

THE WATCHDOG

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Agenda

Tuesday

- 10-11am: Health Caucus, 12th fl UNCC
- 11am-1pm: Intergeneration Dialogue, 10th fl UNCC
- 1.30-2.30pm: Launch of Reproductive Rights Global Wall Chart -IPPF, 10fl UNCC
- 3-6pm: Best practices in Gender Population and Development - UNFPA, conf Rm3
- 4-7pm: Panel Discussion and Reception - NGO Committee on Population and Development.

The 16 Young Delegates

For a long time there were no young people at all included in UN conferences. Access to these conferences was difficult for regular NGOs, but it was impossible for young people to participate.

There was no way for young people to raise their voices and to put the issues forward which were very important to us. Young people had no space to address their needs and problems. There was hardly any recognition of their issues. Whenever there were points raised about the specific needs and problems of young people, it was never put forward by young people themselves.

To address the needs and to get recognized as full and equal partners in discussions and policymaking, young people started to lobby very strongly to be given the chance to speak up. We managed to get two young people in the official delegations during the ICPD+5 PrepCom. After hard work and proving that young people have a very important contribution to the process, we managed to get 10 young people in official government delegations during the Special Session on ICPD+5 in '99.

This was a major step forward. But now, during the Special Session on Beijing+5 we've broken the record; at the last count on Monday there were 16 young people on delega-

tions! The lucky countries are: Jamaica, Bahamas, Panama, Suriname, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Kenya, Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Italy and Portugal. Fiji also had a young woman in their delegation during the PrepCom in March, but unfortunately because of the political circumstances at the moment, the delegation cannot be present at this Special Session.

So there is progress and we need to urge all other governments to take on young people in their delegations. For young people, government delegations are a good place to participate and influence delegates on issues concerning young people, like reproductive health and rights. At the same time, having a youth on your delegation is a gain for the government delegates themselves. Policy making will be more effective when youth have a real voice.

Recognizing the participation of young people is necessary, at all levels. Especially at government level.

By Saskia Hüsken

Press Conference

TUESDAY JUNE 6

2.30 p.m. CHURCH CENTER, 8th FLOOR, GRUMMAN ROOM

"Young Women and the Beijing+5 Process—Our Expectations, Our Contributions"

Scores of young women from all over the world have come to New York to participate in the 5-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women. They are actively monitoring the meetings and will be voicing their assessment of the negotiations thus far. Come hear their perspectives on:

Education and Information, Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Economic Issues, and Youth Participation.

Girls are from Venus and Boys are from Mars

Good luck with the girls!" my father slapped my brother on the shoulder. One year later, I was having a chat with my friends about our feelings and attitudes towards boys. I remembered the advice of my father to my brother. He also slapped me on the shoulder but said the opposite. Boys want one thing If I had some self respect I should let them sweat!

"Good luck with the girls!" my father slapped my brother on the shoulder. One year later, I was having a chat with my friends about our feelings and attitudes towards boys. I remembered the advice of my father to my brother. He also slapped me on the shoulder but said the opposite. Boys want one thing If I had some self respect I should let them sweat!

Difference between female and male sexuality starts from the moment you're born. I took my parents' advice seriously and was made unconsciously aware that there is a great difference in sexuality between boys and girls. Sexuality is a complicated concept. Norms and values are given to sexuality.

What is feminine, what is masculine around sexuality? Without noticing, I was taught that there is a great distinction in sexuality for boys and girls. My brother could enjoy with girls while I was taught to be respectful. Female sexuality is still a taboo, in every country. "Men show off with their

sexuality, women have to behave." These kinds of norms and values influence policy and programs, leading to more inequality and discrimination against women. In some countries schools kick out pregnant girls.

They are seen and treated as bad, as a shame. As an individual, everybody is restricted by values and norms and by laws and policies. There are many differences among women and among men, so everybody express his/her sexuality in her own way. More insight into the individual behaviour of sexuality and the factors

that influence this, will help reproductive and sexual health programs addressing adolescents.

