

WOMEN CANDIDATES LEAD IN THE LIBERIAN LEGISLATIVE AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS October 17

Liberians may elect the continent's first female head of state.

The Government of Liberia has recently conducted national elections in October 2005. The demonstrable participation and performance of women candidates during the elections is indicative of successful mobilization following UNIFEM's programmes that support civic education as well as advocate for the realization of at least 30% representation of women at all levels of political participation and decision

making inline with several international conventions and protocols. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former World Bank official and grandmother of six, is a front-runner in the race to head this small West African nation. Polls put Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf neck and neck with her main rival, former soccer star George Weah. At a rally the other day, roughly 100,000 people in a country of 3.4 million showed up to cheer for her

UNIFEM is monitoring the performance of women candidates in the elections



ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF
 Lead contender for presidential run off.
 Present rating at the poll: 175,520 = 19.70%;



GLORIA SCOTT
 Lead contender for the House of Senate for **Maryland County**
 Unity Party



HAJA FATA SIRYON
 House of Representative **Elect** for District #2, **Bomi County**.
 National Democratic Party of Liberia



NOHN KIDOU
 Lead contender for the House of Representative of District #4 **Nimba County**. , ***poised to win**
 Liberia Action Party/COTOL



JEWEL HOWARD-TAYLOR
 Lead contender for the House of Senate of **Bong County** * **poised to win**
 National Patriotic Party



CORPU G. BARCLAY
 Lead contender for the House of Representative for District #1 of **Bong County**.
 Unity Party



MALIAN JALIBAH
 House of Representative **Elect** for District #3, **Lofa County**.
 All Liberian Coalition Party



CLARICE JAH
 House of Senate **Elect** for **Margibi County**
 Liberty Party



HANNAH BRENT
 Lead contender for the House of Senate of **Montserrado County** Congress for Democratic Change



JOYCE FREEMAN
 Leading contender for the House of Senate of **Montserrado County** * **poised to win** Congress for Democratic Change



KUKU DORBOR
 Lead contender for the House of Representative District #6 of **Montserrado County** Liberty Party



ALOMIZA ENNONS
 Lead contender for the House of Representative District #1 for **Montserrado County** Congress for Democratic Change



VICTORIA LYNCH
 House of Representative **Elect** for District #13 of **Montserrado County**.



REGINA TEAH
 Lead contender for the House of Representative District #10 of **Montserrado County** Congress for Democratic Change

Economic Empowerment of Women in Nigeria

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nigeria recently developed a programme to be executed in three pilot Local Governments chosen from the Niger Delta States. These LGs include: Ikwere LG in Rivers State, Warri South West LG in Delta State, and Ibeno LG in Akwa Ibom State. This is the oil-producing region of the country, here local communities are very impoverished. This project was originally (2003) developed by our office for collaboration with UNDP. The assistance is informed by the subordinate status of women and girls who constitute about half of the population. Women in the Niger Delta area of

Nigeria are at a higher disadvantage because of the peculiar environmental situation. The main objective of this project is to empower women in selected communities of the Niger delta region of Nigeria to actualize their economic potentials, through enhanced access to information, technical and organizational skills, finance and technology support to guarantee their individual rights and security. The implementation of the project is located within the framework of SEEDS, and it will be used as a small pilot of how SEEDS implementation that has gender as one of its analytical values can systematically reduce poverty, both at the individual and household level in Nigeria. The first stage of the project has since been concluded.

UNIFEM Support To Women Delegates To The National Political Reform Conference In Nigeria

The need to have explicit guarantee of gender equality between men and women in Nigeria's Constitution has been on since the 1976 when the then Mohammed/Obasanjo regime in 1976 announced the need for Nigeria's restructuring

through the development of a new Constitution. There were attempts at reviewing the Constitution in 1985, in 1994 and in 1998 respectively. In all of these process, women were very often not represented, and presentations by

women group on a gender agenda almost always rejected.

Given this scenario, UNIFEM decided to support the women delegates to this year's National Political Reform Conference inaugurated by the present civilian government in February 2005. Though the number of women delegates at the conference was just 30 out of 400 delegates, the strategy was to provide sustained technical support to the women incorporated in the final Conference outcomes on the identified areas of focus: Constitutional Reforms, Political Reforms; Judicial/Legal Reforms; Electoral Reforms; Civil Society Reforms and Consultations /Consensus Building.

