

President Obama SINGLES OUT UNDEF FOR SUPPORT



The UN Democracy Fund was one of only two UN named entities singled out for support by President Barack Obama in his **address** to the General Assembly on 23 September. Declaring that “it’s time for every Member State... to increase the UN Democracy Fund”, President Obama **spoke** of democracy as the form of government that delivers most for citizens, and spoke of civil society -- the focus of UNDEF’s work -- as the shapers of human progress and the conscience of communities.

“To put it simply: democracy, more than any other form of government, delivers for our citizens. And that grows stronger in a world where the nations are blurred,” President Obama said at the opening of the General Debate, 192 UN Member States. “America is a world that fosters this openness, for closed or corrupt economy must give way to energy and innovation of human progress. The arc of progress has been shaped by individuals outside of government that insisted upon democratic change; and by free media that held the powerful accountable. We have seen that from the South Africans who stood up to apartheid, to the Poles of Solidarity, to the mothers of the disappeared who spoke out against the Dirty War, to Americans who marched for the rights of all races, including my own.

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“It’s time for every member state... to increase the UN Democracy Fund”

“Civil society is the conscience of our communities, and America will always extend our engagement abroad with citizens beyond the halls of government. We will call out those who suppress ideas, and serve as a voice for the voiceless. We will promote new tools of communication, so people are empowered to connect with one another – and, in repressive societies, to do so with security. We will support a free and open Internet, so individuals have the information to make up their own minds. And it’s time to embrace – and effectively monitor – norms that advance the rights of civil society, and guarantee its expansion within and across borders.”

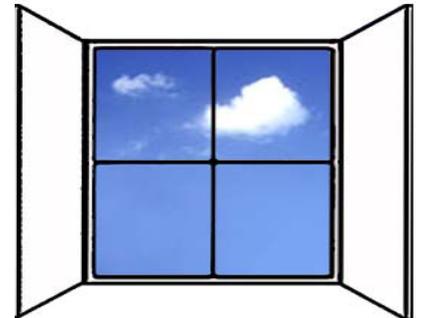
“This institution can still play an indispensable role in the advance of human rights, President Obama urged. “It’s time to welcome the efforts of UN Women to protect the rights of women around the globe. It’s time for every member state to open its elections to international monitors, and to increase the UN Democracy Fund. It’s time to reinvigorate UN peacekeeping, so that missions have the resources necessary to succeed, and so atrocities like sexual violence are prevented and justice is enforced – because neither dignity nor democracy can thrive without basic security. And it’s time to make this institution more accountable as well, because the challenges of a new century demand new ways of serving our common interests.”

APPLICATIONS WINDOW OPENS FOR FIFTH ROUND ON 15 NOVEMBER

On 15 November, UNDEF will open the window for applications for its Fifth Round of Funding, following the green light given by UNDEF Advisory Board. Project proposals may be submitted on-line between 15 November 2009 and 31 December 2010 at www.un.org/democracyfund, where applicants can also find guidelines, FAQs and lessons learned from previous rounds [here](#).

Those who plan to apply are strongly encouraged to visit this page as soon as possible to familiar-

ize themselves with what is required. Only on-line applications in either English or French will be accepted. UNDEF supports projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The large majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations -- both in the transition and consolidation phases of democratization. In this way, UNDEF plays a novel and distinct role in complementing the UN’s more traditional work -- the work with Governments -- to strengthen democratic governance around the world.



In four Rounds of Funding so far, UNDEF has supported more than 330 projects in 115 countries at a total amount of US\$93 million. UNDEF provides grants of up to US\$500,000 per project. Applications are subject to a highly rigorous and competitive selection process, with about three per cent of all applications approved for funding. Projects are two years long and fall under one or more of six main areas:

- Community Development
- Rule of Law and Human Rights
- Tools for Democratization
- Women’s Empowerment
- Youth Participation
- Media

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A WATCHDOG FOR **WOMEN'S**
PARTICIPATION IN

Egypt's elections



Although women in Egypt were granted citizenship and full political rights more than 50 years ago, they have neither achieved equal access to decision-making positions nor had opportunities to exercise their basic political rights. This is reflected by the extremely low rate of women's participation at all political levels.

An UNDEF-backed initiative aims to strengthen women's participation in Egypt's 2010-2011 local and national elections, the first polls of which start in late November this year. The project, implemented by the Egyptian Center For Women's Rights, has established a watchdog to monitor women's political and institutional access, while training women leaders to effectively take part in electoral campaigns.

