



1875 Connecticut Ave. NW | Suite 500 | Washington DC 20009 USA

tel 202-939-5463 | www.genderaction.org

Gender Action Update #7

Fall 2009

Gender Action has been hard at work over the past six months developing advocacy campaigns, tools and publications to hold the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) accountable on their promises to promote gender equality and empower women. Our seventh biannual Update looks back six months at the exciting work we've done and great strides we've made toward achieving this goal!

Istanbul Events

Elaine Zuckerman and Anna Rooke represented Gender Action at the civil society forum surrounding the October 2009 World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings in Istanbul, Turkey. Gender Action sponsored two workshops at the Forum.

Gender and (Illegitimate) IFI Debt: On October 3rd, Gender Action, Jubilee South and Jubilee USA co-sponsored a workshop entitled "Gender and (Illegitimate) IFI Debt" as part of civil society events. Gender Action Senior Programs Coordinator, Anna Rooke, and Jubilee South Americas Coordinator, Beverly Keene, discussed how illegitimate and odious debt that least developed countries owe IFIs must be cancelled because they reduce countries' social spending. This illegitimate and odious debt especially undermines the livelihood and welfare of poor women and children who compose the majority of the poor.

Gender Toolkit for International Finance-Watchers: Organizations that monitor the IFIs came together during Gender Action's workshop "Gender Tools for IFI-Watchers" on October 6th. Led by Senior Programs Coordinator Anna Rooke, the workshop highlighted Gender Action's tools for engendering IFI advocacy and also included presentations from participants about their organizations' work on gender. The workshop constituted part of Gender Action's three-year gender capacity building project for IFI-watchers sponsored by Oxfam Novib.

Climate Change Program

Staff member Anna Rooke also represented Gender Action at the Heinrich Boell Foundation and World Resources Institute sponsored seminar *What Role for the World Bank and the MDBs in an Equitable Climate Finance Architecture?* at Bilgi University in Istanbul, October 4th, 2009. In her talk entitled, "Doubling the Damage: Gender Critique of the World Bank Climate Investment Funds," Ms. Rooke presented findings from a recent Gender Action publication examining the potential gender impacts of World Bank-managed climate funds.

Gender Action participated in a civil society 'Gender and Climate Change Training' workshop during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bangkok. Ms. Rooke worked with gender justice activists from all over Asia to address how gender and women's rights must be integrated into a post-Kyoto climate agreement, including how gender justice should shape future climate finance mechanisms. The training, which was organized by the NGO Forum on the ADB in conjunction with other gender and climate justice groups, produced a "Declaration of Women in Asia on Climate Change." The Declaration, which will be distributed at the December 2009 climate negotiations in Copenhagen, can be read here: http://www.gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/Bilder/UNFCCC_conferences/Road_to_Copenhagen/Asian_Women_Declaration_on_Climate_Change.pdf.

IMF Campaign

Elaine Zuckerman presented at the November 2009 National Council of Women's Organizations meeting in Washington DC on the US government's recent massive \$106 billion appropriation to the International Monetary Fund. In her presentation, Ms. Zuckerman explained that Congress' appropriation required the IMF to prevent further indebting the world's least developed countries, and permit these countries to undertake stimulus spending rather than cutbacks during recessions because cutbacks shrink social programs, particularly harming women and children who constitute the majority of the poor. Congress' bill also called for greater IMF transparency. Unfortunately, President Obama attached a signing statement to the bill, denying the IMF reforms, and instead giving the IMF a blank check.

Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS Campaign

As part of our "Leveraging IFI Funds for Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS" campaign, Gender Action sent a letter with 101 signatories from all over the world to World Bank President, Robert Zoellick. In our press release, Elaine Zuckerman, said, "The Bank should make grants, not loans, for these critical interventions to avoid indebting low-income countries; spend more on better quality grants that are gender-sensitive; and end harmful user-fees and other privatization practices which exclude poor people from accessing health services". The letter and a press release were distributed widely to the media and can be read on Gender Action's website.

New "Gender Action Link"

Recently, we released a new "Gender Action Link" on Gender and Commercial Banks. It addresses the impacts of commercial bank investments on gender equality and women's rights worldwide. The Link specifically examines how private project finance often ignores gender considerations and thus can lead to negative economic, health and social impacts for poor women. It outlines key 'human rights' and 'business case' frameworks for improving gender justice in project-affected communities and provides links to resources and partners working at the intersection of gender and private finance. This is the fourth in Gender Action's Links series which are brief, reader-friendly resources connecting critical issues around gender, international finance and other key development issues.

Other Events

On July 14th, 2009, Gender Action President Elaine Zuckerman presented on the gender impacts of IFI investments at a forum for state legislators. The forum was organized by the Center for Women's Policy Studies in Washington, DC.

Please see Gender Action's website for more details about our activities and publications.

New Staff and Board Members

Gender Action recently welcomed Adriana Kao as our first Executive and Communications Assistant, Nicole Zarafonitis as new Programs Intern and Regina Dumba as a volunteer.

Finally, Gender Action is pleased to announce that three new members joined our Board of Directors this year: Brent Blackwelder, President Emeritus, Friends of the Earth; Muadi Mukenge, Sub-Saharan Regional Director, Global Fund for Women; and Doug Hellinger, Executive Director, The Development Group for Alternative Policies, who has also assumed the role of Treasurer.

Your Help!

Individual donations help us carry on our vital work. To make a donation, please send a check to Gender Action or click **Donate Here** at www.genderaction.org.

With continued appreciation for your support,

Elaine Zuckerman and Adriana Kao