

NGO FORUM REPORT BEIJING + 10 DECEMBER 12-13 2004

SUBREGIONAL NGO REPORTS

EU countries

Kirsti Kolthoff, Women's European Lobby

Since Beijing, some real progress has been made in the European Union at the legislative level; the position of women in decision-making has improved. However, one of the most serious gap in EU action on gender equality is the absence of any binding measure to fight against violence against women, including the growing phenomenon of trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation and prostitution. In recent years, the EU has adopted an economic policy that stresses market liberalisation, privatisation and competition, and this has led to a greater feminization of poverty, less job security and a weakening of the European social model of social protection and public services. Another worrying trend is the negative influence of very conservative forces and religious fundamentalism, in particular in relation to women's sexual and reproductive rights.

CEE /CIS countries

Kinga Lohmann, Karat Coalition

Although the CEE women's activists support strongly the enlargement of the European Union since the changes of the laws can lead to the improvement of the situation of women, they are very concerned about a new process of inclusion and exclusion which has begun. Women – former partners – are now divided by new borders with some of them being inside the Union and others outside it. Karat Coalition with one foot in the EU and the other foot outside is extremely concerned about the increasing gap in the situation of women in the region, between those who have already joined the EU and those who are left outside.

Irina Kolomiyets, Liberal Society Institute

Recommendations for the future:

- National institutions responsible for women's empowerment should be financially provided and professionally staffed.
- Policy for equal opportunities should be based on country-specific gender investigation, gender statistics and results of gender monitoring and gender expertise.
- Budgetary policy should be gender sensitive, transparent and participatory.

Mira Karibaeva, Social Technologies Agency

Recommendations for the future :

- Develop and implement programs aimed at advancing gender equality within long term commitment and sustainability in mind, because establishing effective and strong inter country and inter regional relationships is not possible in a short period.
- These programs should also aim to work with government structures to change from rhetorical strategies to practical solutions that will lead to achieving equality of results.

- Strengthening of the existing potential of local gender experts via running, monitoring and evaluation joint programs. Only a strong local experts and expertise can ensure that these changes will be sustainable and irreversible in our region

Canada

Nancy Peckford, Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action

In Canada, high rates of poverty among single mothers, women of Colour, and immigrant and refugee women persist. Racialized and gender-based violence against Aboriginal Women goes unchecked. Instead, governments have prioritized the elimination of budget deficits and the national debt. Women have been disproportionately affected by reduced accessibility to vital social supports, including employment insurance, social assistance, legal aid, and core operating funds for women's organisations. Despite multi-billion dollar surpluses in the last seven years, there has been little re-investment in women's equality.

USA

June Zeitlin, Women's Environment and Development Organisation

At Beijing+5, women's groups reported a strong governmental commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action. But at Beijing +10, we have to report that the official governmental commitment to the Platform is weaving, progress towards implementation is stalled and undermined in key areas, including human rights, poverty eradication and reproductive health and rights, with disastrous consequences for American women, particularly the poor women of colour and immigrant women. Ratification of CEDAW is stalled and the effectiveness of the ICC is being undermined. Massive military expenditures for the war in Iraq and excessive tax cuts have principally benefited the wealthy. The few preexisting institutional mechanisms for women, including the President's Interagency Task Force on Women, have been dismantled. Women's representation in the Congress and State legislatures remains abysmally low at 14% and 22% respectively.

Lausanne, December 20, 2004