



WILDAF Newsletter

« ACTING FOR WOMAN'S AND GIRL'S RIGHTS IN AFRICA »

N°90-APRIL 2022



14-25 MARCH 2022
 **CSW66**
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

**CLIMATE CHANGE • ENVIRONMENT
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US :

07 BP 7755 Lomé – Togo

Tel. : (228) 22 61-26-79
CEL(228) 92 47 90 00

EMAIL :

wildaf@cafe.tg
wildaf@wildaf-ao.org

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WILDAF-AO

Women in Law and Development in Africa

Quarterly Newsletter

CONTENTS

Editorial	3
IWD2022/ CSW66Advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis	4
Strengthen the Community, Clinical and Legal Mechanism to Effectively Combat Teenage Pregnancy in Togo.....	7
Youth on the front lines against inequality in the Sahel.....	10
One woman's winning idea in taking climate action harnesses the power of the sun.....	15
Risk of sexual violence, unintended pregnancy soars in crisis settings, new report highlights.....	16

WiLDAF- AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST Newsletter

Contributing authors for this edition:

Kafui ADJAMAGBO-JOHNSON (Coordinator)
Nicole DAGAWA (Communication assistant)

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Web site: www.wildaf-ao.org

You may obtain further information at:

Tel: (228) 22 61-26-79

Cel: (228) 92 47 90 00

Email:

wildaf_ao@yahoo.com

wildaf@wildaf-ao.org

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EDITORIAL

Every 8 March, the celebration of International Women's Day (IWD), which is a rallying point for women's coordinated efforts to make their voices heard on a given issue, opens the doors to another major event. This is the Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the largest annual gathering of the United Nations (UN) dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment.

For 2022, International Women's Day has chosen **"Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow"** as its advocacy theme. This theme is in line with the priority theme of the [66th Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW66) held from March 14 to 25, 2022 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York: **"Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes"**.

The theme of the two events is not only to recognize the vital nature of women's/girls' leadership in addressing climate change, including disaster and environmental risk reduction, but also to foster changes in legislation, policies and processes related to climate change and the environment in favor of women and girls.

If it is established that men and women are equally affected by climate crises, why should changes in policies and legislation in favor of women/girls be encouraged?

In climate crises, it is true that both men and women experience the effects of climate crises, however, as in many areas, there are gender differences in this regard. Men and women experience these effects differently. This difference lies in roles, responsibilities, decision-making, access to land and natural resources, opportunities and needs.

Women make up the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent on threatened natural resources. They are therefore more vulnerable than men when climate crises occur and suffer the most severe impacts. Far from admitting defeat, these women innovate, adapt and redouble their ingenuity to find solutions for the survival of their communities.

Despite women's/girls' contribution to adaptation and response to climate change, they are absent from management and decision-making processes related to addressing climate change.

In the face of these challenges confronting with women, despite their contribution, it is necessary to reflect on how to reduce existing inequalities. While government solutions have the merit of addressing climate change, it must be recognised that they ignore the contribution of women and the challenges they face, thus increasing their vulnerability. There is therefore an urgent need to address existing inequalities in climate change processes and policies, which would change the lives of millions of women worldwide

The International Women's Day 2022, which set the tone for the [66th](#) session of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#), provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to unite around a common cause to protest against inequalities, assess women's and girls' actions in this regard, reconsider their contributions, and assert their rights by demanding their fulfillment. It was an opportunity for each actor to emphasize the need to take into account the practical needs, knowledge and skills of women in planning, implementing and assessing the success of actions in the context of climate change.

As actors of change, women must be part of the solutions. These events call therefore on us to continue to explore opportunities and overcome constraints to empowering women and girls to have their voices heard and to be equal actors in climate change decision-making process for sustainable development.

In this issue, WiLDAF Newsletter offers you an article on the IWD and the CSW66.

In the Network News section, we inform you about actions that have marked the life of the network in the last few months, especially the capacity building of young actors to fight against inequalities in the Sahel and WiLDAF's advocacy with competent actors for the reduction of sexual and gender-based violence in relation to early pregnancies.

In Africa and World News, we have selected articles on women's contribution to climate change and sexual violence in crisis entitled respectively: « One woman's winning idea in taking climate action harnesses the power of the sun » and « Risk of sexual violence, unintended pregnancy soars in crisis settings, new report highlights ».

[Enjoy reading!](#)

Advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis



Advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis and disaster risk reduction was the theme for IWD and CSW 2022. Climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of the 21st century. Its effects vary across regions, generations, ages, social classes, income groups and genders. When it comes to climate change, men and women experience the same effects. However, these climate hazards have differential impacts on women and men. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change. According to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the most vulnerable and marginalized populations will be the most affected. The overall finding is that women are more vulnerable than men and this is as a result of several social, economic and cultural factors. Women have less access to resources, land, credit, agricultural inputs, decision-making structures, technology, training and extension services that would strengthen their capacity to adapt to climate change. In addition to this array of challenges, another factor is the absence of women in the decision-making process, which leads to their needs not being taken into account.

