference for approximately 250 young activists registered for AIDS 2008.

The pre-conference will consist of informative and skills-building workshops around HIV and AIDS issues, ranging from scientific knowledge to effective political advocacy. Participants will also gain skills in research methodology, monitoring and evaluation, media and communications, as well as updated information on prevention strategies, harm reduction, and details on treatment. Participants will learn how to advocate policymakers on issues relevant to young people and how to deliver the YouthForce's advocacy messages at the conference and beyond.

More information: www.youthaids2008.org

LIVING 2008: THE POSITIVE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT – RECLAIMING THE ADVOCACY AGENDA

The LIVING 2008 Partnership is currently preparing the programme for LIVING 2008. Working groups are tackling four themes: Access to care, treatment and support; positive prevention; sexual and reproductive health and rights; and criminalisation. Policy questions will be sent to networks of people living with HIV (PLHIV) for consultation and the results will be available online by the end of April.

More information: www.living2008.org

ECUMENICAL PRE-CONFERENCE

Over 500 representatives and members of Christian

churches and organisations involved in responding to HIV and AIDS will meet from July 31 to August 2 at the Hotel Gran Melia in Mexico City. Plenary sessions, skills building workshops and daily worship will take place under the theme, 'Faith in Action Now!' There will be simultaneous interpretation into Spanish in the plenary sessions and at many of the workshops.

INTERFAITH PRAYER AND MEDITATION ROOM

An oasis for quiet prayer and meditation will be available at the Intermediate Level of the Centro Banamex during the conference. The room is available for individual prayer and meditation as well as organised prayers for Muslims, Buddhists, Roman Catholics and Protestants.

ARE YOU ATTENDING THE XVII INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE?

VISA INFORMATION

Information regarding the immigration process is available online. If you don't have a Mexican consulate/embassy that can issue a visa in your country you need to apply, in person, in another country. The list of Mexican embassies/consulates that process visa applications is available. Please check requirements of countries you are transiting through. Visa/immigration-related queries may be sent to visa@aids2008.org. You are encouraged to apply early.

Delegates must enter their passport details into the conference profile by June 20 (the date corresponds with Letter of Invitation requests). The data is shared with Mexican authorities.

CONFERENCE TRANSPORT

The conference takes place at Centro Banamex. Free shuttle busses to and from Centro Banamex are available from designated points. Plan transportation in advance and allocate extra time for delays and traffic congestion.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The International AIDS Society (IAS) needs volunteers from Mexico City and surrounding regions. Volunteers receive free access to sessions and one free meal per day. There is no financial assistance for volunteers not based in Mexico City. Foreign volunteers are required to meet Mexican customs and immigration requirements.

More information: <http://www.aids2008.org/>

The World YWCA is a member of the International AIDS Society Conference Coordinating Committee representing global civil society (women, youth and faith-based groups).

People

Joyce Feinberg, Daniela Schwiefert, Leanne Baumung,
Joy Yakubu, Sarah Davies, Caterina Lemp Bitsacopoulos



FAREWELL

Joyce Feinberg has returned to El Paso, Texas, USA. Joyce joined the World YWCA in 2005 as the fundraising coordinator. Joyce played an important role in the Power to Change Campaign and the Honouring Women Leaders programme. She contributed a great deal to the movement by developing training models and conducting training on fundraising for member associations.

The World YWCA also bid farewell to **Daniela Schwiefert**. From February 2006, Daniela served as the World YWCA Council Coordinator. Daniela contributed to a successful World YWCA Council in Kenya. She is currently back in university studying ecotourism.

The World YWCA will dearly miss both women and wishes them the very best in their future endeavours.

WELCOME

In January 2008, the World YWCA welcomed two new interns, Leanne Baumung from the YWCA of Kauai in Hawaii, USA and Joy Yakubu from the YWCA of Jos in Nigeria.

Leanne Baumung graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa with a major in English and a minor in French. Committed to advocating for the elimination of violence against women, she worked as the Prevention Educator for Sexual Assault Treatment Program at her local YWCA. **Joy Yakubu** is from Plateau State in northern Nigeria, an area that has experienced conflict and unrest for several years. As a Regional Youth Coordinator for the YWCA of Nigeria, Joy represented young women from northern Nigeria at national meetings. Joy holds a diploma in Mass Communications from the Kaduna Polytechnic, Nigeria and is currently pursuing a degree in English at the University of Jos.

The interns will spend a year at the World YWCA developing their skills and contributing to the work of the organisation; Leanne in advocacy and Joy in communications.

Sarah Davies, former intern at the World YWCA, has joined the Communications Department as Communications Assistant. Sarah, a former Executive Committee member of the YWCA of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, has a Bachelor Degree in Communications Studies with an emphasis on Public Relations. Sarah previously worked in New Zealand for the Health and Disability Commissioner as the Education Co-ordinator and for the Public Prison Service in Human Resources.

Caterina Lemp Bitsacopoulos is the new Administrative Assistant for the Regional Programme Directors for America/Caribbean and Asia/Pacific. Caterina graduated from the University of Playa Ancha, Valparaíso, Chile with a degree in Journalism. She has been involved with the YWCA for more than eight years. Before joining the World YWCA as a one-year intern for 2007, Caterina worked as the Communications Assistant for the YWCA of Chile and coordinator for the YWCA of Chile headquarters in Viña del Mar.

