

FEBRUARY e-BULLETIN

Dear UNIFEM members and supporters

Welcome to all members and supporters of UNIFEM. Our regular e-bulletins keep you in touch with news which we hope you will find interesting. Please also visit our website www.unifemuk.org for more information about activities.

February has been particularly busy with meetings and discussions prior to the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York which marks the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. In particular, there is a focus on the new UN women's agency as governments discuss its strategic and operational roles, organisation and funding.

UNIFEM was instrumental in bringing four Afghan women to the UK at the time of the London Conference on Afghanistan and there is a short report below.

I am pleased to announce that we will be working with the White Ribbon Campaign which brings together men fighting to counter violence against women. Read more below.

Finally, I hope you will be able to attend or hold an event to celebrate **International Women's Day** on or around 8th March. The theme this year is **Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities: Progress for All**.

With best wishes
Jan Grasty
President – UK National Committee for UNIFEM

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NEWS FROM THE UK

Inter-departmental meeting on the women's agency at the UN

Jan Grasty represented UNIFEM at a roundtable discussion on the formation of the women's agency at the UN. The event was organised by the Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Government Equalities Office.

The meeting of representatives from about 40 NGOs, which began with a strong endorsement by ministers Harriet Harman MP and Gareth Thomas MP for the establishment and proper funding of the

agency, was an opportunity to debate and question the role of the new women's agency, the barriers to its success and the scope of its operations. Additional comments were contributed at a later date and these will inform future discussions.

UNIFEM UK and White Ribbon Campaign UK in partnership

Representatives of UNIFEM UK and the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) UK met in January to discuss the possibilities for working in partnership. WRC UK is a branch of a global organisation of men campaigning to end men's violence against women.

The first outcome of the discussions is a joint educational workshop which will take place at Southfields Community College in SW London to coincide with the week of International Women's Day. The workshop will be a fitting opportunity to launch the partnership, introducing students to the work of both UNIFEM and WRC and engaging them in interactive tasks. We also hope that later in the year Chris Green of WRC will be one of the guest speakers at a UNIFEM event on violence against women.

We see the partnership as an important element in taking forward UNIFEM's current **SAY NO - UNITE** campaign to end violence against women.

For more information about the activities of WRC in the UK, go to www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk

Human Rights central to Afghanistan solution

Four Afghan women civil society leaders, supported by UNIFEM, travelled to London to lobby the conference on Afghanistan hosted by the UK Government on 28th January. Their message was that women's human rights are critical to achieving stability and reconciliation.



The women's mission was sponsored by UNIFEM and the Washington-based Institute for Inclusive Security who also facilitated extensive consultations through the Women's Afghan Network before the conference. The result was that a package of concrete recommendations on priorities for security, development and governance was presented on the day.

GAPS UK (Gender Action for Peace & Security) was able to organise a meeting at Westminster the day before the Conference to hear from the women's mission. UNIFEM UK President Jan Grasty attended. There was also good media coverage throughout the women's visit.

One of the conference delegates, Arzo Qanih, read a statement at the plenary session on 28th January on behalf of the Afghan Women's Network. The statement emphasised that women must have a voice in decision making about the country's future, that women's rights must not be bargained away in efforts to reconcile competing factions, that the military surge must be complemented by support for recovery and long-term reconstruction, and that in seeking to enhance the rule of law, women's rights must be protected.

For the full statement go to http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1021

When the final Conference communiqué was released there was evidence that some of the women's key messages had been incorporated. For example, the Afghan government and its international partners agreed that "*human rights must be at the heart of any efforts to seek a political solution to the conflict through negotiations and incentive packages directed to the Taliban*".

A full copy of the Afghan Women's Network's response to the closing communiqué can be found at http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1019

NEWS FROM UNIFEM NEW YORK

UNIFEM provides support and protection for Haiti's women

One month on from the devastating earthquake, the UNIFEM team in Haiti is working alongside NGO partners to strengthen services to victims of gender-based violence in women's centres and temporary shelters in Port-au-Prince and Jacmel.