With regard to these gender disparities in the context of climate change, the 2022 International Women's Day and the [66th Commission on the Status of Women](#), held from March 14 to 25, 2022 at the United Nations headquarters in New York, chose the following themes for a global mobilization on the issue: "**Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow**" and "**Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes**".

These themes pay tribute to women's contribution to the climate crisis response, and call on states to be aware of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women/girls, and thus to ensure gender justice in addressing inequalities in decision-making processes related to the issue.

The absence of women in the decision-making process in the context of climate crises,

raise the general problem of women's under-representation in public spheres and decision-making positions in the public administration, in the private sector and in other areas of activity. This theme has received global attention in 2021 at IWD and CSW 65.



Indeed, the issue of women's under-representation in the decision-making process in general and specifically in the context of the climate crisis, despite their proven competence as leaders and change actors, remains a challenge.

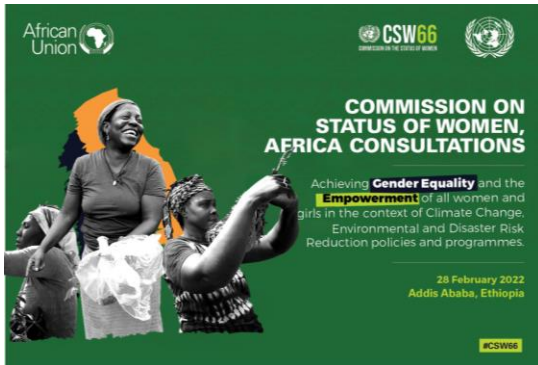
As stated in the Beijing Platform for Action: "Equal participation in decision-making is not only a matter of justice and democracy, but also a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account." It is therefore urgent for the world to react for the effectiveness of equal participation of women/girls and men/boys in decision-making processes, which is a condition for women's/girls' needs to be taken into account. " Without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace are impossible to achieve » (Beijing Platform for Action)

It is in this perspective that the world has mobilized around the issue on the occasion of the IWD and CSW66 to make women's voices heard.



On March 8, WILDAF-AO network carried out actions on social networks entitled She # Talks about Women and Climate as part of the advocacy for the reduction of inequalities experienced by women and girls in the Sahel vis-à-vis climate crises and insecurity. At the country level, activities were also carried out both in person and on social networks. These activities focused on various themes, including domestic violence and sexual violence, sexual reproductive health, women access to land...

Advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis



On March 14, 2022, the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) began. Given the health situation of COVID-19, the event was held in a hybrid format. Also, most of the side events were organized in virtual form at different levels.



Non-governmental organizations, having played an important role in the development of the global policy framework for women's empowerment and gender equality, are important stakeholders in the CSW. They therefore organize parallel events through NGOCSW which is a platform to promote the voice and leadership of women's rights and feminist organizations at the international level. The aim of these meetings is to influence the negotiations at key CSW discussions.

Civil Society Organizations Mobilization in Africa



Prior to CSW66 and under the aegis of CSW/Africa, a grouping of African women's networks including WILDAF, organized pre-CSW consultations from an African perspective with in order to come up with a common position for African women. The African Position or Declaration resulting from these pre-CSW consultations was used as an advocacy tool to influence the process with the respective policy makers at the official CSW66 session.

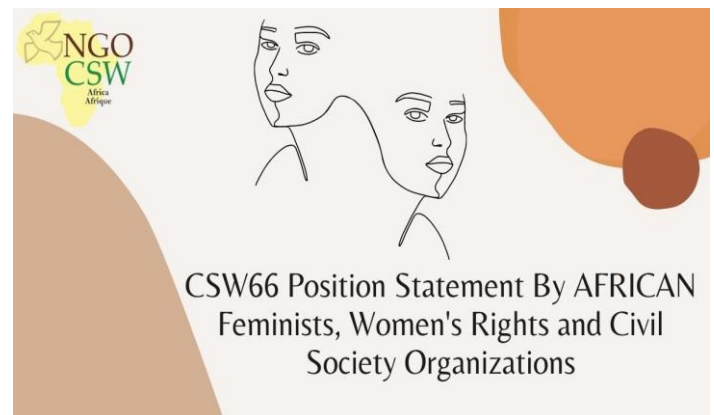


From March 14 to 17, 2022, was held in Nairobi, Kenya, the first ever African edition of CSW Africa, a gathering of African women's organizations and networks. These meetings were organized on African soil by FEMNET in partnership with other African organizations including WILDAF-AO alongside with CSW66. The objective of CSW66 Africa was to bring together African women and girls in a space where they can participate effectively in the virtual CSW and contribute meaningfully to the process of influencing the negotiations and the CSW final document.