NEW GENERAL SECRETARIES AND PRESIDENTS

NEW PRESIDENTS:

YWCA of Cameroon - Marie Madeleine Nono (Ngouabou)
YWCA of Ireland - Winnie Wilmot
YWCA of Uganda - Sarah Apadet
YWCA of Uruguay - Dra. Maria Elena Barañano
YWCA of Colombia - Judith Melo Barrera
YWCA of Peru - Mery de Piña
YWCA of USA - Tracy Lakatua

NEW GENERAL SECRETARIES:

YWCA of Cameroon - Cezanne Rose Nyemb
YWCA of Uganda - Leah Kisesi
YWCA of Bolivia - Elizabeth R. Iturri de Arenas

IN MEMORIAM

The World YWCA expresses its deepest sympathy to family and friends of **Athena Tsouderos Athanasiou**, former World YWCA President and President of the National Board of the YWCA of Greece.

Ms Athanasiou was first elected to the World YWCA Executive Committee in 1963, and was Chairperson of the Group of Consultants on Refugee work during that period. In 1967 at the World YWCA Council in Melbourne, Australia, she was elected President of the World YWCA, a post she held until 1975. In addition to her responsibilities for the World YWCA Movement, she served as President of the National Board of the YWCA of Greece and President of the YWCA of Athens. Ms Athanasiou had a special interest in advocating for the rights of refugees and migrants, a priority issue for the YWCA of Greece. She was also particularly interested in promoting adult and vocational education.

The ecumenical aspects of the work of the YWCA also attracted the attention of Ms Athanasiou. She participated in the first encounters of women's organisation with Roman Catholic and Orthodox groups. She represented her own church, the Greek Orthodox, on the Women's Ecumenical liaison Group of the World Council of Churches and represented the World YWCA at several ecumenical meetings.

The World YWCA sends sincere condolences to her family and friends and appreciation for her wonderful life of service to the YWCA of Greece and the World YWCA.



Supporters

Yvonne Albon **Great Britain**

Anonymous gifts in honour of Mandy Nogarede **Switzerland**

Rose Ann Battelle **USA**

Jane Bennett (**Switzerland**) in honour of Genevieve Jacques and Juliarty Masson Soejarman

Dorritt Bent **Jamaica**

Hedy Berthoud **Switzerland**

Susan Brennan **Australia**

Selina C. Browne **Trinidad & Tobago**

Joan Bruce **USA**

Elaine Carlson **USA**

Ngoc Xuan Chau-Nguyen (**Switzerland**) in honour of Elizabeth Palmer

Marguerite Chauvet **Switzerland**

Annalisa Coisson **Italy**

Josephine Daugherty **USA**

J. Myrna Decker **USA**

Jet Den Hollander (**France**) in honour of Musimbi Kanyoro

Bonnie Fatio-Pollock **Switzerland**

Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund **USA**

Natalie Fisher Spalton **Switzerland**

Carolyn Flowers **USA**

Jo Rita Gann **USA**

Barbara Glass **USA**

Catherine Anny Graf-Stern **Switzerland**

Jeanette Hess (**USA**) in honour of Jo Uehara

Judith Myrick **USA**

Kaburo Kobia **Switzerland**

Claude Le Jeune **Belgium**

Hyerin Sarah Lee **Korea**

Microsoft Giving Campaign **USA**

Mildred E. Morrison (**USA**) in honour of Musimbi Kanyoro

Sheila Moyes (**Great Britain**) in remembrance of Athena Athanassiou

Elizabeth Palmer (**USA**) in honour of Musimbi Kanyoro

Alice Paquier **Switzerland**

Mildred Persinger (**USA**) in honour of Musimbi Kanyoro

Kay Philips **USA**

Odette Pollien **Switzerland**

Conchita Poncini (**Switzerland**) in honour of Musimbi Kanyoro

Betty Jo Swayze Anderson **USA**

Constance A. Tate **USA**

Jo Sachiko Uehara **USA**

Ana Villanueva (**Switzerland**) in honour of Musimbi Kanyoro

Kathrin Vogler **Switzerland**

Sabine von der Mühl **Switzerland**

Randall K. Wilde **USA**

Marilyn E. Williams **USA**

Dr. Joanne Yamauchi (**USA**) in honour of Jo Uehara

YMCA of Denmark **Denmark**

YMCA of Norway Norges KFUK KFUM (**Norway**) in honour of women leaders

YWCA of Canberra **Australia**

YWCA of **Finland**

YWCA of **Japan**

YWCA of **Korea**

YWCA of **USA**

YWCA of El Paso del Norte Region, TX **USA**

YWCA of Mid-Atlantic Region **USA**

YWCA of Sauk Valley, IL **USA**

Geeske Zanen **Netherlands**

Inge Zinn-Pohl **Switzerland**

Carol Zundel **France**



AIDS 2008

XVII INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE

Mexico City, 3-8 August



International Chair of the Conference:

Pedro Cahn, Argentina

Local Co-Chair:

Luis Soto-Ramirez, Mexico

www.aids2008.org