



African women reaping fruits of campaign against gender violence

Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt (PANA) - Tunisian women prisoners are allowed to leave prison for child birth for a period of three months and are currently allowed to seek legal redress for gender-related attacks as a result of the African Union (AU) -led campaigns against gender violence, women rights activists noted here Saturday.

The Tunisian Mothers Association President, Agrebi Saida, said a series of legislation aimed at improving the welfare of women have allowed women prisoners to leave prison during pregnancy and child-birth as part of efforts to improve welfare .

The Tunisian government has taken the steps, as part of its efforts to comply with the aspirations of the July, 2004 treaty of the African Union, which mandates

African governments to ensure effective protection for women in the society.

Several other working mothers are making efforts to enter the half-working-day programme, also granted to breast-feeding mothers in Tunisia, to enable them take

good care of their children, Saida told the continental confab on women rights.

The Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) conference, which kicked off here Friday, has attracted senior women leaders and gender rights campaigners to spread the message against maltreatment of women.

Saida said the Tunisian parliament passed a law 7 November, 2007, allowing mothers at least three months out of prison break, to breastfeed.

Egypt, which is hosting the 11th ordinary session of the African Union (AU) heads of state and governments' assembly, has also been cited as a leader in the campaign to improve the welfare of women to access funds for enterprise development.

"The one million Egyptian pounds campaign has benefited the women in business," Saida told the conference, examining the implementation of the landmark treaty, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, agreed upon in July, 2004.

African women noted that as a result of the solemn declaration, women in parts of the continent have been able to access a wide range of services, including vaccinations for children against common diseases, while also increasing the child rate of survival.

Africa, beset by diseases, poor health care infrastructure and lack of basic needs, has made marginal successes in its efforts to achieve some of the goals set in the declaration, which also lays emphasis on the absolute need to protect women in conflict.

"The north African region has made progress in helping women in enterprise. Each and every country is trying to increase the availability of health care to mothers and this is helping to reduce the mortality rate among the mothers and children," Saida said.

Sharm el-Sheikh - 21/06/2008