To achieve the incorporation of women's reform priorities and the gender agenda, the support aimed to strengthen the women's delegates' capacity to engage with the gender agenda, subsume all other interests to that of the gender agenda, build alliances with other like minded groups to ensure that women delegates are not stereotyped as only able to speak on women and to generally strengthen their representation by putting them in constant contact with their primary constituency – the women from all over the country. As only 30 women will be representing over 60 million

delegates through the engagement of 2 gender experts and 1 media expert. Due to lack of women representation, outright rejections of gender agenda, and the antecedents of the different committees set up in the past to review Constitutions and undertake structuring in Nigeria, it has become necessary to devise an approach/strategy whereby women delegates to the Conference are able to effectively negotiate for gender equality and justice issues to be persons in Nigeria estimated to be women and girls, the project is tagged the ***30 for 60M Initiative*** – implying that 30 women are representing over 60 million Nigerian women and girls. The goal and purpose of this support by UNIFEM is to promote gender justice and equitable participation in democratic processes thereby contributing to good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria, and more so, to promote equitable representation of the voices, views and concerns of women and provide mechanisms to enhance gender responsive outcomes to the National Political Reform Conference. At the end of the Conference, Report was submitted to the Regional Programme Director Mrs. Florence Butegwa by the Gender Experts; Priscilla Ankut and Angela Odah, on National Political Reform Conference.

VICTORY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA: AFRICAN PROTOCOL ON RIGHTS OF WOMEN ENTERS INTO FORCE



Mrs. Florence Butegwa

*The Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM
(Anglo West African Region)*

UNIFEM sub-regional Office, Abuja, Nigeria
— The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) welcomes the 15th ratification by Togo of the Protocol on 26 October. The Protocol will now come into force within 30 days, marking a milestone in the protection and promotion of women's rights in Africa and creating new rights for women in terms of international standards. The other countries that have ratified the Protocol are Cape

Verde, The Comoros, Djibouti, The Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, **Nigeria**, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Benin.

The Protocol, which builds on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, has been in the making since 1994 when women's rights advocacy groups called for a protocol that would make explicit the fundamental human rights in the women. State Parties undertake to condemn all harmful practices which affect the fundamental human rights of women and girls and which are contrary to recognized international standards, and undertake to take all the necessary measures to prevent such practices. States are to take specific positive action to promote the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries. The protocol recognizes the right of women to a remedy and protection when pregnancy results from rape or incest or when the continuation of pregnancy endangers the health or life of the mother. It explicitly calls for the legal prohibition of female genital mutilation, and prohibits the abuse of women in advertising and pornography. The Protocol sets forth a broad range of economic and social welfare rights for

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights as applied to women. The Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and pan-African women's rights networks including WiLDAF, FEMNET, Equality Now have all worked tirelessly to make the Protocol adopted by the African Union (July 2003) and ratified by governments.

This groundbreaking Protocol charges ratifying states to combat all forms of discrimination against women, and all forms of violence against women. The rights of particularly vulnerable groups of women, including widows, elderly women, disabled women and "women in distress," which includes poor women, women from marginalized populations groups, and pregnant or nursing women in detention are specifically recognized.

UNIFEM commends Nigeria for ratifying the Protocol, and the various national, regional and international organizations that have worked tirelessly since July 2003 when the Protocol was adopted for ratification. UNIFEM is proud to have been associated with these initiatives both in Nigeria, and other African countries and will continue to support further ratifications, and the implementation of the Protocol.

UNIFEM – Oxfam Project on Gender Mainstreaming in SEEDS Policy Reform in Nigeria

UNIFEM and CISCOPE is collaborating with Oxfam in the implementation of Objective 2 of the Right To Be Heard (RBTH) project - to promote popular/civil society participation in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of gender sensitive SEEDS and LEEDS in up to 3 states by October 2005. The three pilot states are Abia, Akwa Ibom and Bauchi. Partnership arrangements were forged with some line ministries in the pilot states like the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Economic Development and Project Planning. Training & Sensitization Workshop in Abia, Akwa Ibom

was held on 22 – 23 February 2005 at Uyo. Where as that of Abia and Bauchi states was in the month of May.

