

## **GENDER WIRE**

### **Special Edition: International Women's Day**

*"Gender equality is a basic human right and a transformational force for more just, inclusive and sustainable development."*

- Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General on International Women's Day 2016

## **IWD HIGHLIGHTS**

During this past year the world came together to agree on Agenda 2030. With gender equality at the heart of this agenda, this year's theme for International Women's Day 2016 was, *"Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality"*. Several events organized by the Division for Gender Equality took place throughout the week of 7-18 March.

- International Conference on ***"Violent Extremism and Radicalization: Women as Victims, Perpetrators and Agents of Change"***. UNESCO brought together panelists from different regions to discuss the need for a gendered analysis of radicalization and violent extremism and the role of women in countering these phenomena. The Conference also provided testimonials from a young woman abducted by Boko Haram who managed to escape and from a Yezidi Gender Equality activist who set up a system to free Yezidi women and girls abducted by the IS.
- Round Table on ***Women's Rights in Morocco: between promises and effectiveness***. Organized in collaboration with the Delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Round Table featured presentations from expert panelists about Morocco's recent reforms to mainstream gender and include women at the policy-making levels.
- Panel Discussion on ***"Gender Equality and International Law"***. The University of Pennsylvania Law School (PennLaw) joined UNESCO in a dialogue about universal respect for justice and the rule of human rights law to encourage pushing the global frontiers of law and policy concerning SDG goal 4, education for all, and SDG 5, gender equality.
- Art Exhibition on ***"Women's Role in Sustainable Development"***. UNESCO collaborated with nine Delegations (Turkey, Armenia, Ukraine, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Bangladesh, Togo, Bahrain and Egypt) to nominate 15 artists who showcased different forms of expressing women's role in society and sustainable development.



1: Radicalization Conference



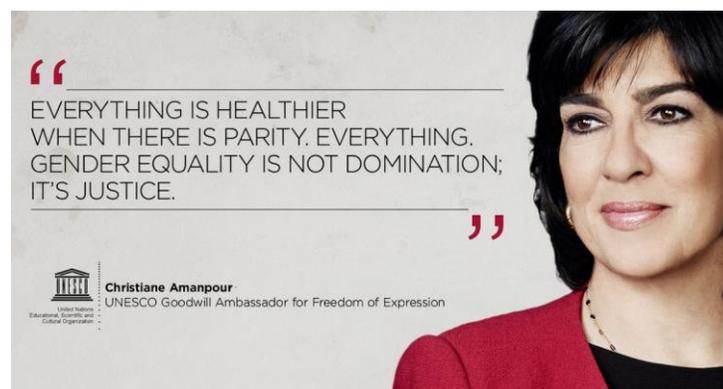
2: DG speaking at the vernissage for the art exhibition



3: International Law Conference  
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## SOCIAL MEDIA DURING IWD

- International Women’s Day was the *worldwide trending topic* on Twitter, with **162,527,233** impressions
- Original tweets on #IWD2016 generated **1.4 million** views over the day
- Goodwill Ambassador **Christiane Amanpour**, shared UNESCO’s IWD posts both on Twitter and Facebook



## CSW HIGHLIGHTS

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Since 1946, it has been instrumental in promoting women’s rights, documenting the reality of women’s lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The priority theme for the 60th session was women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development. Discussions by governments focused on creating a conducive environment for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The Director General of UNESCO, along with DIR/ODG/GE, were there in attendance. Several UNESCO organized side-events took place to highlight different issues related to UNESCO’s domains:

- **“Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education: A new model for delivering the 2030 Agenda”** – Organized by UNESCO (ED and ODG/GE), UN Women and UNFPA
- **“Breaking persistent challenges for gender equality in media”** - Organized by UNESCO (CI)
- **“Heritage and Creativity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment”** – Organized by UNESCO (CLT)
- **“Women’s role and involvement in measuring the progress with the SDG6: How can NGOs, women’s organizations and academics work together for complementary monitoring and reporting on water and gender issues?”** – Organized by UNESCO (World Water Assessment Programme – WWAP)

## UNESCO's Gender Equality Champions

In acknowledging the risks women take every day to advance their human rights and the rights of others, this edition of UNESCO's Gender Wire acknowledges Ameena Saeed Hasan, an activist who has rescued hundreds of women from violent extremism in Iraq, as this month's gender equality champion.



4: Ms. Hasan meeting the DG at UNESCO for IWD, 2016  
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5: Ameena Saeed Hasan  
© Cathy Otten

**Ameena Saeed Hasan** is a Yezidi Kurd, a minority group targeted by the extremist group ISIS. She has helped secure the release of over two hundreds female captives by setting up a hotline and registry to save Yezidi women who are kidnapped and recruited by the extremist group ISIS. There are reports explaining how ISIS is forcing migration, executing those who refuse, and taking girls and women as sex slaves. Ms. Hasan has courageously spoken about the human rights abuses that are being perpetrated upon the Yezidi people. Her advocacy has been encouraging to other members of the Yezidi community. She worked with the community to try and create a registry of captives and their locations. The local government has sponsored a team of local activists who have worked on freeing captives. Ms. Hasan has been a member of that team since the summer of 2014.

Ms. Hasan came to UNESCO for International Women's Day to share her testimony of the work she does to help women build a culture of peace and save them against violent extremism. She called on the international community to mobilize because there are still around 30,000 women vulnerable to the rise of extremism. She stated that "*we must educate for tolerance*

*among all peoples!* We commend Ms. Hasan for her courageous efforts, to find out more about her work, [click here](#).

