

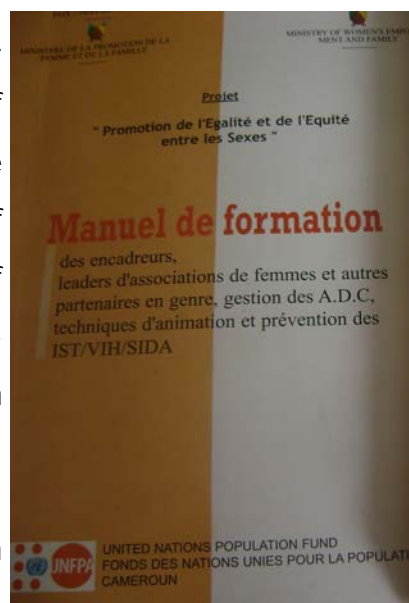
46th Edition of the African Women's Day in Cameroon

Inhabitants of the Ocean division on Friday 25th July 2008, woke up to the manifestations leading up to the 46th day of the African Women in pomp, style and colour. Under the auspices of Her Excellency, the Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family, Suzanne Bombback, events kicked off in Kribi. The powerful delegation accompanying the Minister from Yaounde, consisted of Administrative officials, members of the International Community, Developmental Partners, Women's Associations and Networks just to cite but these.

The Mayor of the Kribi Urban Council took to the rostrum thanking the Minister for choosing his town as the venue for celebration. In line with the theme of the 46th edition of the African Women's Day 'Blooming of the Young African Girl, Woman of Tomorrow', the Minister in her address wasted no time in underscoring the need for parents and the community at large to help young girls bloom and become veritable mothers of tomorrow. She equally launched a vibrant appeal to media professionals to help preserve a positive image of the Cameroonian women and girls by denouncing the derogatory use of young girls as immoral, nude dancers by artists and as sex symbols in adverts.

By the end of the series of workshops organised for girls and widows, the Minister for Women's Empowerment and the Family accompanied by the Senior Divisional officer for the Ocean division Jean Francois Bilong visited a good number of stands where the *savoir faire* and *know-how* of the women was on exhibition. From the beach town of Kribi, Minister Suzanne Bombback and her team took off on a boat excursion to discover the beauty and meandering river Lokoundje. A courtesy call to the chiefdom of the Evuzok Ewondo at Fifinda was not left out.

Putting the significance of this day in perspective with



regards to the mandate of UNFPA, it will be necessary to recall that it was with regards to its policy on poverty reduction and the enhancement of the woman in particular that an agreement was reached between the government of Cameroon and UNFPA spanning 2003-2007. The celebration of the 46th edition of the African Women's Day was as good an opportunity for Dr Yao Faustin, UNFPA's Representative, to officially hand over a Training Manuals developed by the Fund in collaboration with the Ministry, for Trainers, Leaders of Women's Associations and other Gender partners during the 4th Country programme. The Representative in his speech reminded the Cameroonian population and decision-makers of the need to overcome the numerous problems stemming from gender based discrimination facing the African woman. The need to empower the women of tomorrow in management skills in order for them to live up to the responsibilities of their time, contribute positively to the development of their country, the promotion of non discrimination, equal access to education and autonomy of women and girls are amongst the most crucial elements in the promotion of equality between man and women. Thus, the manual in question was elaborated to guide trainers in designing programmes which ensure the enhancement of women's capacity pointed the Representative.

Calling to mind the giant steps taken by the government of Cameroon to improve the status of girls and women, the Representative lauded the endeavors of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family for the successful implementation of activities defined under the gender component of the 4th Country Programme. This he said is contributing immensely towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the fulfillment of the ICPD agenda, the reinforcement of the Maputo plan of action but most of all, to the blooming of the young girl and the African Woman.

The 190 page publication includes modules on gender approaches, management of community development activities, interpersonal communication, family planning and the fight against sexually transmissible infections, HIV and AIDS and will soon be available on the UNFPA website at: <http://cameroon.unfpa.org>

UNFPA - Investing in Women and Girls