HIV/AIDS prevention programs aimed at preventing risk-behaviour can be made more effectively in this way. We all want improvement, we all want a more equal place where we can feel comfortable and can express our sexuality equally as men. But before we can reach this stage, we need to change our policies, we need to change and challenge our values and minds.

By Rose Koenders



Mbve On!

I support...
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YOUTH**

There's Life Outside the UN!

Tuesday, June 6

State of The Onion. Comedy Central Studio, 513 W. 54th between 10th and 11th. Free. Panel discussion with the editors and writers of The Onion, the joke newspaper available online at www.theonion.com.

The Channel Gardens at Rockefeller Center. Free. Check out Jeff Koon's 43 foot tall public art sculpture in the shape of a giant puppy, completely constructed out of flowers.

Cabaret. Rosemary Clooney (mother of George Clooney) performs at Feinstein's at the Regency. 8:30 pm Samba-themed show. Also performing Wednesday and Thursday.

"AskScot"

Do you remember how or when you received sex education?

The usual way.... sitting with your friends, talking about things. Most of the time we made it up. Someone's uncle told them something, or someone had a magazine. We'd lie to each other a lot. Sometimes the older kids would say stuff...I thought they were lying, I didn't think it was true.

Did you have sex education in school?

Kind of. It was a political[ly difficult] thing where I came from. It was more like a science class, not like real life. It [sex education] was taboo. The way it was. I was uncomfortable and the teacher was uncomfortable, so we made a lot of jokes. The way it was, I would I would have preferred not to have even had it. It was embarrassing.

So do you think it affected your sexuality?

I'm sure it did. I didn't know anything about condoms.

In the early '90s, there were a series of conferences (CRC, Cairo, Beijing) that resulted in signed international agreements that recognized the right of adolescents to education and information about their sexual and reproductive

health and rights. **What do you think government should do to promote these sexual and reproductive rights?**

Speak to them [young people] in their own language and through their own lines of communication—what TV shows they watch, etc. I don't think every school is doing it [giving sex education] or if they are, they're not doing it right. Maybe make it a serious class you need a grade in, in order to graduate, to make it really mean something. It may be opposed in some places, like by religious organization not letting this information come through, but then special programs could be established by government to oversee the implementation of sex education, so that it's done right. Maybe a law was passed, but not enough is being done to make it happen. Keeping it [information] from young people is very dangerous. Maybe they could establish something like Big Brother/Sister, so if you can't go to your parents, someone else can guide you to whatever info or services you need. I just don't see a lot being done.

Why do you think very much isn't being done?

Because the political people [think] it's too sensitive and they don't

want to rock the boat.

It's possible it could encourage some, but I remember being a young person, and I remember how I felt. If it does save lives and prevent pregnancy and protect the health of the people we love, what choice do you have? Sure things weren't like this in the past, but there weren't viruses out there ending people's lives. Enough is enough. I'd rather have my child educated so they can be informed. I know sex is natural, it's going to happen, and it happens earlier than we like to think it happens. Young people are going to do things, and might not do some things if they are educated about this stuff. Maybe they'll think twice, if they really know about this stuff. It's better to be safe than sorry.

He's a dog person, but doesn't have a pet at the moment. He's like to travel to Greece, if given the chance, because of its history and architecture. He normally just has fruit for breakfast. He plans to have a more exciting life one day; he just has to figure out how to do it.

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Sex Education in Schools

During the General Assembly yesterday morning, one of the Beijing +5 Organizers, emphasized the importance of moving forwards and strategizing on steps for the PFA implementation. Education is an important tool in this process. For this reason, she thanked all NGOs for the educational work which they have been developing to promote gender equality.

The president of the General Assembly, gave the floor to several countries, including Gambia, Gabon, Namibia, China, Uzbekistan, South Africa, Chile, and Portugal among others. All country representatives talked about the importance of promoting and improving education in their countries, with the target to implement the PFA at the national level.

