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First National Action Plan report released



The first report on the implementation of an action plan of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon was released Thursday, along with a new database to track the initiative's future progress. "Today we are launching the first official report on the first year of the implementation of the National Action Plan ... it covers the work implemented by ministries and NGOs and international organizations until 2013," Rita Chemaly, a project development consultant at the National Commission for Lebanese Women, told The Daily Star during the launching ceremony.

The report is based on qualitative and quantitative data requested in a questionnaire sent to a sample of 40 NGOs involved in women's issues, eight ministries and a number of international organizations.

The National Strategy for Women in Lebanon, drafted by the NCLW, runs from 2011 till 2021. It was created in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund. The Cabinet gave its preliminary approval to the plan in 2012 and recommended its circulation to the ministries.

Read more:

<http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Oct-30/320850-first-national-action-plan-report-released.ashx>

Will new Egyptian employment law help its women lean in?



On the occasion of the World Day for Decent Work on Oct. 7, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics issued a media statement exposing the working conditions and general situation in Egypt based on a study it conducted of the labor force in 2014. The data revealed that the participation of men is three times higher than that of women in the workforce.

Egyptian women face a number of problems that limit their ability to work. Rawateb.org has identified four factors behind these obstacles: balancing career and family, a reluctance to hire women who have children, gender discrimination and harassment.

Mona Ezzat, the director of the Women and Work Program at the New Woman Foundation, told Al-Monitor, "Women should have an adequate representation at the Supreme Council for Wages, which should be given the power to handle complaints from women workers in case they were subjected to any form of discrimination."

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/11/egypt-women-participation-labor-market.html>

Empowering rural women through the SDGs



This week, UN Women marks three UN observances that reflect women's key role in development, beginning with International Day for Rural Women on 15 October, World Food Day on 16 October and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October.

These interconnected issues are more relevant than ever before, as the new *Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development* has just been adopted by world leaders as the new global roadmap. Gender equality and women's rights and empowerment are cross-cutting throughout the 2030 Agenda, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Goals are intrinsically linked to the lives of women and girls globally, including that of rural women, who are vital to its success. Particularly the goal to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, the goal to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture as well as the goal to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development.

Read more:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/rural-women-food-poverty>

Why Iraqi women are turning to the internet to buy books



The deteriorating security situation in the Iraqi capital has prevented Noor Jamal Abdul Hamid from going to Mutanabbi Street to shop for books and stationery. Abdul Hamid is a young woman who found herself crippled by risky roads and social restrictions that prevent her from leaving her house. Despite all this, she manages to read plenty of books and hosts discussions of what she reads over Twitter.

Abdul Hamid, who was born in Baghdad in 1991, is a graduate of Alrafidain College. She is currently unemployed and reads to pass the time. In order to understand what is going on in her society and the mysterious Iraqi political life, she opted for "finding the truth in books," as she told Al-Monitor, and so created her own library.

But how did she manage to collect 300 books, including novels, poetry and philosophy, when she had no access to a bookstore? "I found a bookstore on Facebook that delivers books to my doorstep," she said.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/11/iraq-women-buy-online-books-libraries.html>

Emergency jobs sow long-term livelihoods for youth in Jordan



Nineteen-year-old Aya completed sewing and entrepreneurship training through the 3x6 Emergency Employment Project

“I had a dream since I was 10 years old to open my own sewing shop one day. I’ve always considered myself as an artist in sewing, but I never knew how to pursue my dream,” said Aya, a 19-year-old woman from Salhieh/Mafraq Governorate in Jordan.

Aya was helping her mother in sewing clothes and selling them from home, but the income wasn’t enough. I wanted to support my family especially since I don’t have a degree to help me find a job. When she heard about UNDP’s 3X6 initiative, she and her sister registered in the sewing programme, since they already had skills and knowledge in that area.

The 3x6 Emergency Employment Project is part of UNDP’s “Mitigating the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on vulnerable host communities” initiative in the governorates of Irbid and Mafraq. The goal is to promote local development and social cohesion in the host communities of Jordan.