WILDAF representative on the right Mrs. Amoudath Mazu

At the end of the CSW66 Africa, a common declaration of the women/girls of Africa made it possible to make their voice heard at the international level. In this declaration, African women and girls asked governments to:



Advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis

- recognize and reward Unpaid Care Work and Resource Governance,
- Indigenous and local knowledge systems must inform climate policy and action
- adaptation policies based on gender inclusive, participatory processes,
- improve adaptation finance,
- debt justice and adaptation finance,
- ensure climate justice
- put in place mechanisms to ensure adaptation investments reach women and girls,
- aligning global and regional climate policy instruments with national-level action plans,
- a women's rights-based approach to loss and damage,
- include non-economic losses to loss and damage,
- use an equity and empowerment approach to loss and damage,
- implement the sendai framework for disaster risk reduction,
- recognizing that women and girls bear the responsibility,
- climate financial flows and climate actions must contribute to long-term gender transformative change and pro-poor co-benefits at the local level,
- gender just transition,
- recognize africa as a special needs region,
- finance for implementation of the gender action plans



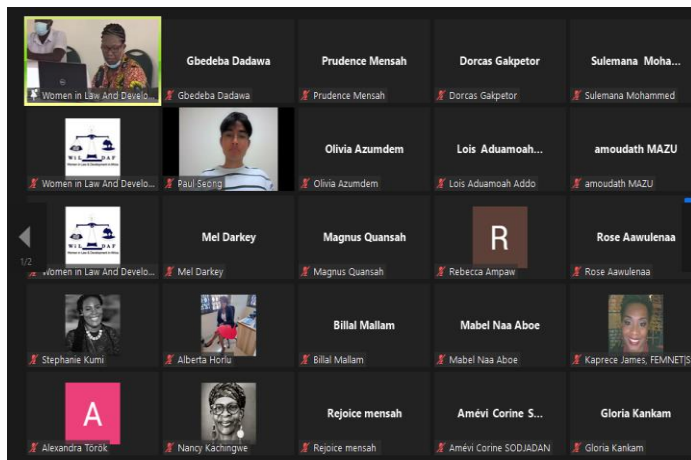
At the international level, the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women closed its session by paying tribute to the important role that women and girls play as change agents for sustainable development, particularly in protecting the environment and combating the adverse effects of climate change. However, it acknowledged with concern the disproportionate impacts of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters on all women and girls. This includes loss of homes and livelihoods, water scarcity, destruction and damage to schools and health facilities... it therefore emphasizes the urgency of eliminating persistent historical and structural inequalities, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination...

In the joint conclusions adopted by the Member States, the Commission urged governments to

- Promoting women's and girls' full and equal participation and leadership to make natural resource management and climate, environment and disaster risk action more effective.
- Expanding gender-responsive finance at scale for climate and environment action and to reach women's organizations, enterprises and cooperatives.
- Building women's resilience in the context of agricultural and food systems, forest and fisheries management and the sustainable energy transition.
- Enhancing gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data in the gender-environment nexus; and fostering gender-responsive just transitions.

Bibliography : Press release : UN Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms women's and girls' leadership as key to address climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction for all
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In addition to CSW66 Africa, WILDAF Ghana organized in collaboration with WILDAF-AO, a webinar under the theme "Rural women, legal literacy and economic emancipation" .in which organizations from West Africa participated.

The objective was to present the various innovative strategies used to advance the economic rights of female smallholders and producers in the cocoa and shea value chain in Ghana.

Strengthen the Community, Clinical and Legal Mechanism to Effectively Combat Teenage Pregnancy in Togo



Women in Law and Development in Africa – Afrique de l'Ouest (WILDAF-AO) in collaboration with the Togolese Association for Family Welfare (ATBEF) organized on March 24 and 25, 2022 at the Madiba Hotel in Lomé (Togo), two workshops bringing together various national actors to strengthen the fight against early pregnancy in Togo

The issue of teenage pregnancy is a major problem in the world. According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), nearly **16 million adolescent girls, aged 15 to 19**, give birth each year and 2 million girls under the age of 15 give birth each year.

These already alarming data are exacerbated by the COVID 19 health crisis, which has exposed women and girls to more sexual violence and sexual behavior leading to early pregnancy.

In Togo, according to a survey conducted by the Directorate of Educational Planning in collaboration with [UNICEF](#) and the World Bank, between September 2020 and March 2021, **1,222 cases** of pregnancy were recorded in the country's public secondary schools. These alarming figures show that despite the efforts made, the phenomenon of early pregnancy is growing, causing disruptions in the normal life paths of young girls and exposing them to increased risks of medical complications and death.

In response to this scourge, Women in Law and Development in Africa- Afrique de l'Ouest (WILDAF-AO) in collaboration with the Togolese Association for Family Welfare (ATBEF), has been committed since 2019 to fighting against the phenomenon as part of an action research project entitled "Preventing Gender-Based Violence and Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Rights Violations to Reduce Teenage Pregnancy in Togo," funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC).

Launched on June 11, 2019, the aforementioned project began with a baseline study that confirmed the need to sustainably respond to and prevent teenage pregnancy. An intervention model was then proposed by the researchers. This model consists of a multi-sectoral approach through the establishment of a collaborative framework that has an advisory and guidance role in the project implementation activities.



In addition to the collaborative framework, the model proposes other strategies, including capacity building of actors, awareness raising and clinical and legal services, denunciation, collective treatment of cases of gender-based violence in accordance with the law, and advocacy with the competent actors in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence.