Many women and especially young women are being excluded by society and by the labour market due to lack of education. This marginalization leaves them without many future perspectives. Exclusion also drives to and is enhanced by the absence of access to sexual and reproductive health services and information.

For this reason, we request not only the improvement of the educational system, but also the inclusion of comprehensive, non-judgmental, reliable, youth friendly and responsive to the different needs of young people sexual education in school curricula. These programs should be developed, implemented and evaluated by young people.

Such information and education should address gender relations and

equality, responsibility for one self as well as for partners; sexuality and freedom of expression, the full range of contraceptive methods; abortion; STIs, including HIV/AIDS; pregnancy; sexual abuse and violence.

Young people, as all human beings, have the right to experience and fully develop their sexuality, as well as the right to highest attainable standard of sexual education and reproductive health.

A good and well planned school curriculum, which must include sexual education, will certainly bring more choices possibilities for the young people. The youth need to be equipped with the skills, tools and knowledge that will enable them to face the future with confidence, responsibility and hope.

By Mariana Arantes Nasser

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A Japanese Mother, 15

An incident that occurred in April 2000 illustrates the extreme reality of unwanted pregnancy among Japanese youth. A 15-year-old girl, a first year high school student gave birth to a baby boy in her room alone. Soon after her boyfriend, a 17-year-old boy who is jobless, abandoned the newborn in the woods. The baby was found dead a day after that when the young girl's father requested the police to search for the baby. The young mother had initially resisted handing over the baby to her boyfriend but eventually she was convinced to do so. The young father told the police that he did not care if the baby died because they could not raise the baby. The couple had visited the gynaecologist earlier but they

had decided to not have an abortion because they did not have enough money.

The young mother who lived with her father and her young brother had kept her pregnancy a well guarded secret. No one, not even her friends at school were aware of her pregnancy even though she went to school till the day of her delivery. The baby's father was arrested first then the baby's mother was arrested as well on the grounds that she agreed to abandon the baby. Had adequate information been provided perhaps the young couple would have chosen another option. It is apparent that sex education in Japan needs reform. The Ministry of Education has not developed a comprehensive sex education program

yet.

Furthermore the approach to sex education remains problematic. Sex education that is provided emphasises abstinence and chastity and it is focused almost exclusively on the biology of the reproductive system without providing practical information. The small number of text books on sex education lack a gender perspective. With respect to gender, the sex education class is given to boys and girls separately. Some experts have been trying to revise the current sex education program however, sex education at school remains impractical and does not meet the needs of the youth.

By Miho Sato

**F.A.K.E.
WOMEN**

**Feminists Alive and
Kicking for Equality**



A real story about a girl who loses her struggle to have access to her rights. In July 31, 1999 a man broke into Paulina's family house for robbery and raped Paulina. After one month Paulina realized she was pregnant. After the enormous shock, her mother and she went to the State Prosecutor's special agency for sex crimes and asked for an authorization to have an abortion.

Of a Room Too Small in the UN

At the Commission of the Whole which convened in conference room 2 yesterday a lot of time was spent on the fact that room 9 would be too small for the contact group meeting that day. Several delegations repeated each others' argument, although the Syrian delegation stood alone with the argument that the NGOs should not take a room that is needed by the delegations.

After reaching an agreement on the program it was time for review and

appraisal.

The second speaker was Mr Peter Piot, executive Director of UNAIDS who advocated for putting AIDS at the heart of the agenda of the women's movement. AIDS is not gender neutral according to Mr Piot, but women are for several reasons more vulnerable. One of the reasons he mentioned was the fact that women systematically lack the power to determine if, when, where and how sexual intercourse takes place.

Mr Piot also said that "greater attention must be given to the special needs of adolescent and pre-adolescent girls. Promoting education and training for girls is one of the surest ways not only to advance the status of women but also ensure that girls can protect themselves from AIDS." Here he thinks about effective education in sex and personal relationships.

