

INTERNATIONAL

Women face long road from classroom to the boardroom

By Neville Johnson
Special to Sentinel-Voice
KINGSTON, Jamaica (IPS) — A visitor to the University of the West Indies campus in Kingston is likely to bump into as many as four women before seeing one male student.

men three to one. However, if that same visitor takes a peek into the boardroom of a major conglomerate here, the picture will be one of middle-aged and older men making the major decisions. Observers say despite the giant strides that women are making in the classroom, it is still an uphill road from the classroom to the boardroom. "Men are still seen in our society as the main bread

winners. This has been the concept ... (since) ... the colonial era, and I think it is time for us to get rid of it from our present culture," said Esme Bailey, executive director of the Small Businesses Association of Jamaica. "We can say that our women in Jamaica have come a long way but they are still looked upon as inferior by men," said Shelly-Ann Green, a student at the Institute of Management Sciences. "They have less power and clout in most cases, and where they are head of any department or organization they are answerable to a male. Even at school, male teachers seem to have the edge over female teachers, although they have similar qualifications. The heads of most educational institutions are male, the board of directors are mostly male, and even if the principal is a woman, she still has to answer to a man."

that women are disproportionately represented in top positions in companies here, despite the progress that they are making in educating themselves. "What these women want is too much power," he said. "Everything they see men do they want to do it (but they) know that they cannot manage efficiently. Men are not going to sit back and give women the power to do what they feel like doing."

Technology, 65 percent of the student population are women. At the major teachers' colleges here, up to 85 percent of the students are women. Even in those companies where women have been able to move up the ladder to executive positions, there is an obvious difference in the salaries between men and women. For instance, while a male managing director in a company could earn almost \$94,000 per year, his female counterpart with similar qualifications and experience earns between \$60,000 and \$63,000, according to Dorothy Dyce, a consumer advocate. She said that women have made strides in many areas but there is still a long way to go. "Once men had occupied the top positions in just about every organization you can think of in this country, but now women are holding their own, and it will take a while for us to see a total revolution from the (male) dominance," she said.

There is only one female director on the board of his company. Of the 20 companies contacted by IPS in an informal survey, not one had a woman as chairperson of the board and in none of these companies were more than two women included as members of the board of directors. Yet, at the UWI campus here, of the 6,650 students registered, 4,678 are women. Last year 315 students graduated with post graduate degrees. Of that number, 221 were women and 94 men. At the University of

WORLD BRIEFS

ZAMBIAN GROUP CONDEMNS RWANDAN GENOCIDE EXECUTIONS

LUSAKA, Zimbabwe (PANA) - Alfred Zulu, the president of the Zambian Independent Monitoring Team, said that Rwanda's execution of people convicted of genocide would only fuel more ethnic tension in that country. "By taking away the lives of 22 convicts, Rwanda may drive itself towards another civil war," he told the Zambian News Agency, Zana. He questioned the legitimacy of the Rwandan trial saying the genocide suspects were not accorded adequate legal representation and the evidence given was defective and unreliable. The convicts who were executed by firing squad Friday, April 24, were found guilty for the 1994 genocide of some 800,000 Rwandan Tutsi and moderate Hutu. Zulu urged all African states to abolish capital punishment and instead try reconciliatory and healing methods in conflict resolution.

ANC SENDS PEACE NEGOTIATION EXPERTS TO NORTHERN IRELAND

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (PANA) — South Africa's African National Congress sent a top-level delegation to Northern Ireland to assist the country with its efforts to secure a long-lasting peace agreement. A statement from the ANC's national executive committee said the delegation consisted of Mpumalanga premier Matthews Phosa, former ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa, minister of Constitutional Development Valli Moosa, and Mac Maharaj, minister of Transport. Ramaphosa was instrumental in bringing the ANC and former National Party government together for crucial talks before the 1994 democratic elections. Maharaj and Moosa were also part of the ANC team that helped to negotiate with the National Party South Africa's first interim constitution. ANC national chairman Terror Lekota said both Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, and the British Labour Party had requested input from the South Africans. This was the second occasion that South Africa has assisted in the Irish peace process. Several members of antagonistic political parties in Northern Ireland attended a conference in Cape Town where leading political figures discussed how they had managed to overcome obstacles before the 1994 elections.

PROSPECTS VERY BRIGHT FOR ZIMBABWEAN MEDICARE PROPRIETORS

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe (PANA) — Hospital Products, a Zimbabwean company that manufactures and exports orthopedic software and disposable products to South Africa, has been making profits at a time when other firms in the country are reeling from losses. For 1998, the Ruwa-based company has predicted an annual turnover of \$25 million (US\$1.5 million) as the market expands due to the growth of the health care industry. In 1997 the company grossed \$12 million (US\$727,272). The company hopes to increase its gross earnings to \$50 million (US\$3.03 million) in 1999. The divisional director of Hospital Products, Gregg Robinson, said that 80 percent of the company's products were exported to South Africa. However, the company intends to expand to other parts of Africa, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. "People are realizing that health care is important, medical aid is expanding its coverage, health services throughout Africa are growing and we are growing with it," he said. The company, he said, depends largely on the internal market for its raw materials such as cotton. The factory was established in 1994 as a Zimbabwe Investment Centre project with South Africa and gradually grew to the point of self-sufficiency.

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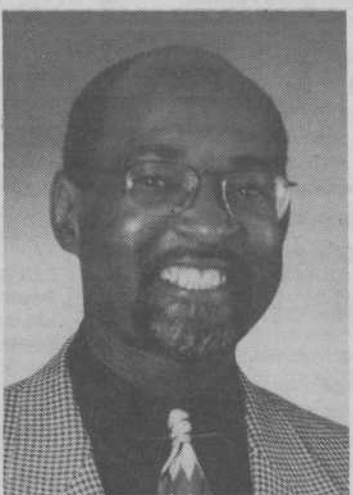
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Published: Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice
May 7, 1998

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Published: Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice
May 7, 1998

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