

# THE WATCHDOG

## Inside this issue:

<b>We're Back</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Youth Participation, Why?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What's On This Weekend (For Free!!)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mn Mn Still in Prison</b>	<b>3</b>

## Friday's Agenda:

- 9:00AM NGO Briefing, UN Conference Room 2
- 1:00PM CRLPNCEDO panel: *Meeting Our Goals: Rights and Development*, Church Center
- 1:15PM US Delegation Daily Briefing for NGOs, Church Center

## We're Back!

The PrepCom resumed and the first part went through like lightning compared to the latest deliberations. At the opening there was a summary of all that the delegations had been working on for the past few weeks. To be honest, it was quite a lot. But was it satisfying? From the youth perspective it was good and

bad. The best part was under 23bis (a). Although not all delegations were in favor of the paragraph, most countries recognized the importance of sex education in school curricula, to help make sure young people can make informed choices. It brought smiles to young faces in Conference Room No. 2. This is definitely something which will be very important for young people in the future if implemented in practice. Another interesting, but not so positive a point, was dealt

with in paragraphs 53 and 55, concerning in-



Youth Coalition members outside the United Nations

creased allocation of funding for adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes. Some countries wanted to strike off the idea completely and no delegation wanted to keep the language as it is. The explicit figure of 20% funding for youth programmes has proven a big problem for most delegations. Although many of them admit that money is needed to do something for the youth, there is not yet a delegation which dares to make a binding promise on the issue. What the

Youth Coalition is advocating, is that of the total funds that donor nations earmark for sexual and reproductive health programmes as part of their ODA (overseas development assistance), at least 20% of those funds should be allocated to programmes which specifically address the sexual

and reproductive health information and service needs of adolescents. We chose 20% as a figure, because at the moment, young people comprise around 20% of the world's population; 85% of them live in developing countries. The needs of these young people need to be met, and a positive conditionality on ODA would help ensure this.

Day one was a good start...let's see where it leads.

By Robin Teurlings

"Youth involvement should not be read as mere presence, but active inclusion in the process. Instead of speaking about us, the important thing is to speak to us. "

## Youth Participation, Why?

The ICPD door opened up just a crack for the youth in The Hague. It was a week of freezing cold weather, working groups, deliberations that went on till the wee hours of the morning and a triumphant youth document. Come March, the youth had their foot firmly in the door. Scrounging around for funds, accreditation they set aside for a while budding careers and schools to launch an organised lobbying for their rights. The Plus Five is a pioneering example of youth partici-

pation. Youth involvement should not be read as mere presence, but active inclusion in the process. Instead of speaking about us, the important thing is to speak to us. All programmes implemented for the youth but without the youth are doomed for failure (something like programmes for women developing countries, where success hinged on involvement of women). Moreover, the subculture of youth demands that those who understand their

language, rules and rituals can most effectively make inroads in this age group. When working to improve the lives of young people, the greatest resource is the young people. Digits can't tell the whole story, which is what most policy makers are likely to indulge in. The Youth Coalition uses its diverse experience to recognise that with the demand for rights, come responsibilities. After all, the future lies with us.

By Dennis Brooks

I support...  
**ICPD  
CHOICE  
YOUTH**

## What's On This Weekend (For Free!!)

### Saturday, 26

*Coney Island Mermaid Parade*, 10am-noon  
(call 718.372.5159 for directions)

Annual parade of mermaids who stroll down the boardwalk of Coney Island. A real New York tradition.

### Sunday, 27

*Lesbian & Gay Pride March* (starts at 52nd St & 5th Ave)

Annual parade winds its way down Fifth Avenue to Greenwich Village, where the festivities continue into the night at Pridefest 99.

First time in New York City and want to see the sites? Call Mainly Manhattan Tours (755.6199), New York City Cultural Walking Tours (979.2388), New York City Discovery Tours (465.3331), or Century Walking Tours (718.627.6973).

Don't like these ideas? Consult Time Out NYC, an entertainment guide available at any local magazine stand. Time Out will give you ideas for movies, shows, bars and restaurants around NYC.

COLOFON: Alison; Nynke; Sonu; Gemma; Robin; Dennis

## YOUTH COALITION FOR ICPD

c/o ACPD  
430 - 1 Nicholas Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
CANADA K1N 7B7

Phone: 613-562-0880  
Fax: 613-241-7550  
Email: [info@youthcoalition.org](mailto:info@youthcoalition.org)

*We're on the Web!*

[www.youthcoalition.org](http://www.youthcoalition.org)

The Youth Coalition for ICPD is an organization composed of committed youth working at the local, national, and international levels to promote the full implementation of the Programme of Action stemming from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo. The Youth Coalition emerged from the ICDP+5 Youth Forum, held in the Hague, in February 1999.

Through public education, advocacy, and coalition building, the Youth Coalition strives to ensure that the sexual and reproductive health rights, needs, and concerns of young people are addressed fully, and that young people from around the world are actively and meaningfully involved in all aspects of development, especially sexual and reproductive health, rights, and education issues. Its members, which range between the ages of 15 and 29, come from diverse backgrounds and represent every region in the world.

## Min Min Still in Prison

Here's the story of a 15-year-old girl.

A year ago, she was raped. The culprit was the brother of her sister-in-law. She reported the offence. He, however, walked out of jail free after a few days. The injustice did not end there. She was pregnant and did not tell her family. Five months down the line they found out. They apparently forced



*Min Min Lama:*

her to have an abortion. Her sister-in-law reported her to the police. She was sentenced to a 20-year jail term.

Yeah, right, I can hear you think. Nobody can be so unlucky. It must be exaggerated. I'm sorry to tell you, but for this teenaged girl, it is a truth that does not get mitigated behind prison bars.

Her name is Min Min Lama from Nepal. In this small Himalayan kingdom, abortion is illegal - even after rape or on medical grounds. Min Min was sentenced to 20 years in jail. Murderers normally get 10 in Nepal. Earlier this year in the The Hague Youth Forum, Min Min's case as brought to the attention of the participants of 132 countries. They wrote a letter to Min Min expressing their solidarity. Following this, the World Population

Foundation and the Dutch Council on Youth and Population started an action committee for Min Min and other girls in the same situation.

The latest news that the *Watchdog* has heard is that Min Min's sentence has been dropped from 20 years to 12. It's a small step, and there's a lot more ground to be covered for girls like Min Min. One of the key organisations working for them is the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

We hope they succeed so that stories like Min Min's don't need to be told anymore.

**By Nynke Inkeri Jager**