

International Women's Day- UNESCO - Paris- 08 March 2014

As a global priority of the UNESCO Action Plan for 2014-2021, Gender Equality (GE), a fundamental human right, is promoted through the major programmes developed in all areas of UNESCO, classified as Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences and Culture sectors (1).

Introduced by Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General and Ms S. Gulser Corat, Director of the Division for Gender Equality, the 2014 International Women's Day has merrily celebrated countries initiatives and women's contributions and roles in the progression to "**Gender Equality: a key to a best world**".

Two conferences were organized:

- **Native women of Quebec: between art and activism** - 5 March
- **Equality for women is progress for all - Views from the small island developing states (SIDS)**- 7 March

Panelists : Ms Joyleen Baklai Temengil (Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs- Palau, H.E. Mrs Laura Faxas (Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to UNESCO) and H.E. Mr Bernard Shamlaye (Ambassador of Seychelles to UNESCO), all underlined that, in spite of some progress, the pace towards GE still remains slow, particularly in some countries including SIDS (2), where extreme poverty, vulnerability, low income and both political and cultural issues brake the mentality change required in GE achievement. In addition to Education Programmes for women and men, for girls and boys , some tools such as special finance fundings, microcredits, ICT, social mediation ... were proposed in order to empower women in the situations where they suffer particular forms of inequality and discrimination. The Education Programmes include

- Primary and secondary Education,
- Education for health (in order to prevent teen age pregnancies and diseases)
- Trainings to develop specific scientific and technical abilities need to face sustainable development issues and disaster management.
- Implementation of a new concept called "positive masculinity", that means make men more gender-sensible.

In the **UNESCO's promise: GE- a global priority**, the organization calls to strengthened partnerships and strategic alliances with various institutions, in order to reach GE on 2021.

UNESCO took advantage of IWD to celebrate female artists , by hosting a beautiful exhibition displaying videos, paintings, photographs, traditional textiles realised by female artists from Canada, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Federation of Russia, Bolivia, Peru, Bangladesh and Benin (visible from 7 to 20 March).

On Thursday 6 March, a forum organized by the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee (3) gathered 1000 young people (18- 35 years old) at UNESCO HEADQUARTER on the theme: "**Education, Sport and cultural Diversity: New ways to promote human rights around the world**". 10 leader projects, from the five continents, were presented and won a prestigious UNESCO certification (4).

1) UNESCO's Promise: Gender Equality- a global Priority- ODG-2014/WS/1

- 2) Full report at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/BSP/GENDER/PDF/SIDS.pdf>
- 3) Dominique Ciavatti and Narges ben Mouklla were IFUW members involved in the 1st Forum working group.
- 4) Selected projects:

- "Agua Riobamba" (Ecuador): access to safe drinking water (in partnership with AVSF)
 - Association from Ghana: sport and handicaped children
 - "Haïti Concertaction": access to safe drinking water, fruits and trees planting (in partnership with UNICEF)
 - "Girls to the top" (France, India, Nepal): GE promotion through alpinism
 - "A kick to racism: play with me" (in collaboration with Juventus Football Club- Turin- Italia): migrants integration through sport
 - "I value my language" (Girl Guides and Scouts from Madagascar): workshops to learn and master Malagasy language and traditional dances
 - "La force des femmes" (National Union of Moroccan Women): Women training in literacy, empowerment, law, family issues (with the European union)
 - Citizen Forums (Antonio Montesinos Centre - Mexico): Advocacy tools for Rights to water
 - "Callescuella/ Steet school" (Paraguay): Villa 9 de Marzo, an hostel where children rights are better respected
- Craftsmen Association (Togo): Center for training young people with a double objective: cultural and professional.

Eliane DIDIER, IFUW representative

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