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International Women's Day Message

"Let us Continue to Wage War against Injustice"

Today, March 8, is International Women's Day. As we reflect on the significance of this day and on the struggles and journeys of women, as a collective social group, to end discrimination and human rights abuses, let us remember all those women who have given much as they demand justice for all and the protection of women's rights as human rights.

Let us also take time out to observe one minute of silence in honour of the women of Haiti who lost their lives in the recent earthquake in a country where they have been denied, for years, basic human rights: the right to life, the right to a life free of social, economic, political and sexual abuse, the right to self-determination and the right to a life of justice and peace.

Today, the issue of justice and human rights and by extension peace is being highlighted more than ever. This is so because the world is in turmoil and peace is elusive. Every day, the news media bring to us incidents and situations in which the rights of women, men and children and of whole nations are constantly being violated with impunity. We are constantly being fed a diet of acts of genocide; violations of human rights; violation of women, girls and all children; civil, religious and ethnic hostilities; foreign occupation; torture and forced imprisonment; corruption; war and more war; and the prevalence of acts of colonial and neo-colonial domination. In addition, unequal exchange and economic imbalances within the international political economy and the persistence of poverty throughout the world signify the violation of the social and economic rights of a significant amount of people struggling to survive, most of them women and children.

As women, we must believe that "another world is possible" and continue to work towards making this new world a reality. This new world would be one free of domestic violence, sexual violence against women and girls; a world in which children's rights are recognised and protected; a world in which women and children are fed, clothed and sheltered; a world in which women, their work and their lives are valued, a world in which male arrogance is eliminated; a world in which the price of a child is so high and so valued that that it cannot be bought and sold and the price of food is so low that it can be bought by all; a world based on justice and one in which all peoples will find peace, love and understanding.

Today, let us, as women, recommit ourselves to wage war on poverty, the violation of our rights and those of our children and the atrocities being committed against human kind. In short, let us continue to wage war against the injustices being inflicted on all marginalised peoples here in the Caribbean and beyond.

"The Sage Has Come of Age" Congrats Marva!

Congratulations to our colleague, Ms. Marva Phillips, Head, TUEI for organising and hosting the recent successful Rex Nettleford symposium (April 7-9). This was a fitting tribute to Prof. Nettleford.

Farewell Prof...Walk Good

On February 2, 2010, Professor the Honourable Ralston Milton "Rex" Nettleford passed away. Professor Nettleford, for the greater part of his academic life, held an iconic place as Director, Extra-Mural Department/Department of Extra-Mural Studies/School of Continuing Studies, UWI and Head, Trade Union Education Institute. In 1996, he was appointed Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor on the retirement of Sir Allister McIntyre. At the time of his death, he was Vice Chancellor Emeritus, a well deserved title.

The Women and Development Unit (WAND), one of the seven specialised extra-mural units, was established in 1978 under Professor Nettleford's watch, as that link with the region's women who fell outside the walls of the academy. Professor Nettleford never wavered in his support for WAND and its programme of activity to ensure the social advancement of women. As we recognise and deeply appreciate his contribution to the development of the Unit and its work, we say well done Prof. and thanks for your generosity of spirit.

Gone, but not forgotten, Ralston Milton "Rex" Nettleford will live on in our hearts and minds and in the annals of history.

Walk good, our friend!

Analysing the *Domestic Violence Act* of St.Kitts and Nevis

As part of its violence against women project, WAND took a critical look at the *Domestic Violence Act* of St.Kitts/Nevis to determine its effectiveness as an instrument of redress. One of the main conclusions is that the, "*Act*, although accompanied by challenges, represents a significant progress towards the protection of individuals from domestic violence".

Some recommendations for improving the Act were offered. A very important one was that a victim of domestic violence should be able to sue the state for compensation. The argument is premised on the notion that the state is entrusted with the responsibility of guaranteeing the protection of its citizens. Another, the effectiveness of the Act may be increased by imposing stiffer penalties. And yet another, the Act should give the court the power to include in the orders made under the Act, an order that the person who has perpetrated acts of domestic violence compensate the victim for any loss or expenses incurred as a result of the domestic violence such as medical fees, fees incurred for counseling sessions, loss of income, accommodation expenses and relocation expenses.

Theologising Women through the Creative Arts

WAND and the Hillcrest Retreat Centre of the Anglican Church hosted their second conference under the theme, "Theologising Women through the Creative Arts" on March 26, 2010. The conference focused on the liberating aspects of religion as ideology and the way in which women can find ideas of liberation and their own liberation through the creative arts which, themselves, can point to a potential community without discrimination.

You can write me down in history with hateful, twisted lies, you can tread me in this very dirt, but still, like dust, I'll rise.

Maya Angelou,

WAND

Notes

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