Read more:

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/emergency-jobs-sow-long-term-livelihoods-for-youth-in-jordan.html?cq_ck=1447102391739

Co-op’s enable low-income women to work as owners and decision makers



At Cooperative Home Care Associates, in their state of the art training facilities, these workers in training are finding each other’s pulses with the help of their training instructor

Co-ops not only give low-income and immigrant women a way to enter an often unwelcoming – and in some cases, hostile – economy, but also give them a way to exert some control over their work lives and simultaneously support themselves and their families. They have consequently been some of the early adopters in the not-yet-critical-mass movement of worker-owned cooperative businesses that has begun to catch fire in towns and cities throughout the United States.

Melissa Hoover, executive director of the Democracy at Work Institute, estimates that there are presently between 300 and 400 worker-owned businesses operating domestically.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/2015/11/co-ops-womens-cooperatives-enable-low-income-women-to-work-as-owners-decision-makers/?_sft_topic=gender-stereotypes-discrimination-dignity-violence-against-women-trafficking-women-girls-economics-poverty-work

Women lead the struggle to defend their land, lives and communities in the Philippines



The Philippines, and more specifically Mindanao, the second largest and southernmost major island, rich in natural resources and minerals, is being plundered by trans- and multi-national companies carrying out extractive operations with impunity for the human rights violations they commit.¹ The government of the Philippines provides the paramilitary forces to suppress and eliminate members of the Lumad² communities in Mindanao if they confront the government's neoliberal agenda and trans- and multi-national companies.

The Lumad have inhabited Mindanao for hundreds of years, developing customs and practices unique and necessary for their survival. They refuse to leave their land and are committed in the fight to protect their ancestral land and resources.

Women of Lumad communities are taking the lead in organizing resistance and defending their communities, while confronting numerous gender-specific challenges in carrying out human rights advocacy against collusion of private businesses and government interests.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/women-lead-struggle-defend-their-land-lives-and-communities-philippines#sthash.jd9mPEgq.dpuf>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Forced child marriages on the rise in region



In the midst of conflict and war, forced child marriages have increased considerably in the region, said rights activists who gathered Thursday to conclude a three-day seminar on the topic at the Gefinor Rotana Hotel.

Sixty activists came together from 13 Arab countries to offer new insight into the issue while developing important strategies for the international community and governing actors to consider.

“Any form of human trafficking is a crime against humanity,” said Jumana Merhi, the director of the Arab Institute for Human Rights in Lebanon. “We stress our rejection to any compromise on the rights of women in any way.”

The workshop was launched by AIHRL, ABAAD MENA Organization, and supported by the Humanist Institute for Cooperation (HIVOS) and The Democratic Forum for Women in Transitional Societies.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Oct-30/320853-forced-child-marriages-on-the-rise-in-region.ashx>

Yemen conflict paralyzes economic activity, puts women businesses at risk

UNDP has conducted a rapid business assessment in August covering six governorates to examine the impact of the ongoing conflict on Yemeni businesses. The assessment was carried out in Sanaa, Hajjah, Sa'ada, Taizz, Aden and Abyan Governorates, providing insights on the extent of damages and loss incurred by the private sector.

The business survey will assist local authorities, the private sector and the early recovery partners to provide timely assistance to support economic recovery and restoration of micro, small, medium and large enterprises (MSMEs).

The findings revealed that around 26 percent of businesses have closed since March 2015 due to the ongoing conflict in the surveyed governorates. As much as 35 percent of MSMEs are engaged in the services sector. Almost all businesses closed during the conflict were due to physical damage; with 77 percent suffering complete damages, 15.4 percent partial damages and 7.6 percent closing for other reasons. The estimated cost of damage incurred per business is highest in Sa'ada with 35.5 million (YER), followed by Aden with 5 million (YER).

In a male-dominated society, women represented less than one third of the labour force before the conflict. The ongoing crisis has severely affected businesswomen compared to their male counterparts, with almost half of women-owned enterprises closed since March.

Read more:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/11/16/yemen-conflict-paralyzes-economic-activity-puts-women-businesses-at-risk.html>

Isis – Bureau of Sex Slavery



Yazidi sisters, who escaped from captivity by Islamic State militants, sit in a tent at Sharya refugee camp

I am thinking of the price list leaked out from the ISIS Sex Slave Market that included women and girls on the same list as cattle. ISIS needed to impose price controls as they were worried about a downturn in their market.

