

CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2010

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

Over the last five years women's rights organizations and civil society has tirelessly monitored the United Nations Reform process of the UN gender equality architecture. Finally, last month we witnessed the establishment of UN Women through the UN resolution [A/64/L.56](#). Member States unanimously voted to establish a new hybrid entity, which consolidates DAW, OSAGI, UNIFEM, and INSTRAW, and strengthens the UN's work on gender equality and women's empowerment.

As a result of civil society's tireless efforts and a number of stalwart Member States, UN Women has become a reality and as the UN moves forward into the next stage of implementation, we must ask ourselves how civil society will participate in the process as well as in the entity. What mechanisms will be established for partnerships with local and regional NGOs in your country and what is next for UN Women and civil society? In the coming months, UN Women will undergo a transitional phase through January 2011. During this period, the UN Secretary-General will appoint the Under-Secretary-General and the GEAR Campaign will continue to monitor the entity through its establishment.

Below you will find helpful resources that explain further what you can do to emphasize the importance of civil society partnerships within UN Women. Remember, the resolution, "requests the head of the entity to continue the existing practice of effective consultation with civil society organizations." What *that* relationship looks like has yet to be realized and we must act now to ensure our participation is effectively integrated.

Best Regards,

[GEAR Campaign Working Group](#)

Take action!

Let your government know that you support GEAR. Reach out to your government and let them know you are paying close attention to the next steps in the development of UN Women.

Speak with your colleagues, friends, and member organizations about the GEAR Campaign. Inform others about the new UN gender equality entity and about the new Global GEAR Campaign website www.gearcampaign.org.

NEWS ON THE GEAR PROCESS AT THE UN

USG Appointment

As a mechanism to ensure the future appointed Under-Secretary-General (USG) is qualified to lead UN Women, the GEAR Campaign has developed a number of questions that the USG should be prepared to answer. These questions build upon the GEAR Campaign USG criteria which illustrate the commitment the leader must have to gender equality and women's empowerment/human rights.

[Read the [USG Questions](#)]

Elections of the Executive Board

In an informal meeting on July 30, ECOSOC members discussed the election of members of the UN Women Executive Board. Areas left ambiguous in the GA's September 2009 Resolution generated debate, and ECOSOC will need to meet again in late August or early September to resolve the outstanding issues. How will the regional groups select their candidates for election? Will the seats for donor countries be determined before the regional groups select theirs? And which developing countries have a say in selecting their representatives on the Board? These questions must be answered soon, as it is hoped that the first elections of the new governing body will take place in early October, giving elected members time to prepare for their new roles beginning January 1, 2011.

RECENT GEAR CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT

Call to Action

The GEAR Campaign has developed a *Call to Action* for the next stage of advocacy for the new UN Women! The steps mapped out in the document call for stronger civil society advocacy to demand establish meaningful, systematic, and diverse civil society participation at all levels; to claim its place in the transition period; to demand a dynamic and relevant content agenda for UN Women; to ensure that UN Member States aim for \$1 Billion in funding for UN Women; and to demand a powerful, capable and effective leaders for UN Women.

[Read the [Call to Action](#)]

INSIDE THE GEAR CAMPAIGN

Feedback from Focal Points

Since the GEAR Campaign's inception, the Working Group has been a critical part of the campaign's success. That said, the facilitation group recently posed the following questions to the GEAR Campaign Focal Points about their participation in the Campaign over the last five years to mark their roles in the establishment of UN Women.

- How has your organization played a role in the GEAR Campaign over the last few years?
- What advocacy strategies have been most effective?
- How did you do to celebrate the resolution of UN Women?
- What are your hopes for the new entity and what are some of your concerns?

The responses are below.

