

Women and the World

Meredith Ann O'Connell



Making Feminism a Priority at the United Nations

“Where are the women? Are they represented? Are they around the table?” Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom recently asked during a visit to the United Nations. Sweden has just started its 2-year term on the UN Security Council, and it is determined to make sure that women are involved in future peace processes as they are usually excluded from the table.

Despite having an entity entirely devoted to women's issues (UN Women), catchy slogans and the inclusion of gender equality as one of the new Sustainable Development Goals, the UN still grapples with putting gender equality into practice in its own organization. In October hopes for the first female Secretary-General were dashed when former Prime Minister of Portugal, Antonio Guterres, became the 8th Secretary-General. The UN's uneven support for women was also recently revealed in a news article by Devex, which reported that the World Food Programme, a UN entity, asked its staff not to attend the Women's Marches which took place across the world Saturday to highlight women's issues.

The idea for the main march, in Washington, D.C., came out of the aftermath of the US Presidential Election and the World Food Programme thus felt that it was not appropriate for staff to attend. Although the organization's reasoning is understandable, the marches were not political and intended to promote gender equality. Ultimately the UN should be supporting women's initiatives, not telling its own employees—who are leaders in the development field—to ignore them.

Grassroots women's initiatives need encouragement and support in order to make their voices heard. The UN needs to practice what it preaches, as it sets an example for the whole world. If it cannot support gender equality in its own hallowed halls, then why should any country follow its advice?

The UN needs to make women a greater priority in both its internal and external agendas. Yet there is hope: Secretary-General Guterres has stated that he wants to fill half of the top positions under his command with women. And UN Women's Executive Board has just elected a new president for 2017, and this time a woman is taking the helm: Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, the United Arab Emirates' Ambassador to the UN. Advancing women's empowerment is one of Her Excellency's key focuses, and I wish her success in promoting UN Women's priorities within the United Nations and throughout the world.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)

Sports Arbitration Centre to be launched in Kingdom

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The first of its kind sport arbitration centre to solve sports disputes in the GCC will be launched soon in Bahrain, the Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) announced yesterday.

Supreme Council for Youth and Sports assistant general secretary and BOC general secretary Abdulrahman Askar

revealed this during a meeting with Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) member Dr Abdulla Al Hayyan of Kuwait in Seef.

He assured that the committee has reached the final stages to launch the GCC Sport Arbitration Centre, which has also been approved by Presidents' of National GCC Olympic Committees.

Medical fees hike; Expats to feel the heat

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The sudden hike in fees at government health centres and hospitals for expats might force low paid workers to turn to 'alternative treatment' which puts their health at risk, according to a social worker here.

The increased fees at government health centres and hospitals could be too big of a burden for low paid expatriates, said Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) Chairperson Marietta Das.

"It is likely that these workers turn to alternatives such as home remedies or take advice from unqualified persons to treat their illness or they might decide not to seek treatment," she said.

Earlier the Health Ministry hiked the medical care cost for non-Bahrainis at public hospitals and health centres



Marietta Das

from BD3 to BD7. It also mentioned that expats will have to purchase their medications from private pharmacies.

According to her, this move will have many repercussions on the labourers.

"This is going to affect the low paid workers more than anyone. They will have to suffer as they cannot afford healthcare," she said.

"They are being paid a very low salary so it is impossible to pay this amount. Many are being paid BD150 or BD100

or less as it is in many cases. In such cases, how can they afford BD7 plus the additional charges including the payment to the pharmacy? It might end up costing BD20 to BD30 and many cannot afford that," she said.

Marietta Das warns that it is dangerous if these people seek home remedies and alternatives that could potentially harm them.

"However, if they are not able to afford healthcare they may feel that they are left without another choice. They might try something based on bad advice or they might take help from someone unqualified and this will harm them. Taking these sort of alternatives could make their illness worse, and we will have people with all sorts of untreated diseases," she added.

When asked if the employers should take up the responsibility of paying for healthcare expenses of the employees in such cases,

she said that it is not practical.

"It makes sense in theory but in practice, the employers may find a way around it. They may deduct the amounts from the worker's salary. The poor workers would be too afraid to protest or may not know his rights," she said.

Published in the Official Gazette, the decision stipulates that non-Bahrainis are obliged to pay BD7 for general medical consultancy. It is also mentioned that expats will have to purchase their medications from private pharmacies.

"Other services such as laboratory tests, X-ray, nursing, maternity and physiotherapy will be priced according to the approved prices at the ministry for each service," the resolution read.

Expats who work in the public sector and their dependents were however excluded from the decision.

Boudegzdame wins 'ArabsMMA Submission Of The Year' award

Elias-Boudegzdame



DT News Network
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Brave Combat Federation fighter Elias Boudegzdame has been presented with the prestigious 'Arabs MMA 2016 Submission of the Year Award' with 61 percent of the fan voting for the fighter.

WBoudegzdame's submission at Brave 2 earned first the place beating around 10 submissions nominated from different regional promotions.

Boudegzdame's flawless submission win against Walel Watson in a little less than two minutes into the first round had impressed fans and judges of Brave 2.

"Elias is certainly one of the most talented prospects that we have. His submission win over a veteran

like Walel Watson sent a huge echo in the featherweight division and we are proud of his achievement. It is a reflection of his hardwork," President Mohammed Shahid said.

Abdulkareem Al Selwady, another Brave Combat Federation fighter came second for a dominant rear naked choke on his opponent Rami Aziz.

