

Communicating for Change: Voice, Visibility and Impact for Gender Equality newsletter



Giving voice to gender equality

The Gender Thread in The Mekong Media Forum



What voices and spaces do women journalists have in the Mekong region newsrooms? And how are women and gender issues portrayed in the region's media? What changes in press laws and access to information have taken place in the last 15 years? And what do audiences expect in the age of more openness?

These are some of the questions to be discussed and debated at the Mekong Media Forum, to be held in the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai on 9-12 December 2009. It will be organised by IPS Asia-Pacific and Probe Media Foundation Inc, two Asian and Southern-based organisations that since 2002 have been running the Imaging Our Mekong media fellowship programme for Mekong journalists.

The Forum will be a key opportunity to assess the representation of women in media across the Mekong region, and to share best-practices with other parts of South-east Asia.

In particular, an overall picture of media organisations' awareness and understanding of gender sensitivity in media and coverage of gender and women will be traced. Journalists and editors will have the chance of comparing their experiences in the area of coverage and reportage of gender and women, including the use of gender-sensitive language in news copy in the diversified media environments of the region.

Helping media internalise gender awareness as an editorial value will be a key priority of IPS Asia throughout the Forum. The 3rd edition of the IPS Gender Glossary will be launched on this occasion.

The "gender thread" in the Forum is being weaved in as part of IPS Asia-Pacific's work within the ongoing global IPS initiative, 'Communicating for Change: Getting Voice, Visibility and Impact for Gender Equality'.

There are many Asian media events — but a Mekong media event is a unique opportunity to listen to, discuss with and learn from the journalists of this fast-changing yet often under-reported region.

Be part of it, write to coordinator.mekongmediaforum@mail.com

Partnering to strengthen communication

Five MDG3 Grantees and IPS work together on customised plans.

In Latin America we are working with the **Latin American Group for Justice and Gender (ELA)** in Argentina and with **Coordinadora de la Mujer** in Bolivia; African partners are **FIDA Kenya** and **APC**; in Asia our partner organisation is **Women Living Under Muslim Laws**. IPS will work on customised media and communication plans with them to strengthen the visibility of their work. With others, they are also active partners of the national or regional media and civil society thematic seminars IPS is organising within the MDG3 programme of work.

MDG3Fund

www.mdg3.nl

"Communicating for Change: Voice, Visibility and Impact for Gender Equality" is an IPS project from 2009 to 2011 that is partially financed by the Dutch Ministry's MDG3 Fund: Investing in Equality. For more information write to: mdg3@ips.org.

AFRICA: Raising the Profile of Gender-Based Violence

IPS Africa and the UN Millennium Campaign host the second IPS MDG3 seminar in Nairobi, Kenya.

By George Mwita

Imagine you are a journalist; you get a tip for a story about a sexual assault on a ten-year-old girl, and pitch it to your editor.

You think it's a strong story idea - fresh news of a violent crime illustrating a widespread social problem; aching human interest angle and solid sources. But he - and chances are high that your editor is male - is not interested.

Susan Wabala, from Peace Pen Communications, a Kenyan media organisation focused on social change, peace-building and conflict resolution, says just such a story about the rape of a minor in the girl's family home was turned down by

editors. "We gave the editors that story but they never wanted to run it, simply because it was one of those stories that don't sell," she says.

Wabala's experience was a common one for East African journalists attending a workshop on reporting gender-based violence organised by Inter Press Service in Nairobi during August 2009.

The workshop, part of the IPS communication project on gender equality and women's empowerment supported by the Dutch government's MDG3 fund, was also the occasion for the launch of a handbook for journalists on GBV.



Zipporah Masau (centre) makes a point at the workshop on covering gender-based violence

Credit: Abdullah Vawda/IPS

To read the complete story, visit the IPS MDG3 webpages -- <http://www.ips.org/mdg3>

Millennium Development Goal 3 and the Role of the Media

IPS Support Group Meeting, November 26, 2009, Rome.

As we celebrate the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, the meeting will primarily focus on how communication can contribute to ending violence against women and on recognising the CEDAW 30th anniversary.

Senior representatives of civil society partner organisations, UN agencies and academics will introduce innovative ways of getting messages across, and stimulate a

debate about how to strengthen communication efforts over gender issues. But we will also take advantage of the event being in Rome and the timing immediately prior to Copenhagen to invite the three Rome-based UN agencies to address the issue of gender and climate change.

During the meeting, IPS will also hold the international launch of its new *Reporting Violence against Women* media handbook.

The seminar "*Millennium Development Goal 3 and the role of the media*" is the public part of the annual meetings of IPS that bring together media clients, donors, board members and partners of the news agency.

MDG3 co-grantees organisations are invited to join us in Rome.