POUR LA PARTICIPATION DES FEMMES EN *Algérie*, AU *Maroc* ET EN *Tunisie*

Dans les trois pays du Maghreb, la représentativité politique des femmes demeure en deçà des objectifs tant au niveau national que régional et local.

C'est pourquoi le FNUD soutient le projet "Renforcement du Leadership Féminin et de la Participation des Femmes à la vie politique et au processus de prise des décisions en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie", mis en oeuvre par CAWTAR, le Centre de la femme arabe pour la formation et la recherche.



Le but du projet est de promouvoir un changement des mentalités, des attitudes et des pratiques qui entravent la participation des femmes à la vie politique, à travers la prise de conscience et la meilleure connaissance des droits politiques des femmes, ainsi que le changement de l'image des femmes politiques dans les médias.

Dans le cadre du projet, un film a récemment été tourné, "Qui est Fatima?", dans lequel une jeune journaliste algérienne retrace la vie de Fatima Al Fihriya, la figure historique marocaine du neuvième siècle. Le tournage du film a été réalisé à Bouraada en Tunisie et Fez au Maroc, ville natale de Fatima. A travers des entretiens avec des hommes dans la rue et dans le souk, le film cherche à expliquer l'évolution des perceptions du rôle de la femme au Maghreb.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL FABRIC BEFORE ELECTIONS IN CAMEROON



Cameroon, strategically placed in and sometimes called “Africa in miniature” for its geographical and cultural diversity, faces several acute challenges ahead of elections in 2011: unemployment, widespread poverty, weak voter and civic participation, weak representation of women in political leadership.

The energy and food crises have further eroded the social and political fabric. In this context, UNDEF supports an initiative throughout Cameroon to educate voters, follow up on voter registrations, improve access to paralegal services, and ensure that women and youth know their rights and can participate actively in communities and public affairs.

As part of the project, implemented by the local Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, 30 traditional leaders from five regions and as many youth leaders in human rights and participatory democracy in Bamenda, north-western Cameroon.

Comment construire une culture démocratique solide en République démocratique du Congo, après des décennies de chaos et de corruption résultant du conflit le plus meurtrier dans le monde depuis la deuxième guerre mondiale?

Le FNUD soutient un projet pour la formation de 700 leaders locaux, relais oeuvrant à la participation au processus de gouvernance local et aux droits de l'Homme. Chaque acteur local devra par la suite former 100 autres leaders, menant à terme à la formation de près de 100 000 acteurs.

Des clubs d'action démocratique ont également été mis en place dans le cadre de ce projet exécuté par une ONG locale, l'Organisation Paix Unité Réconciliation Reconstruction. Ces clubs servent d'interface entre citoyens, gouvernement local et centre de conseils afin de rechercher comment améliorer les instances judiciaires liées aux injustices fiscales et administratives. Ce projet est mis en oeuvre dans 50 communautés dans Kinshasa et Maniema..

ACCROÎTRE *la démocratie* EN RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO



NEWS FROM THE FIELD



UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN RUSSIA

Protecting the rights of migrant workers in the Russian Federation is an ever more acute challenge in the face of growing

xenophobia and discrimination. A new project funded by UNDEF began work in the second half of 2010 to empower civil society organizations representing migrants and ethnic minorities, in particular those from Central Asia. Implemented by the Center for Assistance to Victims of Violence and Human Trafficking, based in Perm, the project has embarked on a series of seminars and workshops in Moscow and the Perm Region.

The sessions bring together migrant civil society leaders, police and the Ministry of Justice, as well as officials from the Offices of the Ombudsman and Prosecutor. The project will train police, institutions, trade unions and social services in tools to prevent discrimination and xenophobia; train civil society organizations in UN human rights conventions, international standards and practices, Russian law and court litigation, self-organization and self-help; and hold workshops with human rights NGOs in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Ukraine to exchange lessons learned and best practices.



While Mongolia's transition to democracy is seen as largely successful, the country has some way to go to develop a mature citizenry fully aware of its rights as well as effective and transparent institutions. That is why an UNDEF-funded initiative is working to raise what is still a low level of civic awareness and voter education.

The initiative, "Towards a better electoral process in Mongolia", is implemented by Women for Social Progress with a view to increasing voter trust and turnout, building a more transparent election process, and strengthening civil society through training electoral observers.