It is within the framework of advocacy that the workshops were held, which brought together various national actors (prosecutors from the following cities: Aného, Atakpamé, Kpalimé Tsévié, Kévé, Sokodé, Kara and Dapaong in addition to a prosecutor from Lomé, representatives of the ministries of health, education, security and justice and members of civil society) competent in the field to provide effective responses to the fight against early pregnancy.



These meetings aimed to strengthen the application of legal measures related to the prevention and resolution of cases of sexual violence and other sexual abuse leading to teenage pregnancy.

Furthermore, the meetings aimed to strengthen the partnership between actors for a comprehensive care of survivors of gender-based violence and victims of early pregnancies in order to systematically strengthen the application of the legal framework for the care of these phenomena.

The program manager recalled that the implementation of the project in the cantons of Akpare, Yorokpodji, Lavie and Tove has resulted in, inter alia, an 84% reduction in the number of pregnancies in the targeted schools; the involvement of traditional and other leaders in the prevention and resolution of gender-based violence; positive changes in the social relationships between girls and boys and men and women in the targeted communities and the establishment of a platform for exchange between the actors (health, social, education, justice and civil society organizations) for the rapid handling of gender-based violence.

Following the various interventions on the implementation of the project, the fundamental question was: What can be done to continue to reduce the prevalence of early pregnancy in Togo?



The prosecutors who attended were unanimous on the need to strengthen the legal provisions, to apply them, and above all to punish the perpetrators of sexual violence leading to early pregnancy, preferably in open court, in order to deter future perpetrators.

"When cases of teenage pregnancy are reported to us, we first try to see if it is happening in our jurisdiction, then we see if the girl is in school, her age ... to determine the law to apply. Each time the cases are proven, we don't hesitate to apply the law, either by imprisonment or fines. We especially apply the law of May 16, sometimes it is not easy because the parents intervene to ask for the author's freedom. But we do not give in", explained Mr. Yao KLOUGAN, Public Prosecutor of the Court of Tsevie.



Despite the prosecutors' desire to punish the perpetrators of sexual abuse, they face persistent difficulties in handling cases of sexual violence against adolescents, whether or not resulting in pregnancy. According to the prosecutors, the non-reporting of cases of violence for fear or shame of being discriminated against, settling cases amicably within the family, sometimes with the help of clerics, due to socio-cultural constraints, family ties, and the late referral of cases to the prosecuting authorities (in these cases, the question arises as to whether or not to initiate proceedings and on what basis), the lack of medical care for the victims, the harassment of the victim's parents by those of the perpetrator, the absence of a state protocol for the care of victims of sexual violence and early pregnancy, influences from outside the judicial process, the recurrent withdrawal of complaints, the absence of a specific text relating to the case of pregnancy in the school environment... are an array of impediments to the smooth running of their work.

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Mrs. N'Zonou Odette, Public Prosecutor of the Court of Keve, who welcomed the implementation of the project, pleads for the adoption of a specific text for cases of pregnancy in schools: *"For us, rape is serious. It is even more serious when the rape results in pregnancy, and even more so when the girl is in school. Therefore, beyond the provisions related to pedophilia and rape of minors, we need a law that addresses pregnancy in schools"*.

According to the participants present, it is important to work in synergies in order to be more effective in the fight against the said phenomenon.

The second session consisted in working on the draft of the Protocol proposed by WILDAF and ATBEF relating to the comprehensive care of survivors of gender-based violence and victims of early pregnancy. The said protocol concretizes the achievements of the collaborative framework set up by the project for the fight against gender-based and sexual violence in connection with early pregnancy for an efficient care of the victims.



It aims to systematically strengthen the application of the legal framework for dealing with these phenomena while indicating the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved in the process.

The document is subdivided into two parts: care for victims of gender-based violence and care for victims of early pregnancy. It also includes psychological, medical and judicial care. It is intended for the technical services of the ministries concerned, civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the area of the fight against gender-based violence, and any person who is a victim or witness of gender-based violence.



The workshop made it possible to finalize the said protocol which, for the various stakeholders, constitutes an information and awareness-raising tool as well as an educational tool and a guide for the various actors involved in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence leading to early pregnancy.



After validation by: The Ministry of Justice and Legislation, the Ministry of Health, Public Hygiene and Universal Access to Health Care, the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education and Handicrafts, the Ministry of Social Action, Women's Promotion and Literacy, and the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection, the protocol will serve as a reference document for the management of victims of sexual assault, particularly adolescent girls.

The project "Preventing Gender-Based Violence and Violations of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Rights to Reduce Teenage Pregnancy in Togo," funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), aims to propose an integrated model of responses to teenage pregnancy that takes into account gender-based violence in order to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls in Togo

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YOUTH ON THE FRONT LINES AGAINST INEQUALITY IN THE SAHEL

Sahelinsight

**« Nous sommes convaincus que les inégalités
constituent un fléau qui installe la guerre, le
terrorisme, l'insécurité, l'instabilité politique, la
confiscation des richesses... »**

Les Sahelactivistes



In order to raise awareness among young actors to fight against inequalities that undermine the lives of people in the Sahel, WILDAF-AO and AfricTivistes, in partnership with Oxfam have strengthened the capacity of young leaders (women / men) from Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Niger from January to April 2022, on civic engagement, gender and women's leadership within the framework of the Sahel A Égalité Program initiated by Oxfam.

