

## Greetings

The Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) is pleased to share recent developments as it embarks on a historic internal transition with the arrival of Radhika Balakrishnan as the new Executive Director. Staff and affiliates are committed to continuing CWGL's engagement with the women's human rights movement and strategic advocacy and programming on the Gender Equality Architecture Reform and, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaigns, as well as our other "flagship" programs. We offer a warm welcome to Radhika, who will join CWGL in September. Please look for future information about a reception and panel on October 1st to formally welcome her.

After extensive consultations with activists worldwide, the [2009 16 Days theme](#) has been developed: *Commit • Act • Demand: We CAN End Violence Against Women!* (see below for update). In late June, CWGL along with the [Women's Human Rights Defenders International Coalition](#) (WHRD IC) organized a strategic conversation entitled *Addressing Gaps in the Defense of Women Human Rights Defenders* (see below for synopsis). Photos from the meeting are now available online on [Flickr](#).

## Highlights

### **GEAR UP** Building a Stronger UN that Works for all Women!

In the last few months, the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign has continued to lobby with allies and speak with governments about the United Nations (UN) reform process. The Campaign has garnered the support of many Member States and key leaders for a strengthened women's rights organization at the UN. The GEAR team is working with countries and meeting with other governments to strategize about how to move the process forward. At this moment, it is crucial to have GEAR supporters speak at capital so that governments are updated about the process. Strong leadership must now come from governments in order to move this process to the next level.

It is essential to advocate for the following key points: 1.) It is crucial that member states adopt a resolution to create a new gender entity based on the composite (option D) during this GA session; 2.) The resolution should authorize a Under Secretary General (USG) position and direct the USG to lead the process or creating the entity; 3.) the new entity must be ambitiously funded with stable and predictable resources; and 4.) It is critical to ensure meaningful, systematic and diverse civil society participation in the women's entity.

### **Human Rights Council**

During the 11th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), a number of sessions focused on women and gender. These included an all day program on the human rights of women, which focused on integration of gender into the Council's work and equality under the law; and sessions on topics such as violence against women, maternal mortality, sexual orientation and gender identity, and on health. An effort to create a resolution promoting "traditional values" was deferred, an outcome welcomed by colleagues concerned about its passage. During this Council session, Yakin Erturk, the Special Rapporteur on VAW, its causes and consequences, delivered her [last annual report](#) to the Council, as her term comes to an end. Click [here](#) to read the 15 years of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences. [READ MORE...](#)

## News

### **India Court Decriminalises Gay Sex**

On July 2, 2009, Delhi's High court ruled that homosexual sex among consenting adults is not a crime and [read down](#) the infamous Section 377 [READ MORE...](#)

## Resources

Radhika Balakrishnan, CWGL incoming Executive Director co-authored [A Human Rights Response to the Economic Crisis in the U.S.](#)

Rana Husseini, WGLI graduate, has written, [Murder in the Name of Honour](#), a controversial examination of honor crimes.

[Bareed Mista3jil](#) is a collection of 41 true (and personal) stories from lesbians, bisexuals, queer and questioning women, and transgender persons from all over Lebanon.

Charlotte Bunch, CWGL Executive Director wrote, [Listen Up: UN Must Hear Women on Violence](#) in the Spring 2009 On the Issues Magazine.

## Women's Human Rights Defenders

CWGL in collaboration with the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRD IC) organized a strategic conversation on *Addressing Gaps in the Defense of Women Human Rights Defenders* from June 27-30, 2009. About 30 women human rights leaders representing 25 organizations and 19 countries convened at CWGL to discuss three thematic strands pertaining to gaps in the defense of women human rights defenders. The three working groups were: *Families, Communities and Culture*; *Sexuality Baiting, the use of sexuality to attack women's organizing*; and *Direct Accountability of Religious Fundamentalist Political Forces*.

Participants agreed that new and creative strategies must be developed to address these particularly challenging issues. They highlighted the need to develop conceptual and documentation tools and analyses and to actively promote the legitimacy of these concerns as human rights issues. They asserted the right of women human rights defenders to define, create and interpret their own values and cultures and evolve new forms of accountability particularly for non-state perpetrators within families and communities, which are not addressed under existing UN and regional human rights mechanisms. [READ MORE...](#)

In the coming months a formal report will be available showcasing the collective analysis that developed from the meeting.

Background materials from the meeting are available [here](#).

## Actions

### [GEAR Petition](#)

Support the GEAR Campaign and sign the petition.

### [Justice Now](#)

Take action and sign the petition to support the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

## Announcements

### [Google Restricting Ads that Promote Abortion Services](#)

### [United States Appointment of White House Advisor on Violence Against Women](#)

Congratulations to Rashida Manjoo, on her appointment as [Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences](#)

## 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

Based on the suggestions received during an e-mail consultation with civil society organizations, CWGL is pleased to announce that this year's theme for the 16 Days Campaign is *Commit • Act • Demand: We CAN End Violence Against Women!* CWGL dedicates the 2009 campaign to honoring groups and individuals who have committed to bringing VAW to the forefront of global attention, to encouraging everyone in their various capacities to take action to end VAW, and to demanding accountability for all of the promises made to eliminate VAW.



Recognizing that the 2009-2010 period marks a number of significant anniversaries – including Beijing +15 and the 30th anniversary of CEDAW, CWGL encourages groups to use this moment to demand individual, state, corporate, and civil society accountability for the commitments that have been made to women.

For more details, please read the [Theme Announcement](#) (available in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Greek, Arabic, Sesotho, and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, thanks to our volunteer translators!). Please share this theme announcement with your networks. The Take Action Kit should be available on the website and in hard copy by late August or September, so please check the 16 Days website for updates. Lastly, since this year's campaign will focus on the power of women's organizing and activism, send us creative suggestions for actions that campaign participants can take! Write to [16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu](mailto:16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu) with your ideas.

## Upcoming Events

- **July 20-August 7, 2009:** [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women](#), 44th Session, United Nations, New York.
- **August 3-8, 2009:** [4th Women in Africa and the African Diaspora \(WAAD\)](#), Nigeria.
- **September 2-4, 2009:** [NGO Forum to mark the 15th anniversary of ICPD](#), Berlin, Germany.
- **July 23, 2009:** [Equal and Indivisible: Crafting Inclusive Shadow Reports for CEDAW](#), NY, USA.

## Contribute

CWGL needs your support to continue our work for women's human rights. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to fund our efforts.

To support CWGL, please [click here](#).

## About Us

The Center for Women's Global Leadership develops and facilitates women's leadership for women's human rights and social justice worldwide. It was founded as a project of Douglass College in 1989 and is a unit of the [Institute for Women's Leadership \(IWL\)](#)—a consortium of women's programs at Rutgers University created to study and promote how and why women lead, and to develop programs that prepare women of all ages to lead effectively.



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