Earthquake victims receive medical treatment at an encampment in front of the Presidential Palace

UNIFEM has now called for US\$7 million to rebuild women's shelters, expand the provision of urgently needed services and protect women and their communities. Funds raised will be channelled towards urgent humanitarian and early recovery efforts.

Kathy Mangones, the UNIFEM Country Programme Coordinator for Haiti, reflects on the increased danger of sexual and gender based violence facing female survivors and the renewed importance of women's roles as "caregivers, economic actors and as the builders of community" in "[Equality is the path – responding today and building the future in Haiti](#)"

Further details and regular updates on UNIFEM's work in Haiti can be found on the New York website page www.unifem.org/worldwide/americas_caribbean/haiti_crisis.php

Don't forget - you can donate online to the UNIFEM appeal through New York at https://secure.globalproblems-globalsolutions.org/site/Donation2?df_id=1960&1960.donation=form1

We are also happy to receive donations in the post and to send them on to New York; make your cheque out to UNIFEM UK, note 'Haiti appeal' on the back, and send it to:
UNIFEM UK, BM Box 6658, London WC1N 3XX

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday, 8th March, is **International Women's Day** and in the first two weeks of March UNIFEM members across the UK will be taking part in events and activities to mark the occasion.

Here are some examples:

- London members will be collecting donations for UNIFEM projects at Canary Wharf station
- UNIFEM in Cambridge has organised two film showings at Café Project on 5th and 16th March
- Yorkshire members will be attending the IWD service at Selby Abbey hosted by local Soroptimists
- Members in Edinburgh will be attending a Scottish Women's Convention IWD event on 6th March
- One of our Northern Ireland members will perform at an IWD concert in the Ulster Hall, Belfast

Contact local branches via our website for further information.

Other UNIFEM events coming up:-

The work of the UN in Gaza

The guest speaker at a public meeting organised jointly by UNIFEM and the United Nations Association in Edinburgh will be **Hind El Arabi**, Women's Programme Officer with UNRWA in Gaza.

Hind is visiting Edinburgh at the invitation of Hadeel, the Palestinian Fairtrade shop in Edinburgh in connection with Fairtrade fortnight.

Date and time: **Monday, 1st March** at 5.30pm
Venue: St Georges West Church, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh
Contact: edinburgh@unifemuk.org

News from the 2010 session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

UNIFEM in Edinburgh have invited members of other women's groups to join them for a coffee morning with guest speaker UNIFEM UK President **Jan Grasty**. Jan will be reporting on the 54th session of the CSW in New York which she will be attending earlier in March.

Date and time: **Tuesday, 30 March** at 10.30am
Venue: Royal Overseas League, 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh
Admission: £3.50 including coffee and biscuits
Contact: edinburgh@unifemuk.org

The coffee morning will be preceded by the **UNIFEM in Edinburgh AGM** which will run from 10am for 30 minutes and is open to members only.

UNIFEM in Northern Ireland evening event

Guest speaker at this open meeting will be NI Branch member **Liz Fleming** talking about her recent experiences taking part in a Habitat project to build houses for women in Bangalore, India.

Date and time: **Monday, 12th April** at 7.00pm
Venue: Belmont Tower, Belmont Road, Belfast
Contact: northernireland@unifemuk.org

UNIFEM in Edinburgh coffee morning

Guest speaker to be confirmed

Date and time: **Tuesday, 20th April** at 10am for 10.30am
Venue: Royal Overseas League, 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh
Admission: £3.50 including coffee and biscuits
Contact: edinburgh@unifemuk.org

UNIFEM in London evening event

Guest speaker will be **Alice Okoko** from **Women in Africa**, a UK registered charity. The focus of Alice's work has been to raise awareness internationally of human rights abuses in Nigeria and to empower African women. The event is open to all – refreshments available.

Date and time: **Wednesday, 28 April** from 6.45pm
Venue: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association room, Houses of Parliament
To book, contact: london@unifemuk.org

The event will be preceded by the **UNIFEM in London AGM** which will run for about 30 minutes from 5.45pm and is open to members only.

The national Annual General Meeting of UNIFEM UK will be held in London on the afternoon of Saturday, 15 May, from 1pm to 5pm in the Conference Room at Fortnum and Mason.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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