Despite the potential for social, economic, and human development in the Sahel region, the populations are still facing a deep multidimensional crisis, leading to inequalities. These social disparities manifest themselves in all areas of life, persist at high levels, and coexist and fuel numerous crises and conflicts in the region. In response to the magnitude of these crises, Oxfam has initiated a program called Sahel A Égalité, in which social movements, civil society, youth, and women are the main actors of change to address these inequalities in the Sahel.



The Sahel A Égalité Program aims to strengthen trust between the state and the population at all levels in order to reduce inequalities in the Sahel through a new social contract. It encourages a new awareness and participation of young actors of change on issues related to the reduction of inequalities in the Sahel. It is implemented in partnership with other organizations such as WILDAF-AO, AfricTivistes, WACSI...

It is within the framework of this program that the capacity building series organized by AfricTiviste and WILDAF-AO on civic engagement, gender and women's leadership, whose objective is to make young women and men leaders, central actors in the implementation of strategies to fight against inequalities and to arouse in them a civic mobilization in favor of public policies adapted to the reduction of inequalities in the Sahel.



This series of trainings facilitated by AfricTivistes and WILDAF-AO in partnership with OXFAM, aimed specifically at strengthening collaboration between Sahelian CSOs and local authorities to improve access to essential services for all, to accompany civil society actors in Sahelian countries in expressing their demand for increased accountability and transparency of public resources, and finally to increase the effective participation of young men and women, especially the most marginalized, in decision-making processes that affect them in a safe and conducive civic space.



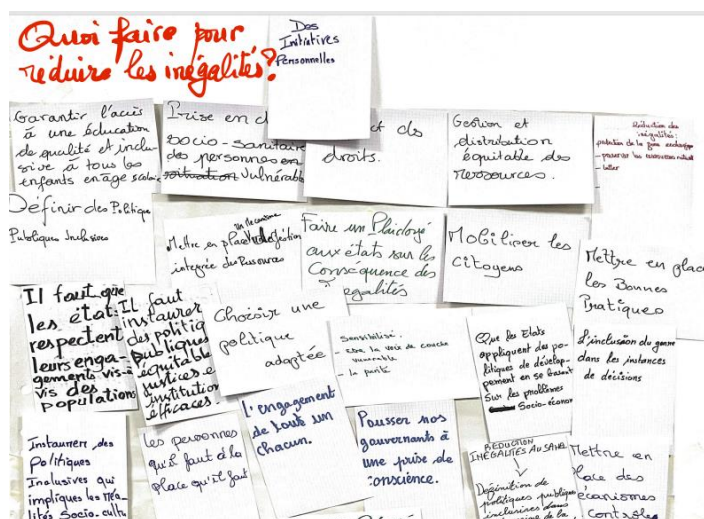
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A first series of training sessions organized by AfricTivistes in partnership with WILDAF and Oxfam have equipped 80 young men/women aged 18 to 40 years old, on civic engagement and participation and the notion of gender. During the sessions, the young "Sahel Activists" tried to define themselves inequalities in the Sahel as the unjust and unequal distribution of wealth resulting from a political, institutional, economic and social situation. According to them, inequality translates into discrimination and limitation of the rights of the vast majority of the population aggravated by the weight of tradition and culture. "We are convinced that inequalities constitute a scourge that installs war, terrorism, insecurity, mistrust, political instability, underdevelopment, confiscation of wealth", argue the Sahel activists of Chad.



Mrs. Seck, gender expert at WILDAF-Senegal, explained to the participants that inequalities are also translated by "gaps that affect the condition of men and women in terms of satisfaction of needs, participation in management and decision making at the family and community levels". She therefore advocated for the consideration of gender in the development of more inclusive public policies.

Aware of the importance of mainstreaming gender in order to reduce inequalities, the young actors of change believe that it is necessary to mobilize influential actors to promote women's empowerment, to take into account the gender aspect in the elaboration of more inclusive public policies and to facilitate women's access to basic social services and production factors. "It is urgent to redefine a new narrative, taking into account socio-economic inequalities with a better approach to the notion of gender," say the Sahel Activists of Senegal.



The participants also proposed solutions to reduce inequalities in the Sahel, including equitable distribution of wealth, access to information, access to quality basic social services, effective access to education for all, equality in law and justice, the end of child marriage, good governance and transparency in the management of public affairs, social justice, citizen involvement and participation in public affairs, awareness of inequalities, the evolution of certain social norms, and keeping girls in school.

According to the participants, the training was a great learning opportunity: "This training is interesting because it has equipped us to carry out our actions with the means at our disposal. It is also a good lever to seize the different opportunities available to us to fight against inequalities," says Oumou Kane of Sahel Activistes Niger.

