



# LA ABOGADA

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E-NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS  
FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES JURISTES  
FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE ABOGADAS (FIDA)

## From The Editor...

Dear Colleagues,

These are no doubt perilous times globally! With the dreaded COVID-19 (the Coronavirus 2019) pandemic on the rampage, we are bombarded daily with ominous news of worldwide escalating death tolls and quarantined victims, international border closures, State lockdowns, ravaged global economies et al.



In the aftermath (following UN Secretary-General's recommendation) the 64th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) convened on 9th March, 2020 for an abridged procedural meeting only. All side and parallel events planned by Member States and the UN system in conjunction with CSW64 were cancelled.

Consequently, at **La Abogada**, our focus for this quarter was shifted appropriately from an earlier-planned UN CSW64 -Beijing+25 emphasis to the equally elating, more apposite publication presented here -with **International Women's Day 2020** as special highlight, a Statement thereon by Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and **PICTORIAL** spectacular scenes of its momentous **Global Celebrations**.

This new edition also features the federation's representation at the **CEDAW@40** commemoration; **FIDA Italy and FIDA Taiwan's International Legal Exchange** -the very first of its kind; an illuminating piece on the **Women of Europe**; an insightful exposition on **The Role of Women and Girls at the Cessation of the Columbian 50-year Conflict**; a brilliant **Spotlight on FIDA Nigeria**; connoisseur commentary on **Neoliberal Policies and Feminist Struggles**; **FIDA Director Gladys Mbuya -as Global Achiever**; a report on **Greek Parliament's First Female President**; **Child Labour as a Bane to Economic and Social Development** (continued from our last edition); **Women's Human Rights and ICT** and various other exciting items.

There is no time as good as the present to curl up indoors and enjoy this fascinating issue of **La Abogada**, dear friends. -And while at it, do please remember to drop us a line with your feedbacks -and inputs towards subsequent editions.

Till we return -in the next quarter,  
...hasta que regresemos -es...adios.  
¡Hasta luego!

Stay safe and be well.

Genially,

Funmi

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# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2020

Sunday, March 8, 2020

Statement by:

**Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**  
Executive Director, UN Women



## 2020 is the year for women!

2020 is a massive year for gender equality. And the benefits of gender equality are not just for women and girls, but for everyone whose lives will be changed by a fairer world that leaves no one behind. It's the year for what we call "Generation Equality". With the leadership of civil society, we're mobilizing to realize women's rights, and to mark 25 years of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

We're enabling women to influence the decisions about their future. Generation Equality tackles issues of women across generations, from early to late years, with young women and girls at the centre.

We don't have an equal world at the moment and women are angry and concerned about the future. They are radically impatient for change. It's an impatience that runs deep, and it has been brewing for years.

We do have some positive changes to celebrate. For example, there has been a 38 per cent drop in the ratio of maternal deaths since 2000. 131 countries have made legal reforms to support gender equality and address discrimination. Twenty-five years ago, discrimination of women was legislated in many countries. Today, more than three-quarters of countries have laws against domestic violence in place. And more girls are in school than ever before, with more women in tertiary education than men globally.

But even though there has been progress, no country has achieved gender equality. Our best hasn't been good enough. Challenges remain for all countries, although many of them are not insurmountable.

Meantime, girls are making no secret of their disappointment with the stewardship of our planet, the unabated violence directed against them and the slow pace of change in fulcrum issues like education. For example, despite improved school enrolment, 1 in 10 young women today are still unable to read and write. This has to change in order for girls to fully own their power, take their place in the world, and play their vital role in technology and innovation.

**We don't have an equal world at the moment and women are angry and concerned about the future. They are radically impatient for change. It's an impatience that runs deep, and it has been brewing for years.**

Another priority target for our impatience is the lack of women at the tables of power. Three-quarters of all parliamentarians in the world are men. A proven solution is to introduce legally binding quotas for women's representation. Nearly 80 countries have already successfully done so and a few States have gender-balanced cabinets and explicitly feminist policies. This is a desirable trend that we need to see more of in both public and private sectors, where overall

the proportion of women in managerial positions remains around 27 per cent, even as more women graduate from universities.

The same goes for women at the peace table, where the vast majority of the negotiators and signatories are men. We know women's involvement brings more lasting peace agreements, but women continue to be marginalized. Women's groups and human rights defenders face persecution yet are ready to do more. For this they desperately need increased security, funding and resources.

My greatest impatience is with unmoving economic inequality. Women and girls use triple the time and energy of boys and men to look after the household. That costs them equal opportunities in education, in the job market and in earning power. It's a driver of repeating poverty. Young women raising families are 25 per cent more likely than men to live in extreme poverty, affecting millions of young children, with impacts that last into later life for both mother and child. The solution includes good policies that promote more equality in childcare responsibilities and that provide state support to families, and those who work in the informal economy.

So, though we are radically impatient, we are not giving up and we are hopeful. We have growing support from allies and partners who are ready to tackle barriers against gender equality. We see the driving will for change across generations and countries. We are locating issues that unite us and that offer opportunities to disrupt the status quo. Lessons learnt in the last 25 years have shown us what is needed to accelerate action for equality. Generation Equality is one of our answers and together, we are that generation. ●

On a Humorous Note...



(Culled from the Internet)

# Commemoration of the 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CEDAW CONVENTION

## **CEDAW@ 40: Past Achievements, Ongoing Challenges and Future Action** *A Statement by BANDANA RANA, Vice-Chair, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*



mutually reinforcing linkages between the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, Security Council resolution 1325, the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and the International Conference on Population and Development.

I take this opportunity to highlight a few of the Convention's significant achievements. Since the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the Committee, CEDAW has reviewed hundreds of State

interpreting the nature and scope of States parties' obligations under the Convention - including landmark GR such as No. 19 (violence against women), No. 30 (women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations), No. 35 (gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19) and No. 37 (gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change). We are now working on a new general recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration.

With regard to gender equality, CEDAW's work on the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially with regard to Goal 5.1 (End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere) is noteworthy. In November 2019, CEDAW adopted a Guidance note for States parties for the preparation of periodic reports in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, CEDAW's Concluding Observations make systematic reference to the SDGs.

Regarding women's education, considerable progress has been made in ensuring girls' and women's equal access to education. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 1970, the global average for girls' schooling, spanning primary, secondary and tertiary education, was 6.7 years. Today, the average length of schooling of girls is above 12 years. The greatest progress is seen in the Least Developed Countries, with school life expectancy for girls increasing from 2.8 years to 8.9 years today. In 2017, CEDAW adopted General Recommendation No. 36 on the right of girls and women to education.

A landmark decision in the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action was that "the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including

*Continued on PAGE 4*

Hon. President of the General Assembly,  
Hon. Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here representing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in my capacity as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

I wish to express our deep appreciation to UNFPA, UN Women and OHCHR for having jointly organised this special event commemorating 40 years of CEDAW and our efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality. I express my gratitude to the co-sponsors of the event, the Permanent Missions of Nigeria and Trinidad and Tobago. I would like to particularly thank CEDAW Committee member Esther Eghobamien for her persistent efforts to ensure that this event takes place.

The 40th anniversary of CEDAW precedes the upcoming 25th celebration and review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the 20 years of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and the five-year milestone towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, as well as the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, all of which provide a unique opportunity for celebration of the achievements over the past decades and for a reflection on the work that still needs to be done, to protect and promote women's rights and substantive gender equality, as the foundation for change, democracy and lasting peace. The CEDAW Convention has laid a solid foundation for the

party reports. Constitutional, legislative and administrative reforms have been adopted by many state parties in response to CEDAW recommendations to eliminate discrimination against women as well as to prevent and address gender-based violence against women. Since the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Committee has adopted final decisions on individual communications in 108 cases. In 32 cases, the Committee found violations of the authors' rights. Only in 14 cases, the Committee was satisfied with the measures taken by the States parties concerned.

### **...school life expectancy for girls increasing from 2.8 years to 8.9 years today**

The Committee is also considering an increasing number of submissions under the confidential inquiry procedure under article 8 of the Optional Protocol in relation to allegations of grave or systematic violations of human rights. Since this procedure came into force, the Committee has adopted and subsequently published five inquiry reports finding grave or systematic violations of rights enshrined in the Convention.

The Committee as of now has adopted 37 General Recommendations



# CEDAW@40 (Cont'd.)

sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.”

‘CEDAW consistently recommends that States parties legalize abortion at least in the case of rape, incest, threats to the life or health of the pregnant woman or severe foetal impairment and to decriminalize it in all other cases, with a view to preventing unsafe abortions and reducing maternal mortality rates. While I want to signal progress in this area I also want to highlight our deep concern at the pushback in various quarters in relations to women's reproductive health and rights and the threat to women human rights defenders.