As to Gender Mainstreaming in NEEDS/SEEDS, UNIFEM had obtained memorandum of understanding with the National Planning Commission (NPC) to review the SEEDS documents and interrogate its gender responsiveness. UNIFEM contracted the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER) to put together a team of consultants. NISER has been identified to lead

this process. The choice of NISER essentially is because of availability of Feminist economists who have consulted for UNIFEM and also in line working with institutions helps in capacity building and institutional strengthening, influencing institutions in their gender responsiveness through their curriculum and staff advocacy for policy reform.

Also to provide an interface for interacting with Government machineries responsible for the

• **Training and Sensitization Workshop in UYO on 22 – 23 February 2005**

Mrs. Florence Butegwa, the UNIFEM's Regional Programme Director led the team made up of Okey George Oji, Gender and Economic Adviser, UNIFEM, Mrs. Rosemary Kaduru, Deputy Country Director, OXFAM, Dr. Dom Okoro, National Coordinator and Lydia Onyeka - CISCOPE, from Abuja to Uyo, Akwa Ibom State for the training and sensitization workshop.

with UNIFEM's considered opinion that it is more sustainable to deal with institutions rather than individual resource persons; arguing that design and production of the SEEDS documents in the pilot states, partnership arrangement has been forged with some line ministries in the pilot states like the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Economic Development and Project Planning.

Also in the workshop were the Resource persons – Dr. Bola Akanji and a team of Gender Specialists that came from NISER, Ibadan and finally a NEEDS/SEEDS specialist from National Planning Commission – Mr. Friday Ohuche.,

MONTHLY REPORT FROM UNIFEM SIERRA LEOENE

Achievements

- ✚ Provided technical and financial assistance to the establishment of National Network of HIV Positive Living Women. A Staff who is HIV positive has been recruited on behalf of the network and supported, to start the process of establishing the network. On this, a lot of consultative meetings were held with partners (Action Aid International, SWAASL, and UNAIDS) on the way forward. Initial financial support has been forwarded to SWAASL to help establish the network of HIV Positive women.
- ✚ Working on a shelter project proposal on behalf of the HIV Positive women's network. This proposal will be submitted to UNAIDS for joint funding.
- ✚ Carried out feasibility studies on a proposed integrated project on the 'Economic Empowerment of Rural women'. A report to the effect submitted to all concerned and a concept note developed for submission to Transition Support Team (TST-UNDP) after Jebbeh and UNIDO's perusals. Presently

working on draft proposal built upon the concept note developed.

- ✚ Still working on finalizing Gender trainings for Local Court Officials, District Legislatures, and the Police. A day's session on Gender training modules for the training of the Local court official have been drafted, awaiting response from the Law Officers' department who are the lead trainers. Awaiting response from UNAMSIL on the situational analysis that was jointly done, for finalization of training plans. We submitted our assessment report already to UNAMSIL and both needs to be consolidated.
- ✚ Had consultative meetings with the Minister of Local Court, and decentralization secretariat on planned trainings for Local Court Official and District Councils, and on plans to pilot the implementation of CEDAW in one of the district-Kailahun. The outcomes of these meetings were positive with high political will and commitment pledged by

both the Minister and Decentralization Secretariat Head.

- ✚ Consultants are in the process of finalizing the first draft of the CEDAW report, to be submitted on the 2nd of November 2005. Continued to provide technical assistance and guidance on the process of producing the first draft.
- ✚ Working on fund raising from the Italia funds at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. Preliminary discussions started and detailed discussions to be held later this month.
- ✚ Developing the Domestic Violence Bill led by the Law Reform Commission is on course.
- ✚ Participated at a radio panel discussion with UNAMSIL on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, from a UNIFEM perspective. This discussion is being aired almost every week since it was held early October.

✚ Facilitated finalization of PCAs for CEDAW consultants and release of payment to all.