AFRICA (Francophone): SERVITAS Cameroon, Chantal Kambiwa



SERVITAS Cameroon has played an important role in the GEAR Campaign by relying on its wide network of women's organizations in Africa. These organizations have steadily maintained contact with the ministries and institutions responsible for gender issues in order to monitor the GEAR Campaign. The meetings with decision makers became more efficient when SERVITAS Cameroon assisted the local women's organizations. The messages that have encouraged these organizations and decision makers in Africa to join GEAR were that the new entity has the capacity and efficiency to better tackle gender issues on the ground, and that civil society plays a key role within it. The rural women who were with me in my village of Bangoulap (West Cameroon) at the time that the news came in, burst into the same songs of joy that is sung when a

child is born to a family, in order to wish this newborn a warm welcome! SERVITAS Cameroon officially celebrated the creation of UN Women, during the 48th year of African Women's Day (31 July), whose regional launch for the coast took place on 29 July in Douala (Cameroon). During the ceremony, around 100 representatives from women's organizations of eight African countries as well as the authorities present, followed with enthusiasm my presentation on how UN Women was founded. This presentation was the initiative of Emilienne Elong, the head of *Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille pour la région du littoral* (The Promotion of Women and the Family for the Coastal Region) - Cameroon (see photo). We hope that UN Women will quickly begin operations and that it will indeed have an ambitious and stable budget. The mechanism that will allow civil society to be effectively present in UN Women on the field is our responsibility.

For more information about the GEAR Campaign
email gearcampaign@gmail.com and visit www.gearcampaign.org.

AFRICA (Anglophone): The African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), Naisola Likimani



African women celebrate the long-awaited creation of "UN Women". Our hope is that the expanded mandate of UN Women will lead to concrete changes in the opportunities available to girls and women in Africa. We look forward to the appointment of a strong, dedicated Under Secretary General who will set the tone for the organization and engage with women's civil society organizations at all levels.

The European GEAR Campaign Working Group



Since 2007 organisations and networks in Europe have gathered together informally to work jointly and strategize around the GEAR campaign in the GEAR European Working Group. Representatives of the partaking organisations meet through conference calls on a regular basis and undertake joint lobby and advocacy efforts, share information received from governments members have been talking to as well as discuss and contribute to the global GEAR campaign. Since 2007, the European Working Group engaged in the development of research and analysis in order to provide information for European Civil Society and policy makers. Position papers and lobbying letters developed by

the Working Group were officially sent to European governments and UN missions and used in bilateral work with governments. The European GEAR Campaign Working Group developed mechanisms to keep civil society organisations updated and to engage them in lobbying, including through the launch of the European GEAR Campaign website <http://www.gearcampaign.org/> in April 2009 (now the global GEAR Campaign website), the provision of an easy way for individuals and organisations to participate in the Campaign through email actions on the website and the creation of an e-newsletter. The European GEAR Campaign Working Group also produced the "New Times for Women", a fake newspaper celebrating GEAR, which was very visible during the 2010 CSW meeting (picture).

LATIN AMERICA: Fundacion Para Estudio e Investigacion De la Mujer (FEIM), Mabel Bianco



As the Latin America Regional Focal Point we keep women's groups informed about the GEAR Campaign global discussions, and collect information about what we need as women's groups and what we should request the new entity to do. Personally, I have advocated at the regional level with governments and Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York and I have disseminated information to the press and coordinated with our partner groups and networks in other countries in the region to contact

For more information about the GEAR Campaign
email gearcampaign@gmail.com and visit www.gearcampaign.org.

and inform the press as widely as possible. The most effective advocacy strategies were the regional meetings we organized, in which the women's groups discussed and defined a joint advocacy action and produced a joint statement, which we then used to do advocacy at country level. We will promote activities in each country to celebrate the new entity. About the future of the new entity, I hope the new Under-Secretary-General elected to head UN Women will be a woman from the South, and a feminist with a strong commitment to the women's movement. My main concern is that women's groups are not incorporated into the governability of the new entity at the international as well as regional and national levels. Finally, I hope that country programs are extended and strengthened.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA: Collective for Research and Training on Development – Action (CRTD.A), Lina Abou Habib