Forty- to 50-year-old women were priced at \$41, 30- to 40-year-old women at \$62, 20- to 30-year-old women, \$82 and 1- to 9-year-old children, \$165. Women over 50 weren't even listed. They had no market value. They were discarded like milk cartons with past sale date markers. But they weren't simply abandoned in some smelly dung heap of trash. First, they were probably tortured, beheaded, raped—then thrown into a pile of rotting corpses. I am thinking of a 1-year-old child's body for sale and what it would be like for a hefty, sex-deprived, war-driven 30-year-old soldier to buy her, package her, take her home like a new television. What would he be feeling or thinking as he unwrapped her baby flesh and raped her with his penis the size of her tiny body?

Read more:

<http://www.thenation.com/article/bureau-of-sex-slavery/>

Using the caring economy to fight modern-day slavery



It is estimated that there are over 27 million modern day slaves across the world. While nowadays, slavery and human trafficking are more commonly associated with sex work, in actual fact 78% of modern day slaves are in “labour slavery.”

Domestic workers are one of the most at-risk populations for exploitation and abuse. Working in private family spaces and without the network or support of colleagues and unions, domestic workers are isolated and left without a voice.

Furthermore, as most domestic workers are immigrant women of colour, they lack strong family and community support systems outside of the workplace, and can be held to ransom through confiscated passports, threats of deportation and withheld wages. Domestic workers in America are excluded from almost every major labour law, with the exception of minimum wage protection.

The “most visible invisible workforce” – that is how Ai-Jen Poo, Ashoka Fellow and Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, describes domestic workers in the USA. She began organising immigrant women workers in 1996 for Asian communities in New York City.

Read more:

<http://www.trust.org/item/20151117062905-jfkmc/?source=fiBlogs>

Prevent violence against women

Prevention is the 2015 theme of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November and of the UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign’s 16 days call for action. This year, at the official commemoration at UN Headquarters in New York, the first UN Framework on Preventing Violence against Women will be launched and discussed (ECOSOC Chamber; 10 a.m.–12 noon). This document stems from the collaboration of seven UN entities: UN Women, ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and WHO. The framework develops a common understanding for the UN System, policymakers and other stakeholders on preventing violence against women and provides a theory of change to underpin action.

A staggering one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime—a pandemic of global proportions. Unlike an illness, however, perpetrators and even entire societies choose to commit violence—and can choose to stop. Violence is not inevitable. It can be prevented. But it’s not as straightforward as eradicating a virus. There is no vaccine, medication or cure. And there is no one single reason for why it happens.

As such, prevention strategies should be holistic, with multiple interventions undertaken in parallel in order to have long-lasting and permanent effects. Many sectors, actors and stakeholders need to be engaged. More evidence is emerging on what interventions work to prevent violence—from community mobilization to change social norms, to comprehensive school interventions targeting staff and pupils, to economic empowerment and income supplements coupled with gender equality training.

Read more:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Iranian Women Are Posting Pics With Their Hair Flying Free In Protest Of Strict Hijab Laws



In 2014, Iran's morality police warned, fined or arrested an astonishing 3.6 million women for charges related to inappropriate dress. Right now wearing the Islamic hijab is a mandatory practice for all women in Iran.

Masih Alinejad, an Iranian Journalist living in the US, would like to change all of that and grant women the choice to wear their hair covered or uncovered. Alinejad says, "My mother wants to wear a scarf. I don't want to wear a scarf. Iran should be for both of us."

In hopes of spreading her message and making social change Alinejad is prompting Iranian women both near and far to post photos of themselves enjoying life with their hair unveiled.

Read more:

http://www.earthporm.com/strict-hijab-laws/?utm_rcreplace_392=4650

Inheritance law reform in Morocco: at the intersection of human rights and religious identity

Last week, the president of Morocco's National Human Rights Council (CNDH), Driss El Yazami, publicly released the Council's most recent report on gender equality and parity in Morocco. The content and recommendations contained therein were broad, addressing a range of issues related to laws affecting women. However, one issue, in particular, received significant attention and has been the subject of heated debate here in the country: inheritance law

The report comes four years after the adoption of a new, Arab Spring-inspired constitution and ten years after a controversial yet much celebrated reform of the Moroccan Family Code (*al-mudawwana*).