✚ Made a presentation at a training workshop of the police on Prevention of HIV and AIDS, and the implications of HIV issues on women. This training was organized by the police for the wives of the police and supported by UNFPA.

✚ The Programme Specialist attended gender training in Dakar and a meeting in Romania. Newly recruited Programme Officer served as the OIC, which was a form of capacity building for both. New staff on her own exploring to better understand procedures and activities of UNIFEM, and programme specialist acquiring new skills on moving gender issues forward.

Gaps

Timely response of partners on joint initiatives, for example late response of UNAMSIL on finalizing training for the Police, and that from UNIDO on finalizing concept note and submit as against the deadline.

Welcome to Abuja for ICASA 2005

*By Mrs. Banke Akirinsimi
UNIFEM (ICASA HIV/AIDS Gender Adviser)*

The International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA) is a biennial conference that has established itself as the primary meeting place for stakeholders working with and affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa. The conference provides a platform for discussions, debates and Networking for confronting the epidemic. UNIFEM will be playing a significant role in the up-coming ICASA 2005 towards bringing to the fore the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS so as to generate the desired attention and commitment that it requires. UNIFEM and CIDA have partnered to plan a host of activities towards

mainstreaming gender into the programme structure of ICASA 2005:

Leadership Forum

UNIFEM is providing technical support to ICASA Secretariat in organizing a dialogue session on "The Impact of AIDS and Poverty on Women in Africa", highlighting critical issues of poverty, gender and HIV/AIDS. Hajia Alima Mahama the Hon. Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Ghana, has been invited to serve as moderator. The session is scheduled to hold on **December 6 from 12.30p.m. - 2.30p.m.**

Round Table on Women and Care Work in Africa: December 5 from 15.30 – 17.00

In collaboration with HAI, YWCA and UNIFEM, this panel will highlight the demands and challenges of home-based HIV/AIDS care, the experiences of unpaid women care-givers and their contribution to the economy. Mr. Tavengwa Nhongo will speak about social protection, Ms. Mary Njeri Gachango will share her experiences as a care-giver, Linet Miriti will speak on modalities for enhancing visibility of Women's Care Work in Macro Processes and Dr. Cecília M. Vilanculos will discuss her research on care work in Mozambique.

Round Table on Women Living with HIV/AIDS in West Africa: December 6 from 15.00 –17.00

Together with Actionaid International and CEDPA, UNIFEM has organized a session focused on strengthening networks of women living with HIV/AIDS in West Africa. The event will be facilitated by a woman living with HIV/AIDS and will highlight women's experiences and key issues raised at the Advocacy Skills Building Workshop.

Pre-conference Skills Building Meeting for Leaders of Women Living with HIV/AIDS from West African Countries – Date Saturday December 3, 2005 from 8 a.m.

UNIFEM will facilitate an advocacy workshop/strategy development session for representatives of women living with HIV/AIDS from the different West African Countries. Planned in collaboration with Actionaid International and CEDPA, this event will support the participation of about 50 positive women. It

is hoped that this workshop will lead to the formation of a West Africa Network of Women Living with HIV/AIDS.

Youth Programme – Date Friday December 2, 2005

UNIFEM, with the support of CIDA, will facilitate ten parallel gender and HIV/AIDS sensitization sessions for about 300 young people at a pre-ICASA skills building workshop for youth.

Gender and HIV/AIDS Forum for Leaders of State Action Committee on AIDS (SACA) from the different States in Nigeria and National Action Committees on AIDS (NAC) from Different African Countries – Date Sunday December 4, 2005 from 8.30 a.m.

UNIFEM and CIDA will plan these two separate forums aimed at increasing the commitment of NAC and SACA officials to mainstream gender and human rights perspectives into National HIV/AIDS Policies, Strategic Frameworks and Monitoring and Evaluation plans in Nigeria and across Africa.

Community Forum

In order to enhance the visibility of grassroots women's and men's voices and views, UNIFEM will organize a community dialogue session as an integral part of the conference community forum. Grassroots women and men will have the opportunity to share their experiences with conference delegates from other parts of the continent as well as exhibit their locally produced wares at the Cultural Centre of the Yar'adua Conference Centre.