In accordance with article 7 of the Convention, CEDAW has been working to ensure that women are able to fully participate in the political and public life of their countries. In this regard, CEDAW has been closely collaborating with the International Parliamentary Union to strengthen women's representation in parliaments and their



CEDAW Expert Shanthy Dairiam (Malaysia) with FIDA Rep. Denise Scotto

participation in decision-making. In 1995, the global proportion of women parliamentarians was 11.3 per cent. Today, it stands at 24.3 percent. This is progress but is still far from parity.

Regrettably, globally only 7.2 per cent of Heads of State and 5.7 per cent of Heads of Government are women, only 19.1 per cent of Speakers of parliament are women, and only 18.3 per cent of Ministers are women. Some of the Obstacles for women's equal participation and leadership are lack of support for female candidates, weak implementation of statutory quotas, discriminatory gender stereotypes, harassment, intimidation and violence against women activists and female politicians.

In its landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the Security Council stressed the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement at all levels and in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. In this regard The Committee's General Recommendation No. 30

(women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations) is proving to be an important tool for advancing women's participation in all peace building processes including peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction processes. Increasing number of countries now report on WPS in their report to the CEDAW Committee. In building synergy with other mechanism In 2018, the Committee signed a framework of cooperation with the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, our former member Pramila Patten.

In spite of such remarkable achievements, we do acknowledge persistent challenges.

Such as the persistent gender pay gap; women's concentration in low-paid jobs, often in the informal sector, and in unpaid care work; and having low pension benefits.

Equally, there is under-representation of women in education and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and other traditionally male dominated fields of study and career paths.

**7.2 per cent of Heads of State and 5.7 per cent of Heads of Government are women, only 19.1 per cent of Speakers of parliament are women, and only 18.3 per cent of Ministers are women.**

Around 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner (not including sexual harassment) at some point in their lives.

Discriminatory stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family

and in society persist across the globe.

In many countries, gender equality legislation is undermined by religious and customary laws and practices and parallel justice systems, which are often applied in a way that is incompatible with the Convention. We hence need to engage not only States but other non-traditional actors such as religious leaders and businesses.



Delegates with Retired Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

In marking the 40th anniversary of CEDAW as well as 25 years of ICPD and Beijing, we must celebrate and affirm gains we have made in countering this system and advancing women's human rights; build on the hope of women's mobilization and transformative actions; and take collective action to forge solidarity with other movements, demanding accountability of states and the private sector.

This is a key moment to reflect on the challenges now facing women in attaining their rights, and to analyze the strategic and legally binding role of CEDAW as an accountability framework, with a view to ascertaining how to address these

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# FIDA Italy & FIDA Taiwan Int'l Law Student Exchange

- Silvana Vanadia (Italy)

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**Silvana Vanadia,**  
Vice President, FIDA INT'L

In July 2019, the very first FIDA international law student Exchange was organized by FIDA Italy and FIDA Taiwan.

The exchange was an initiative of FIDA International Vice President Silvana Vanadi in collaboration with Hsiu-Fon (FIDA International Historian), who worked assiduously to ensure its success.

Luca Canepa, an Italian final year Law student of the University of Milan was first hosted in Taipei by a renowned law firm at which Georgia Chang, (FIDA Taiwan past Vice President) is partner. He



subsequently proceeded to yet another distinguished law firm in Kaohsiung where FIDAN Hsiao-Yen Wu is also partner.

With the help of Professor Wang (current Vice President, FIDA Taiwan) together with Georgia Chang, the law students of National Taiwan University (NTU) and various professionals in Kaohsiung, Luca was opportune to learn how lawyers in Taiwan work, especially in the field of consulting.

**Luca...was also able to provide his hosts with information on the corporate, arbitration, human rights and criminal law aspects of Italian law.**

Luca, on the other hand, was also able to provide his hosts with information on the corporate, arbitration, human rights and criminal law aspects of Italian law.

Whilst in Taiwan, Luca visited the Magic School of Green Technology at National



Cheng Kung University in Tainan, South Taiwan and had the privilege of getting to know a little about the Taiwanese culture.

On the whole, the experience was a very productive and rewarding one for the student. It is one which should be replicated by all branches of FIDA globally. ●



(Called from the Internet)

# Women of Europe

- Giovanna Chiara

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While the tragic second world war triggered by the expansionist and racist ideology of the Nazi-fascism of Europe, two Italian anti-fascists, confined by the dictatorship in the remote island Mediterranean of Ventotene wrote in 1941 what today is considered the founding document of the European Union: the Ventotène Manifesto, for a free and united Europe.

Many important statesmen of European countries (that had been fighting for centuries) in the post-war period worked to achieve, not without variances, the ideals of this "Manifesto".

Finally, European unification came about from the free conviction of the Governments of the European States who wanted to pursue and realize, through the law, the values of lasting peace, unity, equality, freedom, security, solidarity.

The "United Europe", where peace is lasting from about 75 years, can be considered a complex phenomenon economic, political and legal, always in progress, unique in the globalized world and in international law: from a political point of view, the "United Europe" stands as a sovereign entity with respect to the Member States; it grants them sovereignty, and place itself as an international body with respect to third states.

From a legal point of view, it creates an autonomous "corpus" of legal principles common to the Member States and performs a complex hard work to harmonize the internal laws of individual states.

In Europe, the principle of equality between women and men found its first consecration in the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and in subsequent treaties that established equal pay for men and women.

With the Maastricht Treaty, which introduced the concept of European citizenship, the principle of equality has been extended to the female / male person, regardless of work.

The subsequent Amsterdam reform introduced the "mission" of the European Community to pursue gender equality and apply it to all Community policies and established the legal basis for the adoption



**Giovanna Chiara**  
Regional Vice-President, Italy

by Member States of measures and implementation to combat discrimination against women.

A real "legislative corpus", composed of directives, is dedicated to gender equality in Europe in different areas; it represents an important pillar of European social policy and, despite some limitations, it commits the Member States to adopt global and integrated strategies aimed at encourage the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making, by developing or establishing appropriate legislation or regulation.

In the political field, in order to rebalance the presence of the two genders in decision-making assemblies, which historically have always been composed of men, it has been established a percentage of women's participation through legal, legislative or constitutional rules, together with similar internal provisions in the statutes of political parties in the composition of the electoral lists.

The Swedish expert Drude Dahlerup believes that the "critical threshold", that's to say the percentage below which it is not possible to perceive a "gender presence" in political practices, is 40%.

In Italy we speak of "pink quotas" (with reference to the color that indicates the birth of a female child), but such expression is misleading because these are anti-discrimination rules that are intended to allow a fair political participation of both genders. In the language of European institutions as well as in English language, they speak about "gender quotas". Anyway, these "quotas" are not intended

to replace the evaluation of merit of the single female person, but simply want to favor the use of professionalism and female skills currently underused but equal, if not superior, to those of men.

The strategy of "gender quotas" has proved valid if we consider that in its current ninth legislature (2019-2024) the European Parliament has the highest female presence than ever: women in fact represent 40 percent of the MEPs. And this precisely because of European gender policies. The number has grown from one legislature to another, starting from 15.2 percent of the MEPs in the 1979. Although the electoral laws for the European Parliament are established by individual states, and not at a Community level, we can say that today Luxembourg, Slovenia, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Croatia, Italy and Greece use "gender quotas".

But, starting from these datas, can we say that women's participation makes governments more democratic, equal, pacifists and less corrupt, attentive to the environment, education and in general to social policies?

It must be noted that, historically, there have been women in power, but in their governance, it is not easy to always find these achievements. But recent studies and research have pointed out that when women reach decision-making roles on a large scale number in complex and interconnected societies like the current

**can we say that women's participation makes governments more democratic, equal, pacifists and less corrupt, attentive to the environment, education and in general to social policies?**

ones, "the female leadership style is

# The Role of Women and Girls at the Cessation of the Colombian 50-year Conflict

- Carolina Rios Villota\*  
Email: caambas@yahoo.com



**Carolina Rios Villota**  
FIDA RVP (South America)

*The Colombian Conflict (Conflicto Armado Interno de Colombia) commenced in the mid-1960s as a low-intensity asymmetric war between the government of Colombia and such paramilitary groups, crime syndicates and communist guerrillas as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). In this commentary, Carolina, FIDA Regional Vice President, Colombia discusses the aftermath of this struggle and its devastating impact on the country's women and girls.*

**T**he subject matter of this discourse is very important, not just to me, but to women all over Colombia.

This conflict, between the government of Colombia and the The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known as FARC) has been ongoing for more than fifty years. It has affected every citizen in so many ways, religious, economic, social, political.

The process to create peace between the Colombian government, the people of Colombia and the FARC, is complicated, but it is imperative for our country that we continue down this path. There have been mistakes made and things that can be done better, but the latest events will not delay achieving peace.