The project recently held training sessions for students in Darkhan-Uul, Sukhbaatar, Nalaikh and Khan-uul, and ranged from the technicalities of the ballot box to an overview of the Constitution. Methods included role play, brainstorming, team working, discussion, drawing, games and quizzes. to enable civil society organizations to further their cause.



MONGOLIA'S PROGRESS FROM THE BALLOT BOX TO THE CONSTITUTION

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

DEMOCRACY
IN ACTION FOR
Mining STANDARDS
IN **Chile**

As of this year, the whole world knows about the challenges of improving mining standards in Chile. But the issue was already being addressed by an UNDEF-backed initiative in Chile on democracy and the environment, which includes civic action for environmentally sound gold mining. An NGO field mission recently visited an artisanal gold mine, or “pirquén”, in Andacollo, northern Chile, to monitor compliance with environmental agreements between mining companies and authorities. It is part of an UNDEF-backed project to engage citizens in impact assessments of vulnerable communities in northern, central and southern Chile. The field missions, implemented by Acción por la Tierra Santiago together with Control Medioambiental Andacollo, report to the authorities violations such as toxic spills and blasting in adverse wind conditions; broadcasts radio reports; and participates in environmental negotiations to protect air quality.

The overall project aims to improve citizen involvement in environmental issues and thereby increase civic capacity to influence on policy or decision-making. It is part of the long process of building effective, democratic mechanisms for citizen participation in public decision-making that began after the end of Chile’s military dictatorship 20 years ago.



Women implementing an UNDEF-supported project in Colombia celebrated the International Day of Democracy on 15 September 2010 with an impassioned plea for women’s participation in democracy as a means to development and peace.

Former Colombian Senator Cecilia López addressed the gathering organized by the Corporación Centro de Apoyo Popular. She stressed the need for women parliamentarians to engage in women’s issues and to act as a united front, so as to increase political participation in the country as a whole.

Colombian women, although active as voters and at the grassroots of politics, continue to be under-represented at top levels due to educational obstacles, cultural barriers, and the security threats in the conflict-impacted country.

COLOMBIAN

WOMEN MARK

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

WITH

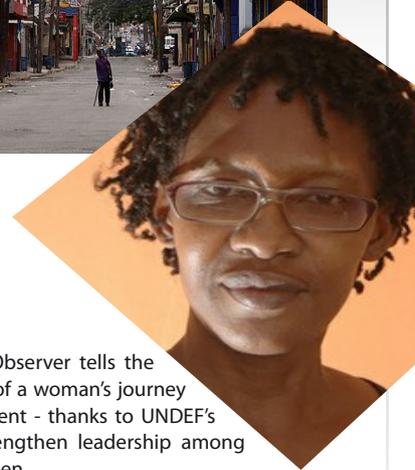
APPEAL FOR PARTICIPATION FOR *PEACE*

WORTH READING

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia **presided** over the **launch** of the UNDEF-supported Liberia Women Democracy Radio in August 2010.

The first radio station in Liberia and the second in Africa to broadcast content for women by women, the project has broken new ground and inspired vast **coverage** by media and civil society.

UNDEF PROJECT YIELDS VOICE FOR LIBERIA'S WOMEN



The Jamaica Observer tells the moving **story** of a woman's journey to empowerment - thanks to UNDEF's project to strengthen leadership among Jamaican women.

UNCHAINED

thanks to UNDEF in
Jamaica

Professor Benhabib of Yale addresses *UNDEF Board* on new forms of JUSTICE

Professor Seyla Benhabib of Yale University, who serves as an individual member of the UNDEF Advisory Board **spoke** at a Board meeting on 29 October 2010 of the "human rights revolution largely initiated by the United Nations" and the UN's various instruments.

"We have entered a phase in the evolution of global civil society which is characterized by a transition from international to cosmopolitan norms of justice," Dr. Benhabib said. "This is not merely a semantic change. While norms of international law emerge through treaty obligations to which states and their representatives are signatories, cosmopolitan norms accrue to individuals considered as moral and legal persons in a world-wide civil society." This revolution had "created a new and powerful vocabulary for public claim-making," said Professor Benhabib. "It has enabled new social actors such as women, migrants, indigenous peoples to enter the public arena as political agents, and it has created anticipations of new forms of justice in a future world."



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