

THE WATCHDOG

Whizzing through crucial bis' and ters

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Tuesday's Agenda:

- 9:00AM NGO Briefing, Conference Room 4
- 1:00PM CRLP/WEDO lunch panel— *Rights and Reforms: Challenges to the health sector*, Conference Room B
- 2:00PM Face to Face Testimonials: Female Genital Mutilation, Conference Room 4

Monday morning started off on a positive note. The weekend had recharged everybody: All of six paragraphs were taken care of during the first session. Three of these were adopted with small changes, very quickly. There was some discussion on paragraph 17ter (concerning refugees), but it led to a pretty quick consensus which is important, since refugees are an extremely vulnerable group and it is good that a document like the one which will come out of this PrepCom will take notice of their predicament.

The afternoon took on a different hue. Paragraph 65bis was discussed; the text in the Rev.3 document refers to the involvement of young people in all aspects of decision-making related to the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes for youth. During the negotiations, this paragraph was unfortunately changed to "(governments) are

urged to consult (the youth)". Needless to say there is a big difference between "consulting" young people or "involving" young people. Of course consulting is a part of involvement, but that is not all that the youth coalition has been fighting for. The only way to really work with the young people and not merely talk about them is by complete involvement in all aspects of decision-making processes. The earlier issues of the *Watchdog* have already pointed out the difference that youth participation makes. The gains that the Youth Coalition made with regard to paragraph 65bis are twofold:

1. At least it is there.
2. The paragraph does not refer to parental guidance and responsibilities. We hope that other paragraphs that refer to youth involvement will be dealt with in a better way during the forthcoming negotiations.

Then there was another big surprise for the youth coalition about the discussion on paragraphs 53 and 55. The G77, to our great joy, came up with the proposal for a new text

in the document on paragraph 53, which the Group of 77 and China were previously planning to delete. It was not perfectly worded but it was better than nothing. There was another surprise coming: We heard the EU say they would prefer to delete the paragraph than to adopt the new text.

At the moment that we went to press, we don't know the outcome of paragraph 53 and 55. But this is how we hope it would be: It can't be true that all the talk about the youth is hot air. If you want to do something you have to show you're serious. That means putting your money where your mouth is: We think that the youth is worth at least 20% of the reproductive and sexual health money that the developing countries get for ODA. Delegates, please show us that you really meant when you said that you care for the youth.

By Robin Teurlings & Anouka van Eerdewijk

Parents, parents, parents

It's all a bit of a balancing act

It seems today as if young people are becoming more independent, more quickly. They seem, in many places to have the freedom to do things which their parents couldn't or wouldn't do "in their day."

It seems that in our current "UN" society we can distance ourselves from the true and frequently harsh realities of life and look towards idealized situations: the stereotypical, fully-functional family with adolescent children who behave like "adolescents" and parents who behave like "responsible parents". However, today with the frequency of dysfunctional families such "tunnel-vision" concerning our images of families and family life cannot be maintained. This creates problems, especially for the Cairo Programme of Action, because the multitude of different situations facing many parents has to be universally recognized. And whilst the word "parent" has such positive connotations concerning love, responsibility and a desire to do their best by their children, it will always be

difficult to legislate the nature of family relationships, due to the sanctity and private nature of the home, which still prevails in many societies around the globe.

Parents undeniably have responsibilities duties and rights to their offspring, but the process is not uni-directional, because offspring, too, have their own rights, duties and responsibilities to both themselves and their parents. This is why the balancing nature of Cairo language is so crucial because it takes account of both the needs and rights of young people and the responsibilities, duties and rights of parents. There is however, a fine distinction between the parents having rights over the young people or rights on their behalf, whilst they are establishing their own place in society. Parents need these rights to be able to empower their children, so that in turn they can enjoy their rights "especially to the information, education and services" that will enable them to become responsible adults and allow them to attain the highest standards possible

in their own future.

Information is protection and it seems that, ironically, this is what some parents are afraid of. For example, in their duties parents should provide "guidance in sexual and reproductive health matters" [ICPD para. 7.45] However, many parents did not receive such information themselves and are still bound by social mores, which frequently stigmatize 'sex' and its role in society and so many parents feel uncomfortable passing on such information to their seemingly impressionable offspring. But, we are not entirely impressionable, we need to be informed to equip us with the tools we need to make informed decisions about our futures. Parents are the key and adolescents are the lock, the task is, through open dialogue, and freedom from the stigmas of society to find the combination so that the 'idealized' balance between adolescents and parents can be realized through the mirroring of the crucial language of Cairo.

By Gemma Hobcraft

The five key themes of the Youth Coalition:

1. 20% resource allocation
2. Sex education
3. Youth Participation
4. Sexual and reproductive health services
5. Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights.

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YOUTH**

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

What's Up On Tuesday?

Bryant Park Summer Film Festival

Bryant Park, 41st St. and Sixth Ave., Free

The summer film series continues with *All About Eve*, starring Bette Davis, Celeste Holm and Marilyn Monroe. Bring a picnic and find a spot in the grass. The show starts at sunset.