More than fifty years ago this conflict began when a group of people, primarily from the countryside of Colombia, were

dissatisfied with the inequalities that existed between the government and the people. They created the FARC and moved to the more inaccessible areas of the country to begin their revolutionary movement.

In all of this time, women in FARC have had a secondary role in the conflict. In the first decades, their role in this revolution was in support of the men. Many times, they would be kidnapped by the FARC for these supporting roles. Some of the women fought as guerillas along side the men, but their roles also included cooking and having children. In addition, many of these victims were subjected to sexual abuse and forced to commit crimes (such as dealing drugs) by their FARC

captors.

Similarly, during that same time period, women have had a more secondary role in the government. We were made to feel that we could not run for election to important government positions such as mayors, senators and president; and we were not considered for positions that require appointment by those government officials.

I am here to talk to you today about how the role of women can and should change in Colombia after this process; as well as the ongoing and important roles women will have across the country.

Many people around the world have helped bring awareness of the conflict in Colombia to the rest of the world, as well as the very great need to continue the peace process. This process formally began on August 12, 2012, however, six months prior to that, President Juan Manuel Santos began informal, secret discussions with the FARC with the intent to bring both sides to the table for a formal peace process. President Santos conducted official negotiations with the FARC in Cuba. While this was obviously a very important step, women had very little meaningful

participation in it. As well, our knowledge and opinions of the situation were not considered in the negotiations.

As the peace process was beginning, a group of activists for women's rights took notice of this and demanded that women be allowed to actively participate in the process. This is important because, like the conflict itself, a lasting peace in Colombia will affect every citizen, not just the men.

According to Colombia's official registry of victims <https://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/> 51% of all victims of the conflict forced to flee their homes are women and children; 47% of all people killed due to the conflict are women and children; 40% of the members of FARC are women and children. When women and children make up such a large portion of both the victims affected by the conflict and the participants in it, true, lasting peace cannot be achieved without their equal participation in the entire peace process.

**I am here to talk to you today about how the role of women can and should change in Colombia after this process; as well as the ongoing and important roles women will have across the country.**

After the activist's demand for women to be represented at the negotiating table, a number of women were selected, amounting to 16% of the overall participants. Even though this may be a small number, it is an improvement and it did allow for a number of important women's issues to be included in the negotiations. These issues included:

- A. To respect International Humanitarian Law,
- B. For FARC to discontinue recruitment of women and children,
- C. To remove existing landmines and

# The Role of Women and Girls at the Cessation of the Columbian 50-year Conflict (Cont'd)

discontinue any future use of them,  
 D. The implementation of a victims' agenda that includes justice, truth and reparations.  
 E. A review of all laws specifically developed to facilitate the peace agreements,  
 F. To consider the sexual abuses suffered by the victims during the conflict in all laws relating to the peace agreements to ensure that this does not occur again.

In Colombia, we have an opportunity to advance the empowerment of women. The inclusion of women in every part of the peace process, from the negotiations between FARC and the government to the development of laws related to the peace agreements, is a good step in that direction.

An ongoing debate in the peace process has been over how to transition the members of FARC to regular Colombian citizens. As part of this transition, these former members of FARC will be given the right to vote, to run for elected political positions and to form their own political party. This

will be done despite the fact that some have committed crimes, including crimes against humanity.

To facilitate this transition into Colombian society, the implementation of transitional justice is an extremely important part of the peace process. In order to ensure that this is done in a fair and appropriate way, there should be an audit of the entire process and women should take part in conducting this examination.

Colombians are in agreement that we want a lasting peace, but not all are in agreement with the current peace process. This is because inevitably there will be a high cost for Colombia to pay, and not everyone agrees with accepting members of FARC as regular citizens without them being prosecuted for their crimes.

There are cases where female victims of crimes committed by FARC have forgiven their perpetrators and forgotten or moved on in their lives from the crimes committed against them. There have also been cases of

female members of FARC who have left the group and obtained jobs, places to live and successfully integrated into society. As the stories of these brave people proves, Colombia can overcome this great challenge and achieve a sustainable peace.

We still have a long way to go in this journey, but Colombians deserve and should be able to live in peace, but in reaching that goal, it is important that women share a leading role in the entire process. ●

*\*Carolina Rios Villota is a Columbian labor Law Consultant in the textile industry where she facilitates viable projects to provide better opportunities for women.*

# Women of Europe (Cont'd)

tendentially different from the male one: it is a non-aggressive style on a personal level. Women in the political contexts are more collaborative, seemingly accommodating and seek, if possible, the mediation"; "A possible explanation is that, knowing they have less power, they must find some allies "; "Research shows that a female government makes the difference especially in the social field".

But "of course, this is possible if the numbers allow it, if there are so many women inside a government and whether they occupy strategic ministries. Studies show that indeed, where there is a large number of women in a government, political initiatives are different, socially policy-oriented, more egalitarian, attentive to the needs of the family. And this, indirectly, is a benefit also for men". These are words of Chiara Saraceno, a historic Italian feminist sociologist, professor at the University of Turin, where she was also president of the "Interdisciplinary Center

for Studies on Women".

In our societies, and especially in Europe, there is a growing awareness that the question of gender is fundamental in the political choices, also in terms of social equality.

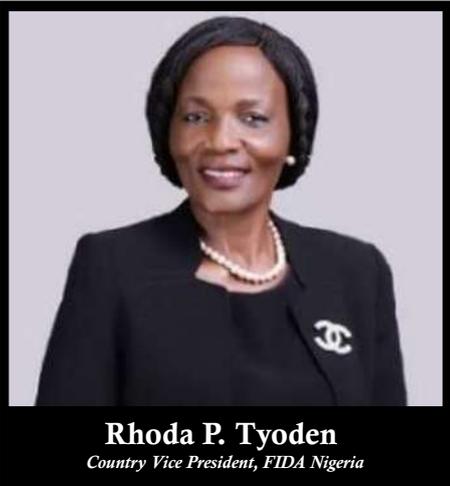
Phenomena such as unemployment, poverty and economic development are not neutral from the point of view of gender. When we approach to these problems, we must be aware that they impact women differently than men. Individual cases of women who have reached the top of politics are an understatement: a leading woman is not the average of women; a large part of women still live subject to gender stereotypes.

European equality policies indicate that more women with gender awareness and attention to social issues are needed in politics; we can really say that a larger

political participation of women can preserve humanity in our fragile world. ●



# Spotlight on FIDA Nigeria



**Rhoda P. Tyoden**  
Country Vice President, FIDA Nigeria

**F**IDA Nigeria currently has 33 branches with over 2,500 members. In furtherance of its objectives, through its branches, it has continued to promote, protect and preserve the rights of women and children in Nigeria via diverse projects and programmes of activities. A few of these are highlighted herein below.

## INSTITUTIONALIZED CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Continuing Legal Education (CLE) concept was institutionalized in line with the Policy adopted at the Five (5) year strategy plan of FIDA Nigeria, by ensuring that there were annual CLE capacity building workshops for her members.

## VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY, FREE LEGAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

FIDA Nigeria through its branches has continued to offer free legal services to its target group, giving pro bono legal representation,

counseling, mediation in respect of child custody, maintenance and inheritance by widows, domestic violence cases, and cases of child molestation and rape.

## PRISON VISIT/OUTREACH

Branches have continued to embark on prison visitation to various prisons in their locations where pro bono services are offered to inmates by taking up their cases and in some instances paying up bail bond for inmates who have been granted bail. Gifts are also freely given to inmates from the purses of FIDA Nigeria members.

## MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

To maintain a strategic place in Nigeria, FIDA Nigeria has continued to partner with the media to showcase her activities at the National and State levels. The Country Vice President and her representatives have been on National television and radio stations nationwide discussing issues affecting women, children and gender related issues.

## NETWORKING/PARTNERSHIPS

In her collaborative efforts and to achieve her objective, FIDA Nigeria has continued to partner with key organizations as well as government agencies globally.

## WORKSHOPS/PRESENTATIONS/PANEL DISCUSSIONS

FIDA Nigeria has had the privilege of being invited to participate in numerous workshops, trainings and panel discussions at International, National and State levels.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Following new trends and growing needs, the National Executive Committee, having received appeals from members on the need to review some issues, set up a committee to review the FIDA Nigeria Constitution. The Constitution has been amended and was adopted on 25 January 2019 at the FIDA Annual General Meeting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.



*Cross section of representatives of FIDA state Branches at the workshops held in the South-South Region and Northern Region.*

## PROJECT REPORT

i. Australian Embassy: Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Women and Children through the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP Act) Project implemented in Abuja, Ekiti and Lagos states from February 2016 till December 2016. The project activities were:

- Societal awareness on the provisions of the VAPP Act/Law through radio discussions and airing of jingles developed to popularize the provisions of the GBV Law in Ekiti and prohibition of Domestic Violence Law in Lagos states.