For more information write to: supportgroup@ips.org

IPS Partners with UNIFEM to mark the 30th Anniversary of CEDAW



On 18 December 2009 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) will mark its 30th anniversary.

Often described as an international bill of rights for women, CEDAW provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men.

In a very real sense CEDAW is the legal bedrock upon which a goal like MDG3 "Promote gender equality and empower women" rests. Since its adoption by the UN General Assembly 186 countries have ratified the Convention.

UNIFEM and many other women's organisations are looking to the opportunity that the 30th anniversary offers both to assess progress, and to underscore the continuing need to press for full implementation of CEDAW. A celebration event will be held on December 3.

IPS wants to add a communication component to these efforts by commissioning a series of articles,

columns from international leading thinkers and interviews to be published until December.

All the articles are being featured on the new [Women in the News / Las Mujeres son Noticia](#) websites and in [The Gender Wire newsletter](#), which has already attracted more than 3,000 subscribers.

IPS is already co-operating with the "Pathways to Empowerment" initiative to gather the stories of CEDAW's first 30 years. This work is undertaken within the framework of our overall programme "Communicating for Change: Getting Voice, Visibility and Impact for Gender Equality".



The New Gender Blog from IPS

Masala is an aromatic, flavour-enhancing blend of spices, originally from India and now global. Masala has many variants, each with a different personality and purpose. This brings out the flavour of gender issues.

From photography to pornography and polygamy, from abortion to adoption, from grammar and genes to glass ceilings, from sexual diversity to sexual abuse, expect sharp writing that blends the

personal and the political, reflections on topics as wide as the stories that IPS covers.

Author Mercedes Sayagues is a journalist and editor with a lifelong membership in the global women's movement, from her home country of Uruguay to South Africa, where she now lives. IPS writers and partners add zest to the blog.

Gender Masala is part of the Inter Press Service project. Check the Blog at <http://www.ips.org/blog/mdg3>

Contact Us

IPS Inter Press Service
Via Panisperna 207, Rome,
00184, Italy

Tel: +39 06 485 692
Fax: +39 06 481 7877

email: mdg3@ips.org
website: www.ips.org/mdg3/



www.ipsnews.net/



www.ips.org/mdg3/

MDG3Fund
www.mdg3.nl

RIGHTS: UN Approves Long-Awaited New Women's Agency

By Thalif Deen

UN, Sep 14 (IPS) - After more than three years of political foot-dragging, the 192-member General Assembly adopted a historic resolution Monday aimed at creating a new U.N. agency for women.

The decision to create a separate powerful body to deal exclusively with gender-related activities comes years - or decades - after the United Nations created specialised agencies to deal with specific issues, including children, population, refugees, food, environment, education, health and tourism, among many others.

Currently, there are four existing women's U.N. entities in the world body: the U.N. Development Fund



Charlotte Bunch, Director of the Centre for Women's Global Leadership and a vocal proponent of the new agency, called it a "great victory for women's rights"

Credit: UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

for Women (UNIFEM); the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues; the U.N. Division for the

Advancement of Women; and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

But none of them is as politically powerful and financially stable as full-fledged U.N. agencies.

When the new women's agency is created, perhaps by the middle of next year, it will be headed by an under-secretary-general (USG), the third highest ranking position in the U.N. system, after the secretary-general and the deputy secretary-general.

Read the complete story on GenderWire --

<http://www.ipsnews.net/genderwire/>

PERU: Going to School Still a Feat for Rural Girls

By Milagros Salazar

WAWAS, Peru, Jul 15 (IPS) - María Belén Sabio, a 30-year-old Awajun woman from Peru's northeastern Amazonia province, was able to complete a teacher training programme despite having five children to raise. "Life here in the countryside is not easy, and I've had a hard time getting ahead," she told IPS.

Education for native women is an unfinished story. While opportunities for schooling have expanded and official figures show that there's more than 90 percent coverage in education, girls of all ages and young women from rural areas are the weakest link in the learning chain.

The greatest problems faced in terms of enrolment in rural areas - which is where most of the country's indigenous people live - are found in preschool, between the ages of three and five, and in secondary education, from age 12 to 17.

"As girls grow older their mothers choose not to send them to school because they need them at home to help care for their younger siblings or with household chores," Fidel Datsa, a teacher at a school in Wawas, told IPS.

Elena Burga, head of education at IBIS, a Danish non-governmental development organisation working

to achieve equal access to education, told IPS that geographic, social, cultural and economic reasons combine to keep indigenous women out of school.

Read the complete story on GenderWire --

<http://www.ipsnews.net/genderwire/>



Schoolgirls in an Amazon community

Credit: Milagros Salazar/IPS