By Alicia Karssing

Paulina's Story: Why the Law isn't Enough

Location: Mexicali a city located in the state of Baja California governed by the most important Mexican right wing party National Action Party (PAN).

A real story about a girl who loses her struggle to have access to her rights. In July 31, 1999 a man broke into Paulina's family house for robbery and raped Paulina. After one month Paulina realized she was pregnant. After the enormous shock, her mother and she went to the State Prosecutor's special agency for sex crimes and asked for an authorization to have an abortion.

On September 20, they had the authorization and Norma Alicia Velazquez, Agent of the State Prosecutor asked Dr. Ismael Avila Director of the Mexicali's General Hospital to perform the abortion.

Paulina, her mother and her older brother went to the General Hospital for the abortion but she stayed seven days without receiving this service. Mrs. Jacinto took her daughter to Juan

Manuel Salazar, State Attorney General, the state's highest justice official and he tried to convince Paulina to quit their decision to have an abortion. He took them to a priest who told Paulina she will be excommunicate if she decided to have an abortion.

Aware of all of this, Paulina continued looking for an abortion. The State Prosecutor sent another order to the Mexicali's General Hospital Director and he agreed to re-admit Paulina on October 13th. Next day, two women who claimed to work for the governmental Comprehensive Family Development Agency (DIF) showed her a video tape of pictures of aborted fetuses that the Pro-live movement frequently uses. Later Paulina's brother discovered that DIF never sent anybody to visit and Director of Pro-Live doesn't deny they tried to persuade Paulina.

A few minutes before the abortion was programmed, the doctor asked Paulina's mother to sign a document to obtain consent to perform

this process. Dr. Avila asked her to take into account that probably Paulina would die from a massive haemorrhage or would become sterile. Afraid of the doctors intentions and to suffer the consequences of their anger, she decided not to sign the letter and the abortion was cancelled. On April the 13th Paulina gave a caesarean birth.

Now after a big struggle the State Office for Human Rights and Citizens Protection made a recommendation on this case.

A Trust Fund should be established to guarantee the future of Paulina and Isacc and that Administrative and/or penal proceeding have been initiated to determine the responsibility of the public servers involved.

This case shows us that it is a long way to walk. It is not enough to change the law. The government must create mechanisms to apply the law and to be sure every body's rights are respected.

By Maria Antoinetta

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

We're on the Web!

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.

Mini-Beijing

The contrast was stark: inside the UN the tension levels soared as negotiations move slowly with only 4 days remaining while outside at the Dag Hammarskjold Plaza women from around the world gathered to celebrate yet another welcome/opening. In contrast to the earlier NGO welcome held on Friday, this high profile event had a range of prominent speakers including UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who reiterated the significance of the outcomes document "...the Beijing Plus Five negotiation is among the most important that we will undertake in this Millennium year. Its

outcome will not only be crucial to the rights and lives of women everywhere; it will also be crucial to the achievement of the goals I have asked the world's leaders to support at the Millennium Summit."

In the midst of these high profile speakers, the NGO speakers failed to get mention whenever there was talk of the official opening ceremony, on the flyers and in the announcements. At the opening, they spoke eloquently on the necessity of moving ahead, understood as the need to have a strong outcomes document, taking a step forward from Beijing.

Attempts to recreate a mini Beijing have been par-

tially successful women from around the world engulf the UN building despite the restrictions imposed on accreditation, which has become a popular topic of conversation. In line with the Annan's sentiments it would perhaps be apt to recall and bear in mind that as in the case of Beijing, the Beijing +5 outcomes document needs the energy and spirit of all the women especially those present in New York now. "Just as the Platform for Action could not have been drafted without you, it cannot be implemented without you."

By Zahra Ahmed

COLOFON

Zahra Ahmed and Miho Sato (NAPY), Erin McGinn, Sonu Chhina, Rose Koenders, Marianna Nasser, Saskia Hüsken, Alicia Karssing, Liam. And Scot

Send us e-mail at: ycwatchdog@hotmail.com.