*Discussions on extortion, child labour and abuse on WAZOBIA FM*



*Cross section of FIDA Nigeria members at the Training of Trainers*



*Group photo of FIDA National executive, Abuja branch members and the representatives of the management of NAN*

# Spotlight on FIDA Nigeria

(Cont'd.)

- Free legal representation for 45 indigent women and children within the ambit of the 3 laws.

ii. Stop-Violence against Women in Elections (stop-VAWIE) project, which was implemented in Bayelsa, Edo, Kogi and Ondo states. The project was designed to collate data on VAWIE in public and private spaces through a toll-free hotline, media campaign on VAWIE and a response team that handled cases of VAWIE as received from the hotline. The project was launched nationally in September 2015 and activities held from then till November 2017.



National launch of the stop-VAWIE project/Members of Kogi response team

iii. Ipas, Nigeria supported the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women (LACVAW) through FIDA Nigeria to conduct a sensitization outreach to Bwari Area council, Abuja on the provisions of the VAPP Act, 2015 in December 2015.

I. Ipas, Nigeria supported FIDA Nigeria on a sensitization outreach to Jabi Junior Secondary School, Life camp, Abuja on the provisions of the VAPP Act, 2015 in June 2016. The project was implemented through a drama presentation by the school drama club on issues of child sexual abuse, how children can seek help if violated, the provisions of the VAPP Act, 2015 and the CRA, 2003.

I. Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) funded the Challenging Impunity through Gender Protection and Empowerment project implemented in Yobe state from March 2016 to March 2017. The activities include:

- Establishment and Capacity building of

Stakeholder's Monitoring Forum Referral Pathway

- Sensitization and advocacy on end to VAWG and encourage women inclusion in the peace-building process/institutions
- Provision of legal representation/assistance to survivors/victims.

I. The Access to Justice for Conflict-Induced Displaced Population project funded by International Organisation on Migration in Borno State. The project targeted over sixty thousand (60,000) internally displaced persons (IDPs) with the aim of providing legal information and assistance to ensure that the target beneficiaries enjoy the gains of the justice system. The activities include:

- Provision of legal representation/assistance to survivors/victims of VAWG
- Establishment of stakeholders' referral pathway for victims of GBV
- Advocacy visit to traditional rulers and persons of influence in host communities of IDP



Advocacy visit to the Emir of Potiskum on ending VAW and encouraging women inclusion in the peace building process/institution



FIDA Nigeria members, teachers and students of the drama club of JSS Jabi

- campus and authorities of the IDP camps;
- Radio jingles on access to justice for target IDPs

The Advocacy for the adoption of the VAPP Act, 2015 in Rivers state, its effective implementation in Abuja and its equivalent in Lagos state under the Voice project with support from Oxfam, Nigeria. The project aimed at promoting the adoption of the VAPP Act in Rivers state, popularizing its provisions in Abuja and Prohibition against Domestic Violence Law in Lagos state for effective implementation.

Enabling Capacity for the Adoption and Effective Implementation of the ACJA, 2015 project supported by Mac-Arthur Foundation. The project aims at building the capacity of FIDA members and her partners in the criminal justice sector across the states through Continuing Legal Education workshops to engage and improve the Nigeria criminal justice sector thereby enhancing access to justice for the indigent women and children across the federation. The project also seeks to provide educational and technical support to the state houses of assembly yet to adopt the ACJA, 2015.

Continued on PAGE 11

## On a Humorous Note...



(Culled from the Internet)

# Spotlight on **FIDA Nigeria** (Cont'd.)



*L-R: Cross section of indigenes of Bwari Area Council at the Esu's Palace enjoying the presentations of LACVAW members on the provisions of the VAPP Act, 2015 and group photo of LACVAW members and some indigenes of Bwari Area Council*



*FIDA member, Yamai Lawan Musa, translating FIDA Yobe's message in Kanuri*



*FIDA Benue members & resource persons at the MAF-CLE workshop*



*National officers & Participants at the National Stakeholders Workshop on the implementation of the VAPP Act held in Abuja*

## Awards

FIDA Nigeria has received some outstanding awards in recognition of her humanitarian work in protecting and promoting the rights of women and children in Nigeria. These awards include:

- Award of recognition from the Vice President of Nigeria presented at the National GBV Response Conference, 2018 towards reducing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria.

- Award presented to FIDA Nigeria by the Nigerian Stock Exchange for the ceremonial ringing of the bell at the close of business for the day in 2017. ●

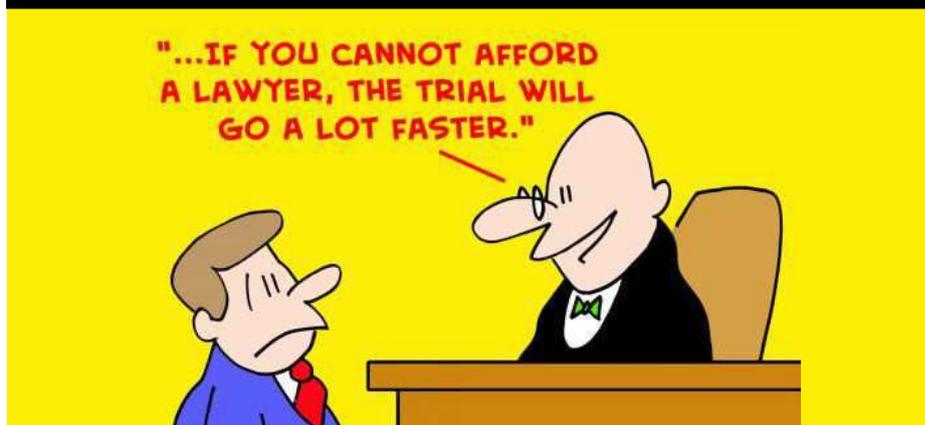


*FIDA Borno members at the MAF-CLE workshop*



*National officers & Participants at the National Stakeholders Workshop on the implementation of the VAPP Act held in Abuja*

## On a Humorous Note...



*(Culled from the Internet)*

# Neoliberal Policies and the Feminist struggles to transform them: An Agenda that puts people over profits

- Joanna Manganara\*

Most feminist thinkers and activists agree that neoliberalism as ideology and as practice is one of the biggest challenges that contemporary women's movements face.

Neoliberal capitalism is a key driver of the current global crisis. Its core positions are free market and profits above people and the planet. Patriarchal structures are key to its current functions.

Neoliberal capitalism in its pursuits of profits has caused ecological devastation, underdevelopment, violence and repression through deepening authoritarianism worldwide.

It has provoked a dramatic increase in income inequalities across the world and a systematic attack on the human rights of women and vulnerable groups by regressive forces that are coming to power in many parts of the world.

Originating in economics neoliberalism has become a major cultural influence where all aspects of living are interpreted through a business lens using a free market mentality.

Neoliberalism is enforced around the world through the international financial institutions. The basic effects of neoliberalism are:

- The transformation of political problems into individual problems with market solutions.
- The legitimization of government as a firm with entrepreneurship and managing functions that could be unacceptable to a democratic culture.

I would like to start by examining the approach of neoliberalism to **parity, equality and discrimination.**

The early 21st century is characterized by a global economic and social crisis. In this context the narrative is that policies to ensure equality and tackle discrimination must be shown to perform well for decision makers to remain convinced that priority should be given to implementing this principle.

Such performance is measured in terms of a cost-benefit analysis carried out from an economic and social perspective. The justifications of equality policies solely by their performance runs a serious risk if it can be proved that equality policies do not lead to economic or social performance or that discrimination and exclusion are profitable.



Joanna Manganara  
President, IAW

The relevant question to be asked is about the just redistribution of resources and wealth and not about the costs linked to an under-usage of human capital. The anti-discrimination struggle may or may not increase the size of the pie. That is not the question. The question is about the just sharing of the pie independently of its size.

Justifying equality policies in the name of profitability is a negation of both the structural dimension of inequality and the damage done to individuals who suffer discrimination and their legitimate call for justice.

## Resentment also manifested itself within the home and the family as there was a shift in gender roles because women now could take part in providing for their family

### Neoliberal Policies And Violence Against Women.

I will take as an example Latin America, which from 1970 to 1980 implemented several political and economic measures including the liberalization of trade in order to integrate the region to an international free market economy.

I will examine whether the liberalization of trade in Latin America is associated with growing inequality and exacerbation of violence against women and why this is so. These policies brought about changes in the political structures of the region's countries as well as in gender structures.

Women in a number of countries in this region were inserted in Assembly lines in export processing zones. They were inserted into precarious job situations as unskilled workers with very low wages and no job security. This situation created a resentment against this group of women which manifested itself in violent targeted abuse in which the most drastic action has been femicide.

Resentment also manifested itself within the home and the family as there was a shift in gender roles because women now could take part in providing for their family while neoliberal policies failed to acknowledge violence in the agenda for liberalizing markets and use proper tools to deal with it. Women by taking non-traditional roles and acquiring access to new resources and opportunities undermined men's identities as breadwinners. This shift in roles increased levels of violence towards women.

