

God with an action plan

Report from the 7th Session of the Human Rights Council
Geneva March 2008

THE United Nations declaration of Human rights was a response against the horrors of world war two. A Frenchman, Rene Cassin, authored the declaration of the universal rights of man on 10 December 1948 in Geneva.

To me the UN is like God with an action plan, a clip board, microscope and democracy. By looking, listening, communicating, measuring, computing, analysing , guidelines are produced and hopefully carried out and then monitored.

Compassion for all attempted democratically!

I think that a fully human life force is the goal of the UN.

Compliance with the rights declared relies on the good will of individual states.

However this process is, tortuous, mind numbing, meticulous, non autocratic and at times dangerous

It is an incredible challenge and the only one worth taking if we are to change the world for the better.

We in Subud are supposed to be getting in touch with with the love of God and receiving compassion through the latihan.

If we do nothing in the world with it; it is like having electricity' but just allowing your battery to leak away without producing heat and light.

By allowing this intrinsic compassion into the world with intelligence, balance, and guided action, the sins of the world can be eradicated.

In what else should we Subudians be involved?

*The darkness of violence can only be
enlightened by compassion.*

*We therefore need to promote compassion
with great effort. (Dalai Lama)*

Despite the latihan we can insulate ourselves and ignore the suffering of our non-Subud brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters.

Except for Susila Dharma, do we think that Subud is doing good in the world? Or are we waiting for full enlightenment and becoming true improved Human beings before we act in the world in a way that manifests the highest human nature?

We may get it wrong, but we must try by combining the initial rush of compassion with the careful discriminating skills of the intellect.

INDICATORS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE STATE RESPONSE

Report from Special Rapporteur Yakin Erturk.

Indicators are needed in order to monitor impact of rights and their implementation.

Violence against women is persistent globally.

There is a need to

- Measure violence
- Measure what are the states doing.

These need to be standardized and accepted unanimously by the world if progress is to be made to reduce the various forms of violence against women.(VAW)

The types of violence are stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, sex exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation, physical violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence.

Each of these has three degrees of intensity, for example, to be pushed once is not physical violence to measure on the HR register but to be pushed many times is.

The ultimate form of violence is honour killing.

There needs to be a commitment by governments to collect statistics on the incidences of the various types of violence.

General indicators do not work across countries, separate indicators are more useful and it is easier to formulate policies from them.

Most states do not have a violence against women agenda and have only a limited understanding on the real nature of this problem and have made only limited progress.

Definitions of the nature of violence against women needs to be established and accepted by states. Bench marks established and agreed, a framework for monitoring created and data collection on VAW instigated and femicide cases documented.

State responses should be to protect, prosecute and provide compensation.

Convention on Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) should be ratified.

There should be an end to impunity of police in dealing VAW crime seriously.

The reporting and documentation of VAW needs to increase.

Preventative measures

- Services from government judicial, work and health to be employed in VAW cases.
- the social tolerance of VAW has to be changed through changing attitudes.
- Qualitative research is needed as interviews do not provide all data pertinent.

Ethical and safety dimensions need to be addressed.

- Difficulty of proving femicide.
- Culture and tradition can be a barrier to carrying out research and compiling other types of data.
- This answer to the question, *Which forms of violence against women are considered as crimes, or not, in different countries?* need to be established before any agreement monitoring can take place.

- Access to reporting and justice , rates of reporting and prosecution should be examined.
- Awareness campaigns on violence against women be mounted.
- Violence prevention included in school curriculum *as in Mithra's Human Rights education training programmes in Karnataka, India.*
- Police, social work and health staff should receive training in dealing with violence against women.

Human Rights Defenders in Indonesia

Special Rapporteur Hina Jilani

Special Rapporteur on Human rights defenders, Hina Jilani, expressed concern about the HRs situation in Indonesia. In 2007 Indonesia ratified the international covenant on civic and political rights and the elimination of descrimination against women.

Despite the Human rights Commission of Indonesia (Komnas HAM) the work of human rights defenders is undermined.

- Justice for human rights defenders may be influenced to protect the perpetrators who violate human rights.
- Absence of police investigation of high ranking officials implicated.
- HRs defenders are often accused of being enemies of the state and negatively affected by laws, politics and the social environment.

For example a woman Human rights defender who was advocating the rights of women to be free from domestic violence, had her home burnt down. She complained to the police, who later accused her of arson!