While the CNDH has issued previous reports and memoranda on gender, the CNDH noted that the report was "the first of its kind" to review the efforts and achievements to promote and protect the rights of women in Morocco, but also to present the challenges, gaps, and obstacles that continue to prevent women from enjoying all of their human rights.

It offers **97 recommendations** intended to ensure the full participation of women in society and their equal access to services and resources. From a human rights perspective, it is impressive.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/inheritance-law-reform-morocco-intersection-human-rights-and-religious-identity>

Turkey – Challenges of Sustained Gender Parity & Political Party Gender Ideology



The Turkish HDP's egalitarian gender ideology played a key role in the election of a record number of women to parliament in June's election. Can these gains be sustained in the political turmoil ahead?

On June 7th Turkey held parliamentary elections which marked major turning points in Turkish politics. While this election put an end to thirteen years of single-party rule of the Justice and Development Party, it was also the first time that a pro-Kurdish rights political party, the People's Democratic Party (HDP) entered parliament with 13% of the total national votes.

However, another major outcome of the elections was that it witnessed the entry of a record number of women to the Turkish parliament. Ninety six women were elected to the 550-seat Turkish parliament, constituting 17.5% of total parliamentarians, up from 14.4% in the previous parliament.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/2015/11/turkey-challenges-of-sustained-gender-parity-political-party-gender-ideology-upcoming-snap-elections/?sf_paged=3

What ISIS has done to the lives of women

According to Edward Lorenz's chaos theory, the butterfly effect is defined as the "sensitive dependence on initial conditions in which a small change in one state of a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state." Well, you may ask what does that have to do with ISIS and women in the Middle East. Consider ISIS as the small change that is impacting the larger system of how women live their lives in profound and turbulent ways.

Less than 0.001% of the world's Muslims

The continuous terror of ISIS activities throughout Europe and the Middle East – from Baghdad to Beirut to Paris – has dominated not only world news, but also intimate discussions amongst the majority of Muslims. Although ISIS members do not exceed 0.001% of the entire Muslim population of 1.5 billion people around the world, their loud, aggressive, and very particular claims of what they believe is Islam are prompting a disproportionate and varied reaction.

There are those who are attracted to ISIS ideology and are joining them. The number of young men and women from all over the world who participate are not high in numbers, but their involvement is very alarming nevertheless.

Middle Eastern newspapers cover stories on a daily basis of parents reporting the escape of their college students – from those studying engineering to medicine – to ISIS camps, and disowning their parents in the process. This is publicly discussed from Saudi Arabia to Jordan to the Sudan.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/what-isis-has-done-lives-women>

Recommendations to UN Human Rights Council in realizing the right to an adequate standard of living

WIDE+ Recommendations to UN Human Rights Council on the protection of the family and the contribution of families in realizing the right to an adequate standard of living

- ✓ The concept of family is understood in terms of individuals assuming a shared responsibility for social reproduction.
- ✓ Access to and the provision of public services like health, education and social security should not be regulated on the basis of markets, but easily accessible for all citizens on an individual basis as a matter of social rights.
- ✓ As specified in Paragraph 16 of the CEDAW Convention, States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and shall ensure equality of men and women in the family.
- ✓ Unpaid and paid care work within the family, mostly done by women, has to be fully recognised as work and the contribution of unpaid work for social well-being has to be acknowledged.
- ✓ All family members have to be protected against violence from inside and outside the family.

Read more:

<http://wideplus.org/>

Valuing women's work key to achieving new global goal on gender equality



Applauding the decision by Member States to include gender equality as a key plank of the newly-adopted 2030 Agenda, a senior United Nations labour agency official has stressed the importance of empowering women in employment, salaries and the working environment, urging governments to commit to this achievable, basic right.

“The world has fallen short in bringing women’s employment, earnings and working conditions in line with those of men,” stressed Shauna Olney, Chief of Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch at the International Labour Organization (ILO), while acknowledging progress made in education and maternal mortality.

