



PROGRESS OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2008/2009

Who Answers to Women?

GENDER & ACCOUNTABILITY

BIOS OF PARTICIPANTS



Dr. Christiana Ayoka Mary Thorpe is the chief electoral commissioner for the National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone. She also served as Secretary of State Education of Sierra Leone from 1993-1996. Through her duties as Chief Electoral Commissioner, Thorpe restructured electoral processes within Sierra Leone for the nation's second post-conflict presidential and parliamentary elections. Thorpe was responsible for registering political parties and citizen voters and organizing and monitoring the voting process.



Senator Cecilia López Montaña of Colombia is the Speaker of the Liberal Party. An economist by training, she entered public life as Head of the Social Unit of the Ministry of Planning, 1978-80. She subsequently served as Head of the Pre-investment Fund of Colombia, FONADE from 1981-1982; Vice-Minister of Agriculture 1982-85; Ambassador to the Netherlands 1985-1988; Director of PREALC in Chile, the Employment Program of ILO 1988-1990; Director of the Social Security System of Colombia 1990-1992; Minister of Environment, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Planning and Minister responsible of women's issues between 1994-1998.



Ms. Kyung-wha Kang was appointed Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 2006. Before joining the United Nations, Ms. Kang, a national of the Republic of Korea, was Director-General of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic. She also served as Minister at the Republic of Korea Mission to the United Nations in New York and chaired the Commission on the Status of Women for its forty-eighth session in 2004 and its forty-ninth session in 2005, which marked the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.



Mr. Shankar Singh Rawat is a founding member of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS - Organization for the Empowerment Workers and Peasants) and the National Campaign for People's Right to Information. His immensely popular performances have rallied people, politicians, intellectuals, bureaucrats and opinion makers and contributed to the passage of two historic acts adopted by the Government of India in 2005: The Right to Information Act and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.



Ms. Nourati Devi, another member of the MKSS, symbolises the growing Dalit consciousness fighting against centuries of caste inequality in India. With no formal education, she has fought traditional oppression, including untouchability and Sati with a combination of courage and legal tools. In 1981 she organised a strike for minimum wages for 700 daily wage labourers working on government public work sites in her village, Harmara. This struggle prepared the ground for a landmark case in the Indian Supreme Court. The favourable ruling in 1983 established the rights of workers to earn minimum wage under all circumstances across the country.



Ms. Sushila Devi of the MKSS has helped shape the movement for the Right to Information since its inception in the early 1990s. Tireless in her struggle against corruption, Sushila is an integral organizer of social and public audits of government services in her area. When she was asked by the media in Delhi what brought her, a barely literate woman to ask for the right to see government records, her retort was, “If I send my son to the market with 10 rupees, I ask for the accounts. The government spends billions of rupees in our name, it’s our money - therefore it’s our accounts!”

UNIFEM Participants



Ms. Inés Alberdi of Spain is the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). She comes to UNIFEM from her previous position as Professor of Sociology at Madrid University where she taught Political Sociology and Sociology of Gender since 1993. Prior to that, she was Director for Research at the Centre for Sociological Research (1992–1993). Ms. Alberdi has published extensively on family and women’s issues. From 2003 to 2007, Ms. Alberdi was an elected Deputy in the Madrid Assembly. She served as an expert for the Equal Opportunities Unit of the European Commission on the networks Family and Work and Diversification of Occupational Choices for Women (1998–2000).



Mr. Moez Doraid has worked as the Deputy Executive Director for the Organizational and Business Development Services of the UN Development Fund for Women, since November 2006. In this capacity he oversees UNIFEM’s business development, partnership building, financial and human resources and administrative systems in support of organizational effectiveness and advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment globally. Moez Doraid is also the Chair of the UN Development Group’s Working Group on Programming Issues which provides interagency guidance and direction to UN common programming at the country level.



Dr. Anne Marie Goetz is Chief Advisor for Governance Peace and Security at UNIFEM and the lead author of Progress of the World’s Women 2008-2009. Prior to joining UNIFEM in 2005, she was Professor of Political Science at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. She is the author of a number of books on gender, politics, and accountability, including the co-authored volume, with Rob Jenkins, *Reinventing Accountability: Making Democracy Work for Human Development* (Palgrave, 2005).