- Complaints are not registered, lawyers are frightened to take up cases relating to gay and transexual rights.
- Sexual abuse and harrasment cases are ignored and there is belittlement of women and stigmatization of women victims of rape.
- Violation of freedom of religious practice is encouraged by the state.
- An over zealous implementation of sharia law has led to delegitimisation of the activities of women HRs defenders. For example post tsunami reconstruction, women's voices about adequete housing were seen as not to be in conformity with sharia law.
- There is a need to train the police and military in the HRs compliance.
- Implement strict guidelines on investigation prosecution agencies to carry out investigations properly.
- Give greater prominence to the Human Rights Defenders in the regions.

Sexual violence was common during the 5 year war 1998 and 2003 Gang rapes, genital injury was common; the victims were stigmatized by their own communities and, together with their children, became destitute.

The normalisation of rape in war cannot be separated from gender discrimination and violation.

Now, even though there is peace, the war on women goes on. Sexual violence is fuelled by gender based discrimination in society at large (*See Charlotte Ndonga's Gender study*)

In every sphere women face discrimination. DR Congo is 130th of 136 countries in UN development programme UNDP gender related index GDI

The new Family Code theoretically gives equality between spouses yet a married woman, in law, is under the guardianship of her husband.

Women get up to 12 months in prison for adultery, men get nothing. Because of the bride price men feel that they have bought their wife.

63% of women are literate against 78% men.

Victims of sexual violence in DRC do not bother to seek their rights to compensation. As there is a fund, for compensation of victims, but no one has received any payment.

Recommendations

There is a Human Rights crisis in the DR Congo the International communities failure to prevent Rwandan genocide set the scene for impunity in violations of rights.

Even though there is peace, sexual violence remains, amounting to crimes against humanity.

Crimes committed in war are rarely punished. Non punishment for rape is massive.

The justice system does not have an adequate budget.

And all protective social mechanisms seem to have been dropped.

There needs to be a security sector reform.

Corruption allow those imprisoned for violence against women to buy their way out of prison.

On a day to day basis, women defenders of Human rights are constrained within a social milieu of:

"Each inclination or trend to do things differently is considered a transgression of the established social order and, therefore, invites sanctions and reprisals."

"With the unquestioning acceptance and submission of women.....L

They are more spectators than actors. On topics that will directly affect women, it is the men who discuss them, decide the direction that will be followed and make the decisions for the women. "

"If she became one of those who rebel against the community order, she would cease to be a woman."

Charlotte Ndonga. Chair SD Congo; *Gender Study in Kingantoko and Surrounding Area*

At present there is no general provision for resolutions on the Rights of the Child in this 7th Council. There is recommendation for full inclusion in 2009, which will be the 20th Anniversary of the 'Convention on the Rights of the child', with a full report to Council.

In the reports attention is drawn to the link between poverty /housing /lack of education /physical and psychological security. Special attention was drawn to the rights of children in prison, either alone or with, usually, their mother.

The Special Rapporteur visited Mexico with a remit to investigate child victims of sexual exploitation. It is one of several countries not signed up to the 'Code of Conduct for Protection of Children from Sexual exploitation in Travel and Tourism'.

Only 5 of 32 Mexican States have specifically criminalised offences against minors, although Mexico's general Constitution offers full protection. Positive and supportive work is being done by several agencies, State and NGO. The Rapporteur recommends state/NGO dialogue, with specific and special programmes catering to the needs of children quick responses to disappeared and abducted children; shelters for assistance and rehabilitation to provide residence, food, clothes, medical aid, competent staff, psychological counselling, educational facilities, legal aid, translation services, personalised care and recreational activities.

A Quaker report on 'Primary Right of Child in Sentencing Mother', draws attention to needs of child being taken into consideration when its mother is due for prison sentencing. Thailand was among the countries addressing this problem.

ECPAT is an international organisation noted for good practise in its work for support and re-integration of child victims of sexual exploitation. However, in general, separate programmes for such children is not available.

The Rapporteur notes the lack of specific assistance for such children can be a cause of re-victimisation and vulnerability towards exploiters and traffickers. He recommends separate support for child victims of domestic abuse and those victims of commercial abuse.

Children and Employment: in 2004, there were 218 million children aged 5-14 and 141 millions aged 15-17 were 'economically active'. 126 millions were forced to work in hazardous conditions. sisters in our world

The UN attempts to shine a light into the dark shadows of the lives of our brothers and Through finding, exposing, examining communicating, suggesting, checking and improving to make the world a better place for all. Through clear unanimously agreed guidelines that eradicate the sins evils of this life. To what else should we, in Subud, be attached?

This immense challenge to act as though we were truly balanced human beings with compassion.

There is a lot of suffering going on in the world for workers, women, children, migrants and indigenous minorities.

I hope that these these reports will give some background context to the lives of our partners with whom Susila Dharma works. Contributing to the millenium development goals and the implementation of many of the rights declared in Geneva.

Raphael Bate. 31 March 2008