

**2006 Report of WomenWatch's Task Manager to  
the WomenWatch Advisory Committee  
of the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)  
New York, 23 February 2007**

WomenWatch (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>) is a project of the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE). It is a gateway to all websites of the United Nations on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

1. What was the key goal for the task force during the reporting period?

In 2006, key goals included:

- 1/ restructuring/streamlining the website navigation, and improving the website content and relevance, through: technical improvements; automatic feed functions; addition of special features; and preparations for multilingual features;
- 2/ increasing the visibility of WomenWatch in the UN system, through: collaboration with other UN entities' global knowledge sharing and ICT for development initiatives;
- 3/ seeking funds to secure staffing and prepare multi-language versions

2. Tasks undertaken in 2006, to achieve these goals

*Regular Updates and maintenance of WomenWatch*

- *Portal Front Page*  
The WomenWatch front page has been fully redesigned; it includes regular updates on: UN-related gender equality news and highlights, upcoming events, new documents and publications, and new websites. The new front-page also provides a user-friendly overview of recent UN-related gender equality news and new gender-related documentation resources in the UN system.
- *Expansion of items posted in Directory of Resources and Calendar of Events*  
A new, RSS-based method for monitoring gender-related UN websites for updates and new publications, as well as increased collaboration and communication exchanges between webmanagers of UN Gender websites (UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNFPA, INSTRAW, DPI, DAW, etc.) made it possible to add more than 200 new online resources to WomenWatch in 2006.
- *Mail Maintenance*  
Monitoring the WomenWatch website feedback form and the E-Mail address "womenwatch@un.org", the WomenWatch webmanager has answered requests, including by referring to resources and contacts in other UN entities.

*Special Features on WomenWatch*

- WomenWatch commemorated the **International Women's Day** on March 8, 2006 with a special online feature, announcing observances and activities of individual UN entities: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/2006>

- In October 2006, the special feature on *Women, Peace and Security* was revised, updated and expanded, including a calendar of events: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/wps/>
- In December 2006, marking the General Assembly's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, WomenWatch launched a special feature on *Women with Disabilities*, in cooperation with UN Enable and IANWGE members: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/enable/>  
Following the guidelines of the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium, this special feature incorporates a special design for people with disabilities.

#### *Preparations for Multilingual WomenWatch sections*

- Meetings with experts of DPI multilingual website section and DESA-CIMS have been held to discuss technical and production-related aspects of multilingual web pages.
- A detailed word-count and database export of all linkages and pages in WomenWatch was undertaken in 2006, as a basis for procurement of a translation company.
- A company (Applied Language Solutions, based in the UK) started the work in early December 2006; quality control of translated titles and captions is in progress, and will be completed by end of February, 2007.
- Multilingual navigation definitions and screen elements have been conceived for WomenWatch to provide a multilingual interface, as a basis for design adaptations to be performed in 2007.

#### *Technical improvements in WomenWatch functions*

During 2006, a number of user-friendly technical enhancements and updates/expansions to the directory content were implemented, including:

- *WomenWatch RSS feed*  
A new WomenWatch online service was launched, which automatically alerts WomenWatch users of updates in a timely, cost-effective and tailored manner. This service is based on RSS technology ("Really Simple Syndication") and provides a newsfeed of WomenWatch latest additions to all users. Launched in June 2006, it is quickly being adopted by users and ranked # 7 in the list of most-viewed WomenWatch pages in August 2006.

#### *Soft restructuring*

Completion of soft restructuring of the site architecture, i.e.: integration of the directory of gender resources, and the archive section of previous online discussions, into the main WomenWatch website structure; restructuring of country information into ten regional groups (Caribbean, East Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East, North America, Oceania, South and South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Western

Europe); and expanding country-specific resources to more than 100 specific linkages.

- *Online Discussions*  
A comprehensive upgrade to the online discussion software “WebBoard” was performed to address technical shortcomings of the old version and to deploy online discussions more efficiently. The new online discussion software allows email participation, which is especially important for participants in areas where broadband internet access is not available, as well as online surveys and polls, and rating of messages. The migration of archived WomenWatch online discussions, available as read-only conferences, to the new software version has been completed.
- WomenWatch did not host any new online discussions in 2006 (the DAW online discussion on the Girl Child as a preparation to the 51st session of CSW session received technical support from the WomenWatch webmanager.)