### The Neoliberal Feminist Paradigm

Over the past half-decade, we have witnessed the rise of a particular variant of feminism, which is not based on social ideals such as equality, rights and justice. This is neoliberal feminism since it recognizes gender inequality while simultaneously denying that socioeconomic and cultural structures shape our lives.

- Neoliberal feminism ultimately directs its address to the middle and upper middle class, ignoring the vast majority of women, since it is uninterested in social justice or mass mobilization.

- These women are incessantly incited to accept full responsibility for their own well-being and welfare.

- This feminism is exclusionary encompassing only so-called aspirational women in its address. In doing so it reifies white and class privilege.

Continued on PAGE 13

### On a Humorous Note...



(Culled from the Internet)

## Neoliberal Policies and the Feminist struggles to transform them: An Agenda that puts people over profits *(Cont'd)*

- Neoliberal feminism fails to address the challenges and difficulties of the vast majority of women who work. Many of these women are working in increasingly precarious conditions enduring double shifts, night shifts, or taking on two or three jobs just in order to make ends meet.

- Most often women of color, poor women and immigrant women serve as care workers that enable professional women to strive towards balance in their lives. Neoliberal feminism helps to reproduce and legitimize the exploitation of these other female subjects.

### **When women engage in struggles for transformation, they take part in a process of challenging and changing the very norms of behavior that are reinforced by neoliberal development.**

- Women for housework reinforce a class based and racialised gender stratification which constitutes the necessary infrastructure of our new neoliberal order.

- At the same time, an unprecedented number of high profile corporate women have been publicly declaring themselves feminists. Feminism serves as cultural capital for Hollywood stars and music celebrities.

A different form of feminism has also unexpectedly gained popularity. A new wave of mass feminist militancy has appeared on the political landscape. The reason has been that neoliberal feminism has facilitated the widespread visibility and embrace of the word feminism thus paving the way for militant feminist movements. Neoliberalism mobilized feminism to advance political goals and enhance market value.

- The reemergence of large scale feminist protest and mobilization such as the MeToo movement, the women's march, feminism for the 99% which helped organize the woman's strike serve as an important counter to the rise of non oppositional feminism.

- They encourage mass mobilization in order to challenge an increasingly dominant neoliberal agenda that puts profits over people.

- MeToo was able to gain such widespread support at the particular moment in history because feminism had already been rendered popular and desirable by Beyoncé, Emma Watson, (to name just a few) music celebrities as well as high corporate women.

- With the rise of neoliberal feminism which encourages individual women to focus on themselves and their own aspirations, feminism can be more easily popularized, circulated and sold in the marketplace.

- These movements expand gender, articulating and protesting on a great number of inequalities that women as well as minorities and other disadvantaged populations face.

- The pressing question now is how we can sustain and broaden the mass feminist renaissance as resistance and counter hegemonic, while rejecting the logic of neoliberal feminism. How can we maintain feminism as a threat to the many forces that continue to oppress and exclude whole segments of society?

- Feminist movements are demanding dramatic economic, social and cultural transformations thereby challenging the neoliberal consensus while creating alternative visions that cultivate hope for the future.

In our view we should focus on notions of empowerment and agency within neoliberal development discourses on gender which have different meanings for financial institutions and feminists.

For the World Bank the term empowerment means accommodating women within rather than challenging or transforming the social order.

For Feminists empowerment means the ability to define the change for themselves, negotiate change, understand and challenge injustice and inequality and act towards the achievement of strategic goals that address issues of women's status/ position.

Feminists challenge ideologies that justify gender inequality, change prevailing patterns of access to and control over resources and transform the institutions that reinforce existing power relations.

Challenging and potentially transforming existing relations of power involves not only empowerment but also resistance. The two are inextricably intertwined. More often than not this resistance runs counter to the neoliberal model demanding the redistribution of resources, challenging the operation of markets or organizing against state repression.

When women engage in struggles for transformation, they take part in a process of challenging and changing the very norms of behavior that are reinforced by neoliberal development.

In our view we should support feminist struggles for transformation and try to

persuade more people in particular women to embrace them and take part in them.

We should also try to strengthen women's agenda and resistance against neoliberalism as a way to create a world that puts people over profits.

We should also develop counter strategies from a feminist perspective. Feminist organization should transform neoliberal policies by using feminist economics. We need to bring care economy into the heart of the economy.

A very important aspect of our efforts to deal with global challenges and transformation has to do with power. We have to gain and retain power by transforming power relations between women and men which are anchored in patriarchy. ●

*\*Joanna Manganara is a Greek diplomat, an ardent women's right activist, incumbent President of the International Alliance of Women and its Chief Representative to the United Nations.*

### On a Humorous Note...

#### A doctor and lawyer loved the **same** girl



When you can see the joke coming from a mile away

*(Culled from the Internet)*

# FIDA GLOBAL ACHIEVER Gladys Mbuya

- Director, FIDA Cameroon

*Elie Smith's 2019 Most Influential Cameroonian*



Gladys Mbuya

For Queen Gladys Fri Mbuya, amiable Director, FIDA Cameroon, the year 2019 was an extraordinary one of global highs and recognition in various spheres of endeavor. This effervescent, indefatigable women's rights activist was duly branded:

- FIDA Africa Awardee for the advancement of women's rights.
- REDHAC Awardee for the defense of human rights.
- Award Recipient from High Commission of Canada in Cameroon for advancing human rights. and

- Enlisted amongst 2019 most influential Cameroonians.

Referring to her as yet 'another example of woman power' Elie Smith, world-renowned, Intrepid senior international journalist, described Gladys as a "Human Rights Defender who has fought for those locked up without reason and in spite of threats, has not given up."

*Continued on PAGE 15*



### On a Humorous Note...

How do you get a group of personal injury lawyers to smile for a picture?  
Just say "Fees!"



*(Culled from the Internet)*

**2019 Most Influential Cameroonians (Cont'd)**

**Others in the ranking of 16 most influential Cameroonians in 2019 include the following:**



*Agbor Balla*

**1. AGBOR BALLA:**

-a 'legalist, strategist and gradualist', was arrested and jailed alongside Dr Fontem Neba and others for their radical stance. Out of jail, he established the renowned "Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa", an NGO for the promotion of peace, tolerance and democracy.



*Mimi Mefo*

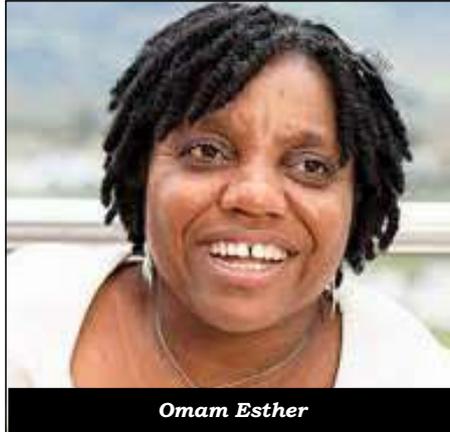
**2. MIMI MEFO**

..'An inspiration and beacon of hope for women', was jailed for reporting human rights abuses within the crisis in North West and South west Cameroon. On self-exile, she currently continues to inform Cameroonian via her blog.

**3. OMAM ESTHER**

-“has proven the worth of female power.” - as founding coordinator of the South West North West Women Task Force (SNWOT), a coalition of female-led civil society leaders in the English-Speaking Regions of Cameroon. Despite persecution by government and armed

Anglophone nationalist groups, who kidnapped her children and burned



*Omam Esther*

down her vehicle and compound, Omam believes in peace and advocates for greater Anglophone women participation in the quest to solve the Anglophone crisis.

**4. CARYN DASAH**

.. “..a bright and rising star”. As Global youth Ambassador, Caryn founded "HerPlace Campaign" which mobilised



*Caryn Dasah*

and trained 150 women from six villages in the South West Region on Community mediation as a tool for addressing conflict.



*Feka Parchibell*

**5. FEKA PARCHIBELL**

-A feminist activist who risked the dangers of going into the bushes to supply menstrual kits to women and girls and to provide education for children who have been out of school, due to the crisis. One of her staff got her leg amputated, allegedly by armed Anglophone nationalist groups, generically referred to as Amba boys.



*Magdaline Agbor*

**6. MAGDALINE AGBOR**

-Founder of CHAMEG Cameroon, led a delegation of women to the Divisional officer's office to seek possible measures to put an end to the crisis. Although a member of the ruling party, she is not afraid to express her opinions when necessary.



*Fobang Geraldine*

**7. FOBANG GERALDINE**

-As President of the Cameroon Traditional Media, she led a delegation of pastors for a walk on Peace in the South West Region.