BAILOU Bénédicte, a lawyer specialized in women's rights and coordinator of the association Femin-in which promotes women's civic participation in Burkina Faso, considers that the training was practical, intense and technical. "Practical because of the methodology based on the collective intelligence used by the AfricTivistes. Intense because they had to concentrate throughout the session due to the importance of the contents. Technical, as they were equipped to achieve the expected results".

At the end of the training, the young activists set up action plans for each country with the creation of several platforms with the assistance of the AfricTivistes to carry out awareness raising, campaigns and advocacy.

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The digital campaigns and online trainings outlined in the action plans will be implemented in the different countries. The young activists have also mapped the different influential power actors whose actions can impact inequalities



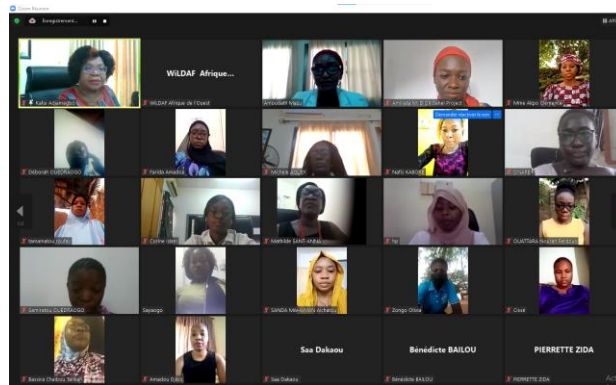
At the end of the training, the young leaders intend to implement several intervention strategies, including online and offline activities. They intend to use the internet and social networks as a venue for information, dialogue, learning and influence.

In Burkina-Faso, a digital campaign has already been carried out by the Sahel Activists entitled ##ENFANTSPASMADAME to end child marriage.



In Senegal, the Sahel Activists have set up the SenEgalite platform, which aims to be a benchmark in the fight against inequality by making a database available to Senegalese Internet users. *"To better popularize and promote our participation efforts, we have set up the senegalites.org platform. This digital tool will allow us to fight against inequalities and to bring our States to commit to reduce this scourge. Especially since we are in an area where inequality issues are glaring. Together, we can do it and we will do it through online awareness campaigns"*, Alice Djiba, Journalist, beneficiary of the training within the framework of the Sahel Insight project

The second series of online training organized by WiLDAF-AO in partnership with Oxfam has helped build the capacity of about 70 girls and women aged 18 and 35 years in Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal in women's leadership. The objective was to enable them to be and remain leaders in their daily lives with regard to inequalities by raising awareness of their condition in order to provide an adequate solution and increase their civic participation.



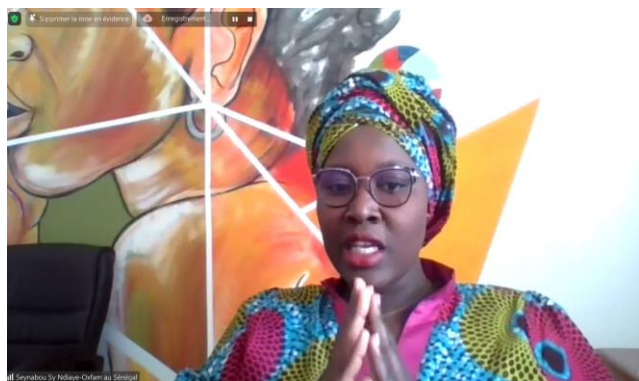
"We all have a role to play in influencing policy and protecting our civic space in order to perpetuate freedom of speech and defend our interests... We hope that at the end of this training, we will have girls who are strengthened and committed to defending their rights and those of their peers, girls who are ready to influence the policies of their country so that women's rights are well taken into account," explained Ms. Aminata M Diop of Oxfam to the participants at the beginning of the training.

The young activists were trained on various notions such as gender equality, gender, values and practices of women's leadership, self-confidence and self-knowledge, self-fulfillment, decision making and speech, communication and relational skills, digital mobilization and gender justice, young activists.



They also learned from the experiences of their elders in the person of Mrs. Bintou Samaké, Chair of WiLDAF Mali, who said: *"I will never get tired, I have a lot of courage and I am aware that the fight I am leading is a noble one because through it, many women have been able to access their rights"*

NETWORK NEWS



In addition to this experience, Ms. Mame Diarra Senghor of Oxfam shared with the participants her experience as an activist and also explained to the young activists the notion of gender justice by explaining that: "Gender is this balance of power of access to resources, access to information, access to opportunities between men and women. The practice, the reality has shown that women are those who are the most vulnerable and most disadvantaged by society in the sense that when we speak of gender justice we speak of its corollary which is the right of women ... "The challenges are enormous in reducing inequalities in Africa. These glaring disparities noted particularly in access to essential services deprive millions of Africans of happiness and push most of them to live in misery".

Aware of the challenges to overcome, Hounnou H. Honorine declared «From now on, when faced with a situation of injustice, I commit myself to change it. I hope to be better equipped to overcome the injustices that prevail in our African communities.