### *Conferences and Expert Group Meetings*

- WomenWatch assisted in the organization of the Third “Web for Development” Conference (Web4Dev) at UN Headquarters in New York, 20-22 November 2006. Web4Dev convened participants from the UN and its agencies, including participants from other duty stations, government, business, industry experts, academia, non-profit and civil society attendees with an interest in the web and information and communication technologies for development. Collaboration with the organizing entity (DPI) made it possible for WomenWatch to be promoted through a double-sided flyer (see annex) and a bookmark in participants’ conference packages.
- In December 2006, WomenWatch was invited by UNSD to present WomenWatch functionalities as good-practice example of an inter-agency gender equality portal at the Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting on the Development of Gender Statistics (UN Headquarters New York, 12-14 December 2006). Showcasing of WomenWatch included new WomenWatch features like RSS feeds and the new version of Web-board discussion groups as a tool for online collaboration.

### 3. Inter-Agency Collaboration

- ***An informal network of web managers of gender-related UN websites*** has been formed to increase communication and knowledge sharing, through meetings and online collaboration. Three meetings have been held in New York in 2006, with the participation of web managers from UNIFEM, UNFPA, DPI, DAW, DESA/CIMS. An online platform has been set up to accommodate remote participants (INSTRAW), including password-protected areas and online discussion groups/ mailing lists. Annex 1 includes the names of webmanagers and minutes of meetings.
- ***UN-related gender equality newsfeed.*** In July 2006, a first concrete outcome of this collaboration was the definition of a common format for UN-related gender equality RSS newsfeeds. A prototype for a “one-stop” UN-related gender equality

news site has been created, and is ready for deployment in 2007. For the first time and operated by WomenWatch, an automated UN-related gender equality news aggregator will combine all gender-related news items of individual UN entities' RSS newsfeeds, and provide all WomenWatch users with a single page/feed.

- ***ILO Gender Network Orientation Kit***. In September 2006, English and French versions of a WomenWatch PDF flyer have been produced for inclusion in the ILO online toolkit designed to assist ILO Gender Focal Points in their role of gender mainstreaming "catalysts":  
[http://www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/genderresources.details?p\\_lang=en&p\\_category=NEW&p\\_resource\\_id=397](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/genderresources.details?p_lang=en&p_category=NEW&p_resource_id=397)
- Other results of increased collaboration among IANWGE webmanagers included: exchanges of "banners" (i.e., attention-getting website visuals for announcement of events or publications); timely announcement of entities' events throughout the UN system; knowledge sharing; joint production of WomenWatch special features on specific themes; and constant updating of links and resources in the WomenWatch directory.

#### 4. Fundraising

- ***Funding remains a key challenge***. In June 2006, a fundraising letter and a funding project proposal for WomenWatch were sent out to all entities of the UN system as well as to Member States and intergovernmental organizations such as the "Agence de la Francophonie" and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Few contributions were received from: the government of Norway, and from UN entities (UNICEF, and ILO). Annex 2 includes a status of fund report.
- Additional resources are being sought to fund the WomenWatch web manager position and a substantive information assistant position on a full time basis for 2007, and to complete the multilingual sections on WomenWatch, and further expand the directory of resources. Efforts will also be made to secure funding for ongoing translation activities for multilingual sections on WomenWatch.

#### 5. Priorities for 2007

The main priority for 2007 is the implementation of multilingual sections.

- In the first quarter of 2007, the WomenWatch directory of resources will be translated into all official UN languages, and modifications to the database will be performed to allow the incorporation of these translations and multilingual character sets into the WomenWatch database.
- The implementation of multilingual sections on WomenWatch is planned to be completed at the end of 2007, including interface adaptations to accommodate all UN languages.

At its meeting, the advisory committee will decide on which themes could be the topics of new "special features".

Activities are also planned to increase accessibility of WomenWatch web content for disabled persons, and to include access for mobile browsers, e.g., cell-phones.

As online video is becoming a popular form of internet usage and a highly suitable medium for online advocacy, WomenWatch will put special emphasis on researching and presenting related online video and multimedia produced by UN entities (e.g., OCHA IRIN, UNICEF, UNFPA, etc.). This interest is shared by other IANWGE web managers, including UNIFEM.