**8. AISSA DOUMARA**

-Recipient of the Simon Veil prize for Women's Rights. She works with women affected by the Boko Haram insurgencies

**2019 Most Influential Cameroonians (Cont'd)**



**Aissa Doumara**

in the predominantly Muslim and conservative far North region of Cameroon



**Christelle Bay**

**9. CHRISTELLE BAY:**  
-brought over 300 grassroots women

leaders from the English-Speaking Regions to combat GBV and learn proper peace processes.



**Chief Dr. Joseph Dion Ngute**

**10. CHIEF DR. JOSEPH DION NGUTE, Prime minister.**  
- listed for his success at ensuring that Paul Biya's major national dialogue addresses the perennial Anglophone crisis. One of the dividends of the major national dialogue is the special status given to the North West and South West regions.



**Maurice Kamto**

**11. MAURICE KAMTO**  
-Chairman, Cameroon Renaissance Movement.  
-Was arrested alongside some of his party's militants and remains the only emblematic character within his party.



**Sisiseku Ayuk Tabe**

**12. SISISEKU AYUK TABE**  
- the only one among the Anglophone nationalist leaders who today still has some credibility and has the trappings of moderate leaders such as Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela. Emotive on occasions, his only preoccupation are his people to whom he is ready to pay the ultimate prize.



**Cardinal Christian Tumi**

**13. CARDINAL CHRISTIAN TUMI**  
- A true man of God and a social critic, he speaks without fear or favour. Motivated

by love for people and God, Tumi is an excellent manager. He took over as Archbishop of the Douala archdiocese and met a bankrupt diocese reeling in debts. On his resignation, the Douala archdiocese had more than FCFA 3 billion and 8 hundred million in its bank account. His current mission is to contribute to peace-building in the land that he loves.



**John Fru Ndi**

**14. JOHN FRU NDI**  
-leads the largest intra and extra parliamentary opposition in Cameroon. Kidnapped and tortured twice by armed Anglophone nationalist groups, he acknowledges that his captors' actions were excessive, but even so, he understands the reasons behind their violence outbursts. He believes in utilizing legal means to attain the objectives of the Anglophones and in a federation established through peaceful means.



**NJ Ayuk**

**15. NJ AYUK**  
-a young Cameroonian operating in the oil sector. With an extraordinary love for his people and fatherland, NJ has done more singlehandedly for Cameroonian refugees and other internally displaced Cameroonians than anyone known. He is an inspiration to several young upwardly mobile Cameroonians at home and in the diaspora. ●

# Greek Parliament elects first Female President

- Helen Smith, Athens



**A** high court judge and ardent human rights advocate has been elected Greece's first female president in a historic vote by parliament.

Inaugurating a new era for one of Europe's more traditional nations, MPs overwhelmingly endorsed the nomination of Katerina Sakellaropoulou as head of state. No woman has held the post in the nearly 200 years since Greece proclaimed independence. "Today a window to the future has opened," said the prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, after 261 deputies in the 300-seat House voted in favour of the French-educated jurist assuming the role. "Our country enters the third decade of the 21st century with more optimism."

## MPs overwhelmingly back Katerina Sakellaropoulou's appointment with PM hailing it as 'a window to the future'

The election – less than a week after the centre-right leader proposed Sakellaropoulou – not only breaks with tradition in an EU state where few women hold political positions but has taken many in Mitsotakis' own New Democracy party aback.

The 63-year-old, who first made history fifteen months ago when she was elevated to the helm of the highest court in the land by the leftist administration then in power, holds liberal views with an emphasis on

environmental protection. But with no known party allegiance she is a political outsider.

The diminutive Sakellaropoulou cut a defiantly modernist figure as she officially accepted her appointment by a cross-party group of mostly male MPs headed by the president of the parliament in her office on Wednesday. Signalling her determination to act as a moral compass in a society often riven by political division, and singling out the climate emergency among the global challenges facing the country, she told the delegation: "I look forward to a society which respects rights ... heals the wounds of the past and looks with optimism at the future."

Her election was immediately applauded by the EU commission chief, Ursula von der Leyen, in a tweet praising Greece for "moving ahead into a new era of equality".

An expert in environmental and constitutional law, Sakellaropoulou will take the oath of office on 13 March, when she will formally succeed Prokopis Pavlopoulos, a former conservative minister who has held the largely ceremonial position for the past five years.

Raised in Thessaloniki, Greece's northern metropolis, she is the daughter of a supreme court judge and lives in a part of central Athens eschewed by most politicians.

Worldly and well read, her career has been defined at the vanguard of a minority of jurists unafraid to clash with prevailing sentiment in pursuit of the rule of law. Despite nationalist frenzy two decades ago she stood her ground as a leading

proponent of removing religious affiliation from civilian identity cards, a reform demanded by the EU but vigorously opposed at the time by conservatives and the country's powerful Orthodox church. In a nation on the forefront of the refugee crisis, Sakellaropoulou has also supported citizenship being granted to migrant children.

As Greece enters 2020 after a decade of battling its worst economic crisis in modern times, the appointment of a woman to the country's highest office has raised hopes that a new page is finally being turned.

Greek female MPs voiced optimism that the president-elect could serve as a role model to younger generations in a nation still getting to grips with the idea of gender equality.

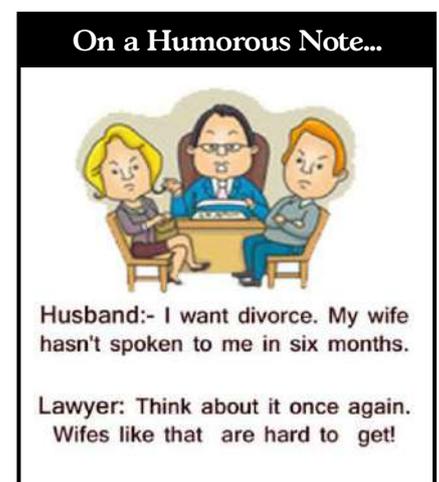
A mere five women currently hold cabinet positions – a scarcity that earned Mitsotakis wide criticism when his government assumed power in July.

Despite protests from some in the opposition that Sakellaropoulou lacked political clout, the rare consensus with which MPs supported her nomination in the first round of what could have been a five-round vote buttressed optimism on Wednesday.

## A mere five women currently hold cabinet positions – a scarcity that earned Mitsotakis wide criticism when his government assumed power in July.

In the past the failure of parliament to elect a president had frequently fueled dissent, triggering early elections that have spurred further political tumult. ●

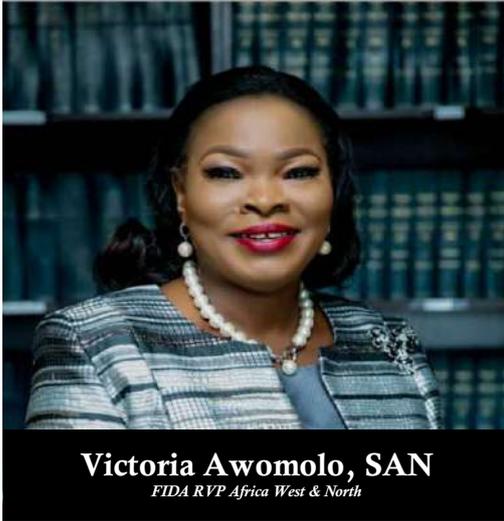
*Culled from THE GUARDIAN*



*(Culled from the Internet)*

# Child Labour: A Bane To Economic And Social Development *(Cont'd from last edition)*

- Victoria O. Awomolo, SAN



**Victoria Awomolo, SAN**  
FIDA RVP Africa West & North

## WHAT CAN BE DONE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ERADICATE CHILDLABOUR

Several approaches can be used to combat child labour and they are:

- I. Reducing poverty - widespread poverty is said to be the major cause of harmful child labour in developing countries. If the poverty level of households is reduced, child labour will also be reduced. Government can reduce poverty by channeling resources to people-oriented programmes such as poverty eradication, small and medium -scale loans scheme, subsidy on petroleum and agricultural products, as well as free, qualitative but compulsory education at all levels.
- ii. Educating children - making basic education compulsory will solve the problem especially in rural areas where children can be scheduled to attend school and work rightly without conflict.
- iii. Providing support services for working children where the causes of child labour may be known and with palliative measures like feeding schemes, literacy programmes etc can be used.
- iv. There should be a binding legislation against child labour in particular. This will help to check mate any perpetrator. Political will is needed here.

v. Raising public Awareness -this include improving child knowledge of work hazards raising parental awareness of the human capital loss that may be associated with child labour and changing the emphasis of policy makers.

vi. All employers of child labour should be arrested and prosecuted

vii. A department should be created under the Ministry of Women & Social Welfare with the mandate to go round factories, shops, streets, homes and farms to fish out child labourers.

## **CHILD LABOUR & HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The Trafficking in persons (Prohibition), Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 is an Act to provide measures against trafficking and for related matters.

