



IFUW Update – 27 August 2014

International News Round-Up: August 2014



“The ‘new girls’ club’: Girls’ summit wants women’s issues on the G20 agenda”

(The Washington Post, 25 August 2014)

The 2014 G(irls)20 Summit on 25 - 26 August in Sydney, Australia, saw female delegates from the G20 countries as well as representatives from the European and African Unions, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region convene to discuss getting women’s issues on the G20 political agenda. The purpose of the forum is to facilitate the delegates, aged 18 – 20, to brainstorm ways in which “the G20 Summit can better the lives of women and girls through concrete education and empowerment initiatives.” Youth unemployment and the role of women in global agriculture are amongst the topics on the 2014 agenda. [Read more.](#)

“South Africa: Women At the Heart of Food Production” (All Africa, 24 August 2014)

Female farmers account for 70% of all food produced across the continent of Africa, as highlighted recently by South Africa’s Department for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) Female Entrepreneur of the Year Awards. Speaking at the awards, the DAFF Minister Mr. Senzeni Zokwana noted that “[i]t is about time we highlight the contribution made by women in the sector that is often regarded as the terrain of men”. The event was organised as part of the South African government’s Programme of Action that seeks to contribute to mainstreaming of women, youth and people with disabilities in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, through food security, job creation, economic growth and poverty alleviation. [Read more.](#)

“Gender pay gap: female bosses earn 35% less than male colleagues” (The Guardian, 19 August 2014)

Despite the introduction of the Equality Pay Act over 40 years ago in Great Britain, the gender pay gap is still a problem: female leaders would have to work until age 80 to catch up with their male colleagues. A recent report published by Chartered Management Institute (CMI) showed that women are only earning 77% of what men earn in full-time comparable jobs. Ann Francke, Chief Executive of CMI highlighted apathy and ignorance amongst the causes of the pay gap, where she maintained that companies needed to conduct internal surveys to identify the discrepancies. A disinclination to pursue

legal action in cases of pay discrimination as well as a reluctance to ask for a raise in salary were also factors to be considered in explaining the gender pay gap. [Read more.](#)

“Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg on tech's diversity gap” (USA Today, 15 August 2014)

During a recent interview, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg, explained that the gender gap in technology needed to be tackled by addressing the education system, including changing stereotypes about girls and women in maths and science. Emphasising that she would like to see a 50:50 uptake between men and women in technology fields, Ms. Sandberg explained that society suffered from a “tyranny of low expectations”. To close the gender gap in the industry, there must be a supply of women graduates within the field, which was highlighted not to be the case: “Girls are at 18% of computer science college majors. We can't go much above 18% in our [computer] coders if there's only 18% coming into the workplace, and at every level, more boys stay in than girls in every industry. In order to move numbers, we all understand that we have to increase the numbers going into the funnel.” [Read more.](#)

“First female winner for Fields maths medal” (BBC News, 12 August 2014)

Professor Maryam Mirzakhani became the first ever female recipient of the Fields Medal in mathematics. Originally from Iran and currently teaching at Stanford University, California, Professor Mirzakhani is the 55th mathematician to receive the prize since it was founded in 1936 by the International Mathematical Union (IMU). The hope is that more girls and women will be inspired to enter mathematics, where despite being considered a “male preserve”, the discipline has nonetheless benefitted from the contributions of women mathematicians for centuries. Professor Mirzakhani's recognition has been hailed widely by academics, where her seminal research on complex geometry earned her the highly esteemed award. [Read more.](#) IFUW took the opportunity to write to Professor Mirzakhani to congratulate her on the monumental award and to commend her on the academic contribution she has made to the field of mathematics.

“Companies Do Better With Women Leaders (But Women Need More Confidence To Lead), Study Says” (Forbes, 5 August 2014)

At 50% participation, Canada tops the ranks in terms of women in leadership positions, while Japan and India lag far behind accounting for only 8% and 14% respectively. The results are based on a study by Development Dimension International (DDI), which found that women hold just 28% of leadership positions across 2,000 organisations in the 48 countries examined. Companies with higher proportions of women in leadership roles perform the best financially. Higher confidence levels amongst male leaders, more international experience and discrimination in the workplace were identified as factors influencing the gender gap. [Read more.](#)



Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. IFUW is in special consultative status with ECOSOC and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO.

International Federation of University Women, Fédération Internationale des Femmes Diplômées des Universités

10, rue du Lac, CH-1207 Geneva, Switzerland; Tel: (+41 22) 731 23 80; Fax: (+41 22) 738 04 40

E-mail: ifuw@ifuw.org Website: <http://www.ifuw.org>