The quality of jobs is paramount. However, Ms. Olney stated that half of women are employed globally and their wages are about ¾ of what men earn, in addition to their domestic responsibilities.

Workplace violence and under-representation in senior positions are two other prominent issues to tackle, according to Ms. Olney.

Moving on to women’s social and economic status, she said cultural traditions and economic conditions cannot excuse discrimination and other violations of fundamental human rights.

Read more:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsId=52378#.Vkyxotlrjdh>

RESOURCES & CALLS
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GlobalStat – Database on Development in a Globalised World

Statistics play an increasingly vital role in many domains of our political and societal life. As a consequence, the astonishing proliferation of statistics and the widespread use of indicators as instruments to evaluate our societies increase the demand for reliable and publicly available statistical resources.

However, the enhanced relevance of statistical data only slowly translates into a transparent visibility of statistics within the public domain. In order to close this gap, new tools are needed to improve the clarity and speed with which statistical data can be accessed in order to promote the use of these important independent sources of information within the wider public.

This need for visibility and accessibility is even more vital in the era of **Globalisation**, in which sources of information multiply at a speed that is hardly traceable by the individual. Within this process, not only the number of sources amplifies every day. Also the areas, issues and processes affected and affecting the individual do so.

Read more:

<http://www.globalstat.eu/en/>

Women, weapons & War: a gendered critique of multilateral instruments

This publication considers synergies—and contradictions—related to gender and women in a number of multilateral resolutions, treaties, and commitments on conventional weapons and women’s rights and participation.

The instruments considered in this briefing paper, including the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the UN Programme of Action on trade in small arms and light weapons (UNPoA), and resolutions from UN Security Council, UN Human Rights Council, and UN General Assembly, recognise the impact on women of weapons use, trade, or proliferation and promote the participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control and in other forms of conflict prevention or resolution.

This paper provides a gendered critique of several multilateral instruments in order to address problems with categorizing women as a vulnerable group, undermining women’s participation and gender diversity in disarmament, reinforcing violent masculinities, and perpetuating structures of patriarchal militarism. It offers several concrete recommendations for states and other actors to change our framing, implement existing tools holistically, and develop stronger norms, standards, and laws to advance gender diversity, disarmament, and peace.

For a direct link to report:

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/women-weapons-war.pdf>

Gender equality in the 2015 Strategic Response Plan - results & evolution of the IASC Gender Marker



GENDER EQUALITY IN THE
2015
STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLAN

RESULTS & EVOLUTION OF THE
IASC GENDER MARKER



October 2015
IASC
Gender Marker
Results & Evolution of the
IASC Gender Marker

The purpose of this report is to capture progress and learning on how gender issues have been taken into account in the Strategic Response Plan (SRP) 2015 as well to provide an analysis on the implementation of the IASC Gender Marker and information on its future evolution. It is meant to inform sectorial programmers, clusters, cluster lead agencies, decision makers, OCHA and donors on how well current appeal processes take gender issues into account and, building on lessons learnt, how consideration for gender issues could be enhanced in future appeals.

Read more:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/world/gender-equality-2015-strategic-response-plan-results-evolution-iasc-gender-marker>

For a direct link to report:

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/gender_equality_in_the_strategic_response_plan_2015.pdf

Arab spring protests and women's labor market outcomes: evidence from the Egyptian revolution

In many countries in the world, women lag behind men in several education and labour market outcomes; this is particularly true in the Arab World. This paper focuses on Egypt, where former presidents Hosni Mubarak and Mohamed Morsi were removed from power respectively, while Egypt is, at the same time, a country with large gender segregation.

The paper investigates the impact of the 2011 protests on the relative position of women in the labour market by estimating a “difference-in-differences” specification, where it allows gender to be an important dimension of heterogeneity of the treatment effect. Additionally, the document uses information on labour market outcomes before and during the political unrest.

The results show that the 2011 Egyptian protests have reduced the gender gap in labour force participation, by increasing women's unemployment and private sector employment. Yet, the effects mainly concern households at the bottom of the pre-revolution income distribution.

Read more:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender&id=73760&type=Document#.VkzOVdIrJdg>

For a direct link to report:

<http://www.erf.org.eg/CMS/uploads/pdf/957.pdf>

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