Part IV of the Act provides for offences and penalties particularly as they affect children.

Section 15(a) thereof provides thus:

“Any person who -

a) By the use of deception, coercion, debt bondage or any means, induces any person under the age of 18 years to go from one place to another to do any act with intent that such person may be, or knowing that it is likely that the person will be forced or seduced into illicit intercourse with another person or....

S. 16(r) - Any person who procures or recruits any person under the age of 18 years to be subjected to prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation with himself, any person or persons, either in Nigeria or anywhere else, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to

imprisonment for a term of not less than 7 years and a fine of not less than N1,000,000.00 (One Million Naira).

S. 23(1) Any person who -

(a) Employs, receives or hires out a child under the age of 12 years as a domestic worker, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a minimum term of 6 months and not exceeding 7 years

(b) Employs, requires, recruits, transports, harbours, receives or hires out a child to do any work that is exploitative, injurious or hazardous to the physical, social and psychological development of the child, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a minimum term of 2 years but not exceeding 7 years without an option of fine.

(2) Notwithstanding the punishment prescribed in subsection (1) of this Section, a convicted person under this Section shall, in addition to the prescribed punishment, be liable to- (a) a term of not less than 2 years imprisonment where the child is denied payment or reasonable compensation for services rendered; or

(b) a term of not less than 3 years where the child is defiled or inflicted with bodily harm.”

These and many more are the copious provisions we have in our Statutes. What is required therefore is public cooperation with agencies of Government in reporting cases of child labour or child abuse in any form. Our culture of silence or condonation of evil should stop forthwith. The best interest of the child must be the paramount consideration for effective protection of our children.

There are few cases in this area of law due to the problems highlighted above but NAPITIP is really working hard to charge culprits to court. In the recent case of TITILAYO

FOLORUNSHO V. FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA (2019) LPELR 46463(CA) charges were brought against the Appellants under Sections 15(a) and 16 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 (as amended), which provides thus:

**“Procurement of any person for prostitution, pornography and use in armed conflict; Any person who.....**  
**15. (a) Procures, uses or offers any person for prostitution, or the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances; (b) Keeps a brothel; (c) Allows a person under the age of eighteen years to be in a brothel or trades in prostitution; (d) Procures, uses or offers any person for the production and trafficking in drugs; (e) Traffics any person for the purpose of forced or compulsory recruitment use in armed conflict. Commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for fourteen years without an option of fine”.**

In this case, the Appellant, Titilayo Folorunsho and her husband and co accused, Idowu Folorunsho procured the victim one Adesina

# Child Labour: A Bane To Economic And Social Development (Cont'd)

Opeyemi Abidemi for their sister/sister-in-law respectfully, one Odunayo Fashola for use in prostitution in Libya. The Appellant and her husband induced her to undertake the journey. She was subjected to horrendous and harzardous journey from Ibadan, Kano to Agadez in Niger Republic and through the Sahara desert to Tripoli in Libya. The victim was sold to one Madam Muliati in a brothel or connection house in Libya where she was subjected to the most dangerous form of sexual prostitution, meeting from initial five men daily to 15 or more! She was pregnant many times which pregnancies were aborted by her slavers and the many times she tried to escape, she was arrested and severely punished and forced to resume her sexual ordeal. She finally escaped to Nigeria through the help of one Joseph, a Ghanaian who testified as PW2. It is discovered that she was infected with the dreaded HIV disease and found to be pregnant again before her escape to Nigeria. The Appellants were charged to court and upon trial were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for the offences of procurement for prostitution in Libya contrary to Section 15(a) and 16 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 (as amended).

The Court of appeal held thus:-

**“From the evidence before the lower Court, the learned trial Judge was right in drawing from evidence the inescapable conclusion that the Appellant along with others procured Abidemi Opeyemi Adesina to be used for prostitution in Libya. Anyone who for the sake of lucre, deliberately sold his fellow human being into servitude either within or outside the country deserves nothing but outright condemnation. From the shores of their native land, the helpless victims are transported (as in the horrible epoch of slave**

**trade in the olden days) to a cold and pitiless world, a world with neither joy nor freedom. Therein they are forced to contend with very inhuman and degrading conditions and challenges such as prostitution and forced labour. Such culprits are glorified vultures in the image of human beings.**

**The Appellant has failed to show any reason why we should overturn the decision of the lower Court. The appeal lacks merit and it is accordingly dismissed. The judgment of the lower Court delivered on the 26th September, 2016 is hereby affirmed”.**

**CONCLUSION**

According to Koye- Ladele Mofenhintoluwa (Faculty of Law, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) writing in the Thisday Newspaper of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 on the topic ' the Future of the Nigerian child, he said: "Nigeria is presently one of the worst places in the world in which to be a child. The necessary ingredients for the balanced growth of a child are lacking in the Nigerian society.... Generally, in every country, the quality of life of a child's life is based on the financial capacity of the parents. In Nigeria, the finances of parents have not been favourable with the nation just emerging from economic recession amidst other challenges. The Almajiri system in the North of Nigeria gives the hardest knocks to education in the county. Despite the efforts of the government, the children are still not being educated. Almajiris were initially meant to be educated according to religious views, however, the system has degenerated to child migration and daily begging--- Nigeria has a legal framework for child protection. The Child Rights Act passed in 2003 is the best legislation in this regards as it incorporates the international charters such as Convention on the Rights of the Child and African Charter on Human and peoples' Rights. The law also outlaws

child human trafficking and sets up a government framework for the enforcement of child rights while it identifies their functions.....However, the impact of this law is suspect. There is need for concerted efforts from all concerned stakeholders to ensure an increase in school enrolment in Nigeria. There is also need to focus on healthcare. The need to translate the laws from the letters to the spirit has become more urgent that it has been ever been”

I agree in toto with the submissions above and I humbly add that children are the future of the nation, and so if they are vulnerable due to their age and are subjected to physically demanding work or labour which deprives them adequate plan for their future, then where is the future we so much want them to take over and control? They should therefore be protected from early exploitation and given opportunities for their physical, social and mental development. The increase in the number of layabouts, mentally demented and stunted persons in society spells doom for all (Basu1998).

An increase in child labour causes a

decline in the acquisition of human capital, lack of education and low productivity as adults. The endemic situation of drug abuse by children and young adults in almost every part of Nigeria is frightening, so much so that most of the drugs are difficult to identify or trace. Our younger generation is going into extinction by destruction from drug abuse! The question keeps coming to me- where is the future that we so much want our children to take over, manage and control? This is food for thought for all of us. The relevant local and international laws against child labour should be enforced in Nigeria. No child of school age should be allowed to stay out of school.

I thank you for listening. ●

## On a Humorous Note...



(Culled from the Internet)

# WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND ICT

- Mallaury Cervellera\*

We have entered into a digital age, an age where human rights are still violated and need to be reasserted. New technology helps us to implement actions to promote human rights, but at the same time it brings new challenges, raises new ethical questions and violates human rights. Not everyone has access to new technology and often new technology is male dominated. It is designed by men for men.

In this paper, I will focus on information and communication technology (ICT) which I will present as a tool to improve women's human rights all over the world, but as well as a threat towards women. The good and wrong practices show that there is a need to make new technology inclusive and in this paper, proposals will be presented in order to achieve it.

First of all, the access of ICT can be used as a tool for the empowerment of women and for protecting their human rights too.

With the use of a mobile phone and mobile internet, women can download an application in order to share their GPS location with their friends when they are going out to meet someone for the first time or when their fear to be alone. Another example of an app using blockchain technology is "Smashboard" from India. It aims to help victims of sexual violence seeking for assistance to connect with lawyers, mental health experts and journalists..

On the Internet, there are websites which allow women to have access to online courses, thus women can gain skills, knowledge and have an easier access to the labor market. They can use general websites made for everyone such as Futurelearn or EDx or specific courses tailored for women. The factor of mobility is not a barrier anymore for acceding to a basic human rights, education. Besides these courses, number of these platforms propose the possibility as well to follow courses on women's human rights.

In France, The French Online University proposed a massive open online course on gender-based violence at work. It had for goals to prevent and to educate people on how to react in case of an employee is victim of GBV at work. It gives advice on how to prevent the situation and how to react if someone report sexual or sexist violence, for what kind of help can the victim ask, from whom either internal or external actors, which legal recourse the



**Mallaury Cervellera**  
LAW, Athens

person has access. This course is a way to make the rights of women victims of violence at work known and to bring awareness to the situation.

An app called OMOMI, created by two Nigerians, connects pregnant women and mothers with doctors globally. An online consultation with a doctor is available for a fee. They can choose for a single consultation (0,5\$) or buy a monthly subscription (5,50\$). It has also as purpose to create a mother's community where future mothers can share experiences. It helps women to monitor the growth of their children up to a certain age, which is based on the WHO and UNICEF Childhood Survival Strategies.