The participatory process of the training allowed young activists to interact with each other on the themes and to share their experiences.. It emerged from the interventions, an appropriation of the acquired knowledge. They also identified the problems faced by women and girls in their respective countries such as bad governance, norms and practices that are harmful to women and girls, loss of homes and means of subsistence, water shortage, child marriages, lack of education and information, lack of access to essential services, politics that prevents them from approaching the authorities to claim their rights and enjoy them in the same way as men... They also insisted on the overload of domestic tasks that prevent their empowerment and committed themselves to fight against inequalities in these terms:

"The awareness is first for the woman and then for the population" says Madjibeye Françoise from Senegal

Bintou Ngaba from Chad says: *"We must have the courage to face the challenges, be ready to face adversity and the reluctance of men. We can do it."*

At the end of the trainings, requests were made individually in writing and through videos, poem...

Here are some excerpts from the requests made by the girl leaders



"I am a woman: I am the mother, the housewife, the linen maid and the cook... But I am more than that! I am educated, professional, dynamic and so much more.

So why do you put limits on me? My fulfillment is not just in the house. I need more than that, I am more than that. I need to be educated, I need to be active, and I need to manage my resources. And for that I need to be involved in the decision-making processes.

#MyOpinionCounts.

"They say we are mere women. We are not mere women... Women leaders, Where there is a will, there is a way, we can reverse the trend. When we are determined, we can do it. If we want to achieve our goals, let's minimize the obstacles.

NETWORK NEWS

"We want women to be able to occupy important positions in society in order to make important decisions that force the authorities to good governance and that rural women have a voice and that their opinions are taken into account for a better development of a nation, that they have their own plot of land to better cultivate and not to live on their husband's duke by working like slaves.

One question remains for the authorities of Chad: Why is the Ministry of finance in Chad never headed by a woman? Why are the opinions of the poor not taken into account? Why are the children of the poor not given access to jobs and high positions even though they are super intelligent? Why don't the children of the poor, if they manage to occupy great positions, also have the same salary as the so-called children of the rich? The list is long !

"Dear Sahel authorities, inequalities are becoming more and more pronounced. Resources are poorly distributed, access to education is an unattainable dream, health care is becoming more and more difficult. Water, so vital, is difficult to access or of poor quality and eating healthy is becoming a utopia.

This note is addressed to you in hopes that you will do what is necessary to reduce these inequalities. I dream of a Sahel where:

- access to water and electricity will be effective for all layers of the population food self-sufficiency will no longer be a dream but a reality

- All children will go to school and will benefit from quality education without distinction of social class or race;

- Our medical facilities will be well equipped and access to health care will be effective, even free of charge for vulnerable groups;

- Employment will be easy and accessible for our young graduates;

- Men and women will be treated equally at all levels.

This dream will not be possible without you, dear authorities of the Sahel. So help us to do what is necessary to make this dream a reality

"Oh woman!

Don't accept to be trampled upon because you are a woman

Don't accept to be called incompetent because you are a woman

Don't accept that your rights are violated because you are a woman

Fight for the respect of your rights

Get involved in politics because you have a say

Fight against the injustice done to your peers

Know that you are capable of changing the world

Because without you, man would not be able to do anything

You are the foundation of success and happiness

Love yourself

Believe in yourself

And fight because

Only the struggle liberates".

At the end of the training sessions, a certificate of participation was given.



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ONE WOMAN'S WINNING IDEA IN TAKING CLIMATE ACTION HARNESSES THE POWER OF THE SUN



JOHANNESBURG, South

Africa – As a girl, Agnes Kimweri would visit her village's sole medical dispensary in Tanzania and see a steady stream of motorcycles emitting noxious fumes dropping off patients. When she grew up, "I realized that the dispensary received 400 patients per month, which equals 400 motorcycles producing an average of 500 kilograms of carbon emissions," she explained. "Most came with a problem that could easily be solved if reached in time without having to ride on the back of motorcycles on rough roads, which could lead to further complications." An idea was born: Solar-powered motorcycles to reach pregnant women at home. It was one of 111 applications from across east and southern Africa to [UNFPA's Climate HackLab](#), which narrowed the field to 11 entries to undergo a two-week intensive boot camp organized in partnership with AfriLabs, an Africa-based innovation business incubator/accelerator. Camp participants learned about product testing and branding, entrepreneurship and climate change adaptation among other topics before pitching their ideas to a panel of climate and business experts.

Win-win ideas

Two winners emerged: Agripa Maposa from Zambia, whose idea provides low- cost loans to women farmers to buy solar-powered irrigation equipment and other tools to improve crop yield, increase income and build community resilience to the effects of climate change. And Ms. Kimweri, whose solar-powered motorcycles transport lab technicians to connect hard-to-reach communities with medical lab services for pregnant women and children under five, eliminating the cost of transportation for the vulnerable and providing them with comprehensive reproductive health information and services while reducing the carbon footprint of personnel.

