

UDHR60 March Highlights

April 1, 2008

The month of March, dedicated to women's human rights by the [Every Human Has Rights](#) 60th anniversary of the UDHR campaign, revealed a lively and dynamic mosaic of women's activism from the global to the local. At the end of February, the 2008 UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) kicked off with the theme of *financing for gender equality*. Thousands of women from all regions arrived in New York City to demand that sustainable resources are made available for women's empowerment and rights in every arena including in the UN system. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon opened the CSW with the launch of a UN-wide campaign to end violence against women. He pledged his support to ending all forms of violence against women and called upon male leaders around the world to join him as ambassadors for this cause. The [Center for Women's Global Leadership](#) (CWGL), along with over 250 partner organizations, launched the GEAR campaign, which demands a stronger "gender architecture" infrastructure at the UN.

In early March, as a part of the CSW, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, partnered with Amnesty International, AWID, Global Fund for Women, MADRE, and the Women Won't Wait, End HIV/AIDS and Violence Against Women. Now! campaign, to host an event celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The sponsors presented a number of global campaigns for women's human rights and speakers from Sri Lanka, Kenya, Mexico and Zimbabwe gave inspiring accounts of women's activism while also reminding us of the violations and discrimination that women, including women human rights defenders continue to face. They also reflected on the role women have played in expanding and securing women's rights as part of the human rights framework.

International Women's Day (March 8) was commemorated around the globe through a wide range of activities. A group of notable activists known as "The Elders" who pioneered the *Every Human Has Rights* campaign, spent the 8th of March paying tribute to the achievements of women and reaffirming their commitment to women's human rights in various locations: Mary Robinson in Dubai, Mohammad Yunus in Bangladesh and Ela Bhatt in India. The Center for Women's Global Leadership celebrated the 8th of March with the message [Human Rights for Women ↔ Human Rights for All](#), and executive director Charlotte Bunch traveled to Lima, Peru, where over 80 civil society groups sponsored a wide range of activities under the banner *Canto a La Vida - sing to life*, to recognize and celebrate the past 60 years of women's advocacy for human rights.

During the second half of March, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) began its seventh session in Geneva, where the mandates of many special procedures came under review and where advocates continued to press for integration of a gender perspective into all aspects of the Council's work. There were notable successes, including the report of the Special Rapporteur on torture, which had a specific focus on women, and the renewal of the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on violence against women and on

health and human rights defenders. Activists celebrated and paid tribute to the outgoing Special Representative for the Secretary General on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani, who through her tenure challenged the boundaries of the state's responsibility to protect defenders and their rights, and brought the specific experiences faced by women human rights defenders to the forefront, along with a focus on defenders of sexual and reproductive rights.

As March draws to a close, we urge activists and organizations to continue to integrate gender into all aspects of the *Every Human Has Rights* campaign including by highlighting the intersections of gender with the upcoming themes for the rest of 2008. Violations of women's rights are not limited to one day or month of the year. While the month of March gave a valuable spotlight to women, every month must see work for the fulfillment of women's human rights.

As a contribution to this ongoing effort, the Center for Women's Global Leadership dedicates the 2008 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign to the 60th anniversary of the UDHR, reminding us that human rights are universal and cannot be achieved without the realization of human rights for women. CWGL invites our partners, activists, organizations and individuals to join us in this year's 16 Days Campaign and to promote the message *Human Rights for Women* ↔ *Human Rights for All* throughout the year.