CRTD.A became the MENA regional focal point in mid-2009 and as such, is the newcomer in the group. As soon as we took on this role, we started a wide range communication and information sharing on the GEAR Campaign. Key materials were translated and disseminated into Arabic. This paved the way for local and regional sharing and consultation with NGOs, women groups, as well as other civil society organizations. Ongoing electronic communication was the most effective strategy in informing women

groups and civil society organizations about the process leading up to the establishment of UN Women. However, the nature of the regimes in power in the MENA region was challenging and the fact that many activist women and feminist organizations were independent and often on opposing sides of the regime meant that direct lobbying of state institutions was often impossible. Despite this, extensive lobbying took place when the Under-Secretary-General nominations to head the entity materialized. At that moment we actively were lobbying in the region since there were opposing nominees vying for the leadership position, one which was a known conservative. We are concerned that the new entity will mutate into a UN bureaucracy and we are increasingly concerned with the influence of several MENA states in influencing this entity particularly in terms of its agenda as well as its direct linkage with independent feminist groups in the region. The selection of the head of the entity and the mechanism of collaboration and coordination with feminist groups and women organizations will be critical in dissipating these concerns.

SOUTH ASIA: South Asian Campaign for Gender Equality, Bandana Rana and Samjhana Kachhyapati



Saathi as the secretariat of SACGE (South Asian Campaign for Gender Equality) has played a crucial role in garnering wider support and solidarity for the advancement of

women's human rights and gender equality at national and regional levels through awareness, interactions, dialogues, discussions, meetings with the Co-Chair of the Coherence Panel, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaukat Aziz as well as other members of the Coherence Panel and national governments. Regional meetings as well as meetings with national women's commission and other national machineries have been effective. More than that the signature campaign at national, regional and global level has been the most effective advocacy strategy in garnering wider support and solidarity from grass root to government, national to international NGOs. SACGE is soon organizing a special program to mark this celebration where UN representatives, government representatives, media, campaign members and senior political leaders who contributed to GEAR will be invited. We hope that this new women's entity at the UN will have accountability, adequate authority, resources and active presence at national level and will be successful in addressing women's needs at ground level.

Huairou Commission (HC), Pam Ransom



The Huairou Commission has been active in the GEAR New York lobby group for several years. The Huairou Commission's role in the GEAR Campaign is unique because it actively brings grassroots women's priorities and concerns to the global women's movement. In playing this role HC aims to make sure that grassroots

women leaders from community-based organizations are viewed as stakeholders in the development of UN Women. We have encouraged our networks at the regional and national level to engage with Ministries of Women's Affairs and Foreign Affairs on the issues. We have sent memo's and communications about the GEAR process to our networks. Our focus has been to have grassroots women and networks well informed about the process and have also sought to obtain their views and input. We are currently seeking input on suggested policy priorities for the new entity, views about successes and challenges in past UN work on women and visions for the future structure. At a recent Huairou sponsored meeting, we focused on analyzing the implications of the resolution and also engaged with key grassroots women's leaders, partner organizations, government and UN agency representatives. This resulted in a position paper that was released to our global network shortly after passage, about the resolution that addressed our primary hopes, questions about the implications for the Huairou Commission to ensure that the new entity works to actively reach out, and seeks to find creative ways to engage women, particularly grassroots women in decision-making. This might involve strategies for direct input such as public hearings, advisory councils etc. It is also important for significant funding to be specifically targeted directly to grassroots women's organizations to address their priorities. We believe that we need to work closely to make sure that new strategies are developed to track progress

For more information about the GEAR Campaign
email gearcampaign@gmail.com and visit www.gearcampaign.org.

on grassroots women's empowerment agency should also work towards through a set of key indicators that are integrating community managed, defined and owned by grassroots women community designed and community themselves. It is critical that the new monitored tracking systems.

GEAR on YouTube

Recently, GEAR Campaign advocates were interviewed by May Akale of Baha'i International. The interviewees include: Charlotte Bunch (Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University), Bani Dugal (Baha'i International), and Rachel Harris (Women's Environment Development Organization). The GEAR representatives discuss about the history of the GEAR Campaign, the advocacy that led to the establishment of UN Women, and some of the challenges that UN Women might face.

[Watch the [video](#)]