The HackLab, which launched in May 2021, will support the projects with seed funding and a six-month incubation programme, during which the winners can further develop their ideas and meet with investors and other innovators.

Women and girls and other vulnerable populations are disproportionately [affected](#) by climate change but they need to [participate](#) in climate action – adaptation, mitigation and response. A community that is not gender equal cannot be a climate-resilient one.

In adopting the [decision](#) of the [Subsidiary Body for Implementation](#) in November, the [Conference of the Parties](#) recognized "that the full, meaningful and equal participation and leadership of women in all aspects of the UNFCCC [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] process and in national- and local-level climate policy and action is vital for achieving long-term climate goals."

For Ms. Kimweri, the home visits have become more than health consultations. She has been instructing her mostly female patients – many of them rural farmers whose livelihoods have been affected by drought – climate issues related to health, such as the best foods to improve health, generating income, harmful chemicals in growing vegetables and debunking myths about reproductive health.

"Women and youth are the most affected by climate change," she said. "Incidentally they form the fabric of our society and have amazing solutions to everyday problems. Women are drivers of change, and there cannot be any sustainable solution to the effects of climate change without them."

Agnes Kimweri de Tanzanie a eu l'idée de motos à énergie solaire permettant aux techniciens de laboratoire de rendre visite aux femmes enceintes à domicile. Photo fournie par le sujet.

Agnes Kimweri of Tanzania came up with the idea of solar-powered motorcycles for lab technicians to visit pregnant women at home. Photo courtesy of subject

Source : unfpa.org

Risk of sexual violence, unintended pregnancy soars in crisis settings, new report highlights



UNITED NATIONS, New York/JUBA, South Sudan – Globally, an estimated half of all pregnancies are unintended, a recent [UNFPA report](#) highlights. But during a humanitarian crisis, the conditions that erode women's ability to exercise bodily autonomy and reproductive choice increase catastrophically, multiplying the risks of unintended pregnancy. Contraceptive services and sexual and reproductive health information are much harder to come by in crisis settings, leaving women less able to control their fertility. Additionally, the stresses of conflict are known to heighten women's vulnerability to gender-based violence – including sexual violence and various forms of intimate partner violence. Sexual violence leads to pregnancies at rates similar to or greater than consensual sex, while survivors of intimate partner violence are twice as likely to report experiencing an unintended pregnancy compared to women who have not experienced violence. Finally, coercion and exploitation tend to thrive in humanitarian settings, as desperation can lead individuals to engage in sex work for survival or fall victim to traffickers. These facts show “how easily the most fundamental rights of women and girls are pushed to the backburner, especially during times of crisis – precisely when they are at greatest risk of being sidelined,” said Dr. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA's Executive Director.

Pregnant in a crisis

In Afghanistan, UNFPA estimates that conflict, health system disruptions and barriers to women's ability to exercise reproductive decision-making will lead to 1 million more unintended pregnancies each year between 2021 and 2025. Unintended pregnancies, in general, are linked to greater health risks to women, including higher maternal death rates as well as worse health and economic outcomes for families and communities.

Unintended pregnancies in humanitarian and fragile settings come with many added risks, including scarce access to life-saving health services. In 2015, UNFPA estimated that more than [60 per cent of all maternal deaths](#) occurred in such conditions. Humanitarian crises have only proliferated since those estimates, and the world now faces [record numbers of people forcibly displaced by war](#), persecution, pandemics and other large-scale disasters.

On-the-ground health and aid workers highlight the particularly grave consequences of pregnancies that result from sexual violence. These “unintended pregnancies have social and psychological effects on women and girls,” said Dr. Wato Chuol, who works with International Medical Corps, a UNFPA partner, to provide health care to displaced people in Juba, South Sudan. A health worker talks about family planning at an IDP camp in Wau. ©UNFPA South/Sudan Bruno Feder

The consequences of these situations spill over generations. Not only are women and girls forced to grapple with pregnancies they did not choose, under circumstances they did not choose, but the children born from these situations can also face extraordinary hardships.

“We delivered a lady who refused to touch her newborn at our health facility,” Dr. Chuol said. “The midwife and I were surprised that she seemed unhappy about seeing the newborn. Later on, we discovered that her pregnancy resulted from sexual assault. In the end she eventually left the baby at the facility.”

Resorting to unsafe abortion – one of the world's leading contributors to maternal death – is another dangerous fallout. “In the last two years, I have witnessed an increased number of women who attempted abortion,” said Dr. Chuol.

Elevate the status of women

Dr. Chuol say the best protection for women and girls is elevating their status with gender equality, education and opportunity – even in the darkest humanitarian emergencies.

UNFPA is calling for sexual and reproductive health information and services to be considered a non-negotiable part of every humanitarian response. Alongside sexual and reproductive health care, survivors need protection from gender-based violence, safe spaces, psychosocial support and referrals to legal and justice systems, all embedded within broader humanitarian efforts.

“A girl educated today has a greater chance of becoming a productive woman tomorrow... With free and informed choices, girls and women can thrive,” Dr. Chuol said.

Source : [unfpa.org](#)