Another example of an app is the online platform Buy for Women, project piloted by UN Women. It aims to enable an easier access for women farmers to land, information, markets and finance. On one hand, women can access important information such as prices, inputs or finances, on the other hand they become legitimate commercial subjects with digital records.

Thanks to this, they can secure their financial future and make the access to new markets easier. It allows women farmers as well to get in contact with other

farmers, coops and potential buyers.

Moreover, technology and access to internet can serve as a tool to bring peace and gender equality to areas where there are conflicts and wars. In Afghanistan, women use social media to make their voices heard at a national level but as well the international one. On January 2019, the US and the Taliban started to talk about peace. However due to the lack of women representation during the process, on February 2019, a group called Afghan Women for Peace gathered 3,500 women to discuss the peace process. The media coverage at the international level was very low, therefore the women used the hashtag #AfghanWomenWillNotGoBack to share photos, statement and bring the information to the public.

The presence of women on the web is lower than for men. Only 17% of Wikipedia biographies are on women. Groups of activists meet online or offline in order to reduce this gap. The umbrella group, WikiProject Women, wants to create more content related to women. It invites people to write or edit articles about women's work, biographies of notable women. In the online encyclopedia, there is as well a lack of women's perspective as the vast majority of the content creators are male.

One way as well to find solutions to women's human rights' violations would be to organize hackathon, whose main participants would be women and women's organizations. It will help to tackle different challenges faced by women as well as it will increase the visibility of women in STEM. In 2019, the City of Stockholm organized the biggest women's European hackathon. Different entities



## WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND ICT *(Cont'd)*

proposed 10 challenges which had for goal to deal with specific issues for women or for a larger target. The challenge of Case for Her won the first prize. It consisted in breaking the global stigma of female sexual health. The winning grant was an app named LUCY and aims to spread knowledge to more women about their bodies.



who do not have a mobile in Mexico is

abuse. Both app's store led investigations and then refused to delete the app from their platforms. Google claimed that it did not violate their terms of use. These few examples of wrong practices show that there is a need to protect women towards the abuse of new technology.

**Another example of the misuse of technology... shows that digital assistants from products such as Apple or Microsoft enhance gender biases, because the voice used is often by default female and is submissive.**

During the conception or improvement of new technology, companies need to include human rights as a key aspect of the design and take into consideration how the technology can be used and impact each human being, including woman. One of the barriers to it is the fact that this is an industry largely dominated by men. Promoting STEM fields among girls and women could reduce this gap. According to a UNESCO report, 35% of STEM students in higher education globally are women and only 3% of female students in higher education choose ICT studies. Having more women involved in tech would facilitate an inclusive approach during the conception of new tech products.

*Continued on PAGE 22*

**11% of women in the European Union have experienced cyber harassment since the age of 15. One form of cyber violence is the publication of non-consensual pornographic video or image. In 90% of the cases the victims are women. This is often the result of the behavior of a former partner.**

Even if these good practices are theoretically addressed to all women, not all of them, have access to them. In its 2018 Mobile Gender Gap Report, GSMA indicates that 10% of women living in low- or middle-income countries are less than likely to own a mobile phone than men and 26% of women in these countries are less likely to use mobile internet. The main barriers of the ownership of a mobile is the cost of it for men and women. For women it is emphasized that there is a low rate of literacy and in particular in digital literacy, there is as well a lack of awareness among women in these countries when it comes to mobile internet. It is felt that mobile internet is not relevant to their life. There is also a concern of safety, i.e. 40% of women



*(Culled from the Internet)*

## CEDAW@40 *(Cont'd.)*

challenges going forward. CEDAW has a critical role in ensuring that international standards are embodied in national laws, and institutions and procedures established to enforce these laws. The challenge remains as to how we can ensure that these standards, along with relevant international and regional human rights standards and mechanisms, are fully implemented.

CEDAW ratification is nearly universal - we would like to see all States uphold this convention. Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention currently stands at 113 so we need to redouble our efforts to see ratification of this important instrument.

While ratification is generally high many States parties maintain reservations especially to article 2, the State obligation to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and article 16 regarding equality of women and men

in marriage and family relations hence allowing discriminatory family laws.

I therefore on behalf of the Committee call on States to recommit to the Convention by delivering on its promises, withdraw reservations and achieve universal ratification of the Convention.

The Convention offers a unique binding, human rights-based foundation for furthering the ICPD, BPFA, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the women peace and security agenda. The work of the CEDAW Committee has been crucial in the acceleration of the implementation of these political commitments and need to be reviewed in that light for creating the future roadmap for narrowing the gender gap and achieving gender equality beyond 2020. In doing so I call upon all member states to support a 'CEDAW@40 and Beyond GA Resolution' which would help promote to serve

collective action and greater synergy between all human rights mechanisms beyond 2020. Also as the CSW is an important platform for reviewing and reformulating global policies on gender equality and women's empowerment, there is a need to create strong linkages between the CSW and the CEDAW Committee's constructive dialogue outcomes and follow-up recommendations.

With effective partnerships, an intersectional lens, and greater synergy between human rights mechanisms and between New York and Geneva, we can collectively shape strategies that resist the efforts to keep women confined to a world run by patriarchal oppression and inequality.

I thank you for your attention. ●

## WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND ICT *(Cont'd)*

Furthermore, designers and suppliers should be held responsible for the use of their technology. There is a need to make the terms of use more comprehensible and to protect sensitive data like the ones on health from firms. They don't need to know the mood of a person or when was the last time someone has her periods. It should be data that are forbidden to share. Social media firms should as well be held accountable for online violence.

Gender digital divide is "the inequalities between men and women in terms of access to information and communications technologies". This gap has been translated as the 5B target of the SDGs, which is called "Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women" and its indicator is the "Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex". Yet, when it comes to the access of internet worldwide, there is no indicator based on the sex. Such statistic should be created within the context of the SDGs due to the fact that the non-access to internet deepens inequalities. Affordable internet and phones should be accessible to everyone no matter the gender, the country or the income of a person.

To conclude, ICT has to be taken into consideration in the fight against the violation of women's human rights and in the achievement of gender equality. It has

the potential to be a leverage but as well a threat. Technology in the broadest sense of the word covers all the aspects of women's human rights but it has also opened new challenges that need to be tackled. One of the six Action Coalition themes announced for the Generation Equality Forum, which will be held in May 2020 in Mexico and in July 2020 in Paris, refers to the Technology and innovation for Gender Equality. The coalition aims to launch a targeted set of concrete, ambitious and immediate actions within the period of 2020-2025.

*\*Mallaurý Cervella holds a BA in Law, Economics and Management from the University of Angers, France and a MA in International Relations from the University of Lodz, Poland.*

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# Pictorial

## International Women's Day 2020 Celebrations around the world



Madrid, Spain



HRH Megan, Duchess of Sussex, UK



Al-Qahtaniyah, Syria



Santiago, Chile



Minsk, Belarus



London, UK



Manila, Philippines



Kabul, Afghanistan



Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan



Lima, Peru



Mexico City, Mexico



Lausanne, Switzerland



Sydney, Australia



Singapore



Moscow, Russia



Brasilia, Brazil



Paris, France



Baghdad, Iran



Islamabad, Pakistan



Yogyakarta, Indonesia



Pazarkule, Turkey



Saver, Bangladesh



Malaysia



National Library of New Zealand



H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan  
Former President of Nigeria



Phil Nneji,  
Chair, FIDA Lagos



Santiago, Chile



Lagos, Nigeria



FIDANs at Embassy of the  
Netherlands, Lagos



FIDA Nigeria, Lagos

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**To all FIDA Members,  
Country Vice Presidents  
and Executive Board Members:**

**NOTICE** is given that FIDA International dues are payable. Annual individual member dues are US\$40. Annual Branch dues are US\$400. All members who are not Life Members, are encouraged to pay outstanding dues at the earliest. Dues are due the 1st September every year and were last received from members and branches at the 2017 Convention in The Bahamas. It is crucial that dues are paid annually and consistently, in order to fund FIDA's ongoing operations. Members will be required to be in good financial standing prior to the commencement of FIDACON 2020 on the 2nd November 2020.

I, therefore, launch a special plea for all FIDA members and branches to start making payments now to ensure that they are in good standing ahead of the Convention. Members attending CSW64 may bring payments with them. Payments may also be made online on the website [www.fidaferadation.org](http://www.fidaferadation.org) via Paypal or you may contact the Treasurer for wiring instructions.

Thank you all for your co-operation and I look forward to seeing you at either the FIDA General Meeting and Parallel Event at CSW64 or at FIDACON 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland.

**Charisse Brown**  
*Fida International Treasurer*

**SAVE  
THE DATE**



# FIDACON 2020

The 37th Triennial Convention  
*of the* International Federation  
of Women Lawyers

 **2ND - 5TH NOVEMBER, 2020**

 **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.**



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