Shakespeare in the Park

The Taming of the Shrew, Delacourte Theater, 8pm, Free

Tickets are free to NY's famous Shakespeare in the Park but must be issued to the theater-goer ahead of time. **Please call the theater directly for detailed instructions and directions.**

Adolescent Reproductive Rights in Bolivia

In the rare case that the law upholds the reproductive rights of a minor, its practical implementation remains problematic. In countries such as Bolivia, abortion is permitted when the pregnancy results from rape. Even in these instances, however, no legal procedure exists to ensure women's access to safe and legal abortions. As a result, it is often more complicated to seek a legal abortion than to submit to an illegal procedure.

This past August, in Sucre, Bolivia, a young woman was granted legal permission to have an abortion, but could not find a doctor who would agree to perform the procedure. The girl, who is 14 years old, became pregnant after being raped by her father, who subsequently left the family. The girl's mother made clear to the authorities her intentions to terminate her daughter's pregnancy by any means possible, and both the women's legal Center "Juana Azurduy," and the Office of the Ombudsman for Women in

Sucre took up the girl's case to ensure that the procedure was completed in the safest possible way.

A judicial order authorized the procedure, and the girl was admitted to the Hospital de la Mujer on August 10, 1998. The Hospital's Director was ordered to find a doctor who would perform the abortion, but in an attempt to stall time, he waited upon the approval of the Heads of both the Medical College and the Gynecological College. Both directors approved the procedure on 12 August 1998, and informed the Hospital's Director that the abortion should be performed immediately. When the Director acquiesced, each doctor he assigned to the girl declined to treat her. Each of four hospital doctors met and refused her treatment, citing philosophical and ethical conflicts and the refusal to "kill a child." When lawyers from the Center explained the legal nature of the girl's case, each still declined to treat her, claiming "there has never

been a judicial order that obligated a doctor to induce an abortion."

Faced with such opposition from the Hospital, attorneys from the Center consulted with the Attorney responsible for Adolescents and Family, explaining the severe trauma the girl suffered as a result of her pregnancy and abuse from hospital staff. The Attorney upheld the judicial order obligating the hospital to perform the abortion. Finally, on August 17th, 1998, the hospital performed the abortion but would not complete her treatment and the girl left for home. Once again, the attorneys from the Center made the Attorney aware of the hospital's non-compliance and she demanded explanation as to why the hospital did not fulfill the original judicial order. The doctor who finally did complete the procedure has since been harassed by the administration of the Medical College.

By Alison-Maria Bartolone

"In countries such as Bolivia, abortion is permitted when the pregnancy results from rape. Even in these instances, however, no legal procedure exists to ensure women's access to safe and legal abortions."

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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.

The Trials and Tribulations of Youth and Their Passage to New York

The Youth Coalition is a motley bunch: Some of us are students at high school or university and the rest are struggling at the lowest rung of our careers. Attending PrepCom, for most of us, entailed numerous sacrifices.

Claudia, 18, from Chile, is at high school. When she told the Principal that she would have to miss school to attend a UN meeting, he informed her that if she continues going on such 'holidays', she won't pass her final year. Her earlier 'holiday' was the week in the March PrepCom, and the Youth Forum of February.

Robin Teurlings, 22, from the Netherlands, lugged all his books on European Public Administration to study for his exams this Thursday and Friday. He has already missed two, which he'll have to complete in August, when everyone else is on holiday. He's leaving New York today and will be pouring over his notes during the

flight.

Nynke, from the Netherlands, works as a nurse in a general hospital. She made it to the PrepCom after swapping a slew of night shifts with colleagues. Despite all the planning, she too, has to head back home before the UNGASS begins as the hospital is currently short staffed.

Sonu, from India, has had to utilize her annual leave from her work as a journalist. Which means that she goes back to her grueling night-shift schedule immediately after all-nighters at Kinko's with the *Watchdog!*

Personally, I missed two university exams, which I will have to complete in July. I have also brought my books (on semiotics) with me, as the day after I return to Argentina, I have another exam, which I'm really looking forward to after a long plane journey.

There was also a hindrance from an unseen quarter: Some youth eager to make it

to the PrepCom could not come to New York as they had difficulties obtaining a visa, at one point with everyone's commitments it looked as though the Youth Coalition was going to be a lot smaller, but through sheer determination and re-scheduling we finally arrived and have 11 youth on governmental delegations as proof of our hard work.

Problems notwithstanding, placing our normal lives on hold for the ICPD+5 has been rewarding: We are witnessing the culmination of all our efforts that began in this wintry February at The Hague.

On this note, we also have to say goodbye to our Jamaican Delegate, a Mr. Dennis Brooks, who unfortunately has to return home in order to attend his graduation and Robin has to go back to his girlfriend. Bye guys.

By Maria Eugenia Miranda