The WomenWatch RSS functionality introduced in 2006 was quickly adopted by WomenWatch users. As it appears to be one of the most popular services provided by WomenWatch, plans are made to further expand it and offer a combined newsfeed of all gender equality-related RSS news in the UN system.

Networking, knowledge sharing, and online cooperation among core IANWGE webmanagers and information officers, which significantly increased in 2006 and brought tangible results (see section 3), will be expanded in 2007 through reaching out to more UN entities such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNAIDS, FAO, OCHA, OHCHR, Regional Commissions, UNDP, WFP, UNU, UNCTAD/WTO, ILO, WHO, the World Bank, ITU, IFAD, UNIDO, IOM, etc.

Dissemination of WomenWatch as the United Nations Internet Gateway on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women will be further increased through collaboration, cooperation with UN entities, continued networking with IANWGE web managers and information officers, and active participation in related online communities, e.g., the Development Gateway.

7. Other pertinent information from the task force.

Task Manager: DAW

Members of the WomenWatch Advisory Committee:

DPI, FAO, ILO, INSTRAW, ITU, Regional Commissions, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, and UNESCO

**Annex 1: Status of Fund**

(See separate attachment)

**Annex 2a: List of participants of the informal webmanagers' network of IANWGE members:**

|           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| UNIFEM    | Eduardo Gomez            |
| UNFPA     | Alvaro Serrano           |
| UNFPA     | Kimberly Gruber          |
| DESA CIMS | Alexandre Rafalovitch    |
| DESA CIMS | Jianqun Wang             |
| DESA CIMS | Jean-Michel Sadoul       |
| DAW       | Rajkumar Cheney Krishnan |
| DPI       | Pilar Fuentes            |
| DPI       | Otoniel Rojas            |
| INSTRAW   | Mikel Maron              |
| INSTRAW   | Jochen Plumeyer          |

**Annex 2b: Meeting summaries**

Date of meeting: May 11, 2006

Major outcomes:

- Presentations of current websites, technologies used, and plans for future developments:
  - WomenWatch website and Content Management System
  - DAW website / OSAGI website
  - UNIFEM website and Content Management System
  - DESA website
  - UNFPA website
- Discussion of experiences with multilingual website sections and Unicode (UTF-8) Encoding
- Discussion of recent web developments such as RSS, Blogs, Podcasts, etc. and how they could be deployed.
- Sharing of CMS database definition tables (UNIFEM)
- Agreed to focus on RSS technology as a collaborative project.

Date of meeting: June 8, 2006

Major outcomes:

- Presentation of DESA News Content Management System and RSS generation (Alexandre Rafalovitch)

- Definition of common RSS project with the following milestones:
  - Decide on encoding standard (UTF-8)
  - Decide on a common RSS format (RSS or ATOM)
  - Decide on aggregator software
  - Create common RSS feed on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women using the aggregator
  - invite other UN entities to use RSS and join the common RSS feed / aggregator
- Agreed to continue the process of preparing a common RSS format by email communication and meet again when preparations have been finished

Date of meeting: July 25, 2006

Major outcomes:

- Definition of a common RSS format:
  - Feed Format: ATOM 1.0
  - Encoding: UTF-8
  - Feed elements: 7 required elements (id, title, updated, author, link, rights, subtitle), 2 optional elements (icon, logo)
  - Entry elements: 6 required elements (id, title, updated, category, link, content/summary), 5 optional elements (author, contributor, published, source, rights)
- Definition of next steps for fall / winter:
  - Design and Programming of a prototype for a UN Gender News RSS Aggregator  
Moving the discussion to a mailing list / E-Forum to facilitate participation of remote webmanagers (INSTRAW)
  - Follow-up meetings during the planning phase of the Web4Dev conference and at the Web4Dev conference.
  - Expanding the informal webmanager network in 2007 to include more UN entities.

**Annex 2c: WomenWatch flyer** used for online dissemination (e.g., in the “ILO Gender Network Orientation Kit”), and as printed leaflets (e.g., at the Web4Dev Conference):

- [WW-Flyer\\_v01-english.pdf](#)
- [WW-Flyer\\_v01-french.pdf](#)