## ?!?! Did You Know ?!?!

### Did you know about the Bechdel Test?

The Bechdel Test is a measurement of gender bias in movies. This test was developed by Alison Bechdel in 1985. For a movie to pass The Bechdel Test, it must contain just **one thing** – a scene in which two or more named female characters have a conversation (that is, back and forth dialogue) about *anything at all* besides men. Sounds simple, right?

Well, by April 2015, within a pool of 4500 movies, **only 58%** passed this test.

### In the news: A new step towards gender equality

In March 2016, the European Commission proposed that the European Union ratifies the Council of Europe's *Istanbul Convention*, a comprehensive international treaty on combatting violence against women. This reaffirms once more the European Union's solid commitment to fight gender-based violence. **The Istanbul Convention is the first legally-binding instrument that criminalizes violence against women.** This convention "creates a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women" and is focused on preventing domestic violence, protecting victims and prosecuting accused offenders. The Istanbul Convention requires its parties to improve the protection of victims of violence and ensure prosecution of offenders in all forms of violence, including: psychological and physical violence, sexual violence and rape, stalking, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilization.

## Let's Mainstream!

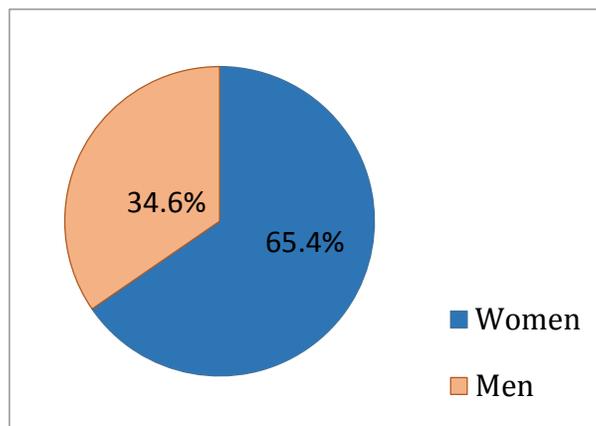
### Gender Equality Trainings are back!

UNESCO's goal is to ensure that all staff members have the right tools to apply gender mainstreaming throughout their work. This is why the Division for Gender Equality has started a new round of capacity building and training sessions on Gender Equality. These sessions will be held at regular intervals throughout the biennium.

#### Gender Equality affects us all

In the sessions held in January and February at HQ, 211 staff members attended the training with 138 women (65.4%) and 73 men (34.6%).

This ratio varies in different sectors; among major sectors SHS has the highest gender parity (53.3% women and 46.7% men) while education ranked at the bottom with 20.6% of men attending.



% of male and female participants

#### Gender Mainstreaming is needed at all levels

Only 5 directors and 21 P5 staff participated to the training, representing 2.4% and 10% of the participants, respectively. We invite staff members of all levels to attend future sessions.

#### Why is Gender Mainstreaming so Important?

Since gender biases are embedded in all aspects of life, it is very difficult to eliminate them without implementing a holistic approach. Gender Mainstreaming is just that: including a gender equality perspective in all areas and at all levels. A strong, continued commitment to gender mainstreaming is one of the most effective means for the United Nations to support promotion of gender equality at all levels - in research, legislation, policy development and in activities on the ground, and to ensure that women as well as men can influence, participate in and benefit from development efforts

**COME AND JOIN US AT THE NEXT TRAINING!**

## Gender Wire's book selection

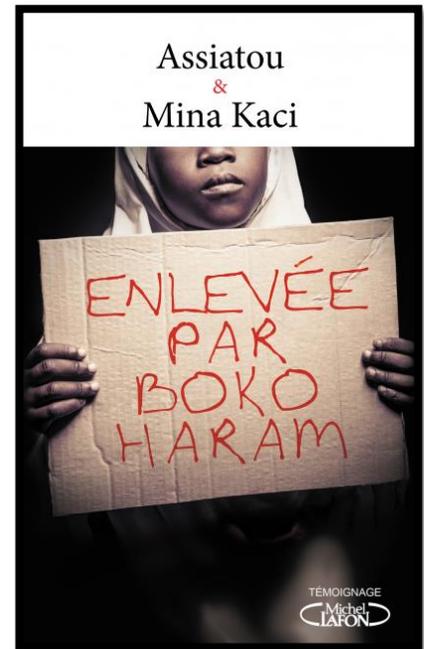
In acknowledging the plight young girls and women take every day to advance their human rights, this edition of UNESCO's Gender Wire recommends the Book, *Enlevée Par Boko Haram*, by Assiatou and Mina Kaci. This book highlights the harrowing story of Assiatou who was kidnapped by Boko Haram in her village in Northern Nigeria, and how she was able to escape.

For security purposes, the girl was given a false name, Assiatou, in order to protect her identity in telling her story, which describes the horrible conditions she endured while she was held captive by Boko Haram. Mina Kaci, a French journalist, went to Niger where Assiatou is now living under protection, to interview her and help share her story with the public at large.

In the light of the rise of violent extremism and radicalization, many have ignored the specific tactics that have turned girls and women into victims, property and perpetrators. Assiatou was able to come to UNESCO to tell her story on International Women's Day.

Her story helps bring awareness to the crimes committed against girls and women by violent extremists and call for action to member states and organizations like UNESCO to end these abductions and use education to help future generations of girls and boys fight against violent extremism. Looking to the future, she described how she is inspired by her father who firmly believes that *"A person who doesn't study is a person who is diminished."*

If you would like to find out more about Assiatou's story, we highly recommend the book. Some of the proceeds from the book will go to furthering Assiatou's education.



**6: Assiatou was covered for security purposes while giving her testimony to the audience, including the DG**

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