Equality Now was founded in 1992 to work for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women around the world. Working with local human rights groups and individual activists, Equality Now documents violations of these rights and adds an international action component to support local and national efforts on behalf of women’s rights and on behalf of individual women who are suffering human rights violations. Equality Now is adapting action techniques that have proven effective in the context of other human rights organizations (such as letter-writing appeals for the release of prisoners of conscience) and using these techniques both to help individual women and to promote women’s rights around the world. By gathering information about human rights abuses and distributing it to groups and individuals around the world, along with recommended actions for publicizing and protesting these abuses, Equality Now hopes to facilitate the coordination of an international force for women and human rights. Equality Now brings an expanded concept of human rights to mainstream international human rights work, taking up many issues which have generally been considered outside the scope of international human rights, such as trafficking in women, domestic violence, reproductive rights, and female genital mutilation. What Equality Now adds to the work of groups already fighting for women and human rights is a worldwide, rapid-response grassroots action component that will have an immediate impact on individual situations and a long-term impact on social policy.
The Women’s Action Network is the core of Equality Now. As of year-end 1993, the Network consists of almost one thousand groups and individuals in twenty-five countries around the world who take action in response to appeals on behalf of individual women, participate in campaigns on broader women’s issues, and channel information on the status of women and violations of human rights in their countries back through the Network. Equality Now has undertaken the following five Women’s Actions to date:

- Reproductive Rights in Poland
- Gender-Based Political Asylum in Canada—The Case of Nada
- Systematic Rape and Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Trafficking of Women to Japan: The Death of Maricris Sioson
- UNICEF’s Failure to Fund Efforts to Stop Female Genital Mutilation

All women’s actions are issued in English, Spanish, French and Arabic to promote equal access to information and to facilitate grassroots participation.

By Jessica Neuwirth, director, Equality Now, New York-based international women’s rights group.

TUES., AUG. 11, 1992

The Women’s Action Network

Byline: 1993. A network was formed. The Women’s Action Network (WAN) was established. It was founded by 12 women who were active in the women’s rights movement. These women worked together to develop a strategy for addressing the challenges faced by women around the world. The WAN works to promote women’s rights and to ensure that women have a voice in the decision-making process.

REZUMÉ

A la fin de l’année 1993, le réseau consistait de près de mille groupes et individus dans 25 pays dans le monde qui répondent aux appels au nom des femmes individuelles, participent à des campagnes sur des questions plus générales relatives aux femmes et disséminent des renseignements sur le statut des femmes et les violations des droits individuels dans leurs pays par l’intermédiaire du réseau. Grâce au réseau d’Action Femmes, Egalité Maintenant a abordé les questions de droits de reproduction, d’asile politique basé sur le sexe de la personne, le viol comme arme de guerre et de génocide, la traîne des femmes et la mutilation féminine génitale.

RESUMEN

Hasta fines del año 1993, la Red consistía de casi mil grupos e individuos en 25 países del mundo que realizan acciones en respuesta a violaciones de derechos humanos de mujeres individuales, participan en campañas sobre temas más amplios relacionados con la mujer y canalizan información sobre la situación de la mujer y violaciones a sus derechos humanos en sus países de vuelta a la Red. A través de la Red de Accion Mujeres, Igualdad Ya ha tratado los temas de derechos reproductivos, asilo político basado en el género, violación como arma de guerra y genocidio, trafico de mujeres, y mutilación genital femenina.

2
In March 1992 Equality Now issued its first Women's Action, to protest the Polish Medical Society's revision of its Code of Ethics to prohibit doctors from performing abortions, even though abortion was legal in Poland. Equality Now targeted the medical profession in its Women's Action, calling on doctors and medical associations around the world to contact the Polish Medical Society and express opposition to the provisions of the new Code of Ethics which would impose sanctions on doctors for performing health services in accordance with Polish law. The Women's Action generated a number of letters from prominent doctors including the Dean of the Columbia University School of Public Health and the National Secretary for Health of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa). Despite the efforts of Equality Now and other groups in and outside Poland, the Polish legislature subsequently passed a law criminalizing abortion with a two-year prison sentence for doctors who perform abortions in all cases except when the pregnancy results from rape or incest, when the fetus is damaged, or when the mother's health or life is threatened. Equality Now has since been working with the Polish Federation for Women and Planned Parenthood, and with the International Planned Parenthood Federation, to consider how best to address the deteriorating situation with respect to reproductive rights in Poland.
Gender-Based Political Asylum in Canada

OCTOBER 1992-JANUARY 1993

Equality Now issued its second Women’s Action in October 1992, on behalf of a Saudi Arabian woman in Canada known publicly as “Nada.” Having fled Saudi Arabia where she was routinely jeered, spit upon, and pelted with stones for walking unaccompanied by a male in public, or for refusing to wear the veil women use to cover their faces, Nada sought political asylum in Canada, which she claimed on the grounds of gender discrimination. The Canadian judge who denied Nada’s claim wrote in his decision that she would “do well to comply with the laws” of Saudi Arabia and that she should “show consideration for the feelings of her father.” A deportation order and a warrant for Nada’s arrest were issued, and Nada went into hiding in Canada. Equality Now, working with Nada’s lawyer and a number of women’s rights groups in Canada, added an international component to the Canadian campaign on behalf of Nada. Among the many letters of protest to Canadian authorities generated by Equality Now’s Women’s Action were letters from the Women Lawyers Association of South Africa, the Federation for Women and Planned Parenthood in Poland, and the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. Equality Now also generated international publicity on the case, and an Equality Now op-ed published in the Christian Science...
Monitor was noted by several Canadian Parliamentaryarians. When in January 1993 Canadian authorities announced their decision to allow Nada to remain in Canada, concern for Canada's international reputation was cited as a factor. Following this case, the Canadian Government introduced national guidelines to facilitate the consideration of gender-based claims to political asylum.

RÉSUMÉ

En octobre 1992, Egalité Maintenant a lancé leur deuxièmes Action Femmes, pour le compte d'une femme d'Arabie Saoudite au Canada, connue publiquement sous le nom de «Nada». S'étant enfuie d'Arabie Saoudite, Nada a demandé l'asile politique au Canada, qu'elle a réclamé sur des motifs de discrimination sexuelle. Egalité Maintenant, travaillant avec l'avocate de Nada et un certain nombre de groupes de droits de la femme au Canada, ont ajouté un aspect international à la campagne canadienne au nom de Nada. Lorsqu'en janvier 1993, les autorités canadiennes ont annoncé leur décision de permettre à Nada de rester au Canada, la préoccupation par la réputation internationale du Canada a été citée comme un facteur.

RESUMEN

En octubre de 1992 Igualdad Ya publicó su segunda Acción Mujeres, en favor de una mujer de Arabia Saudita que vive en Canadá, conocida públicamente como “Nada”. Después de escapar de Arabia Saudita, Nada buscó asilo político en Canadá sobre la base de discriminación por su género. Igualdad Ya, a través de su trabajo con el abogado de Nada y con varios grupos locales de derechos de la mujer, agregó un componente internacional a la campaña canadiense en su defensa. Cuando en enero 1993 las autoridades canadienses anunciaron su decisión de permitir que Nada permanezca en el país, la preocupación por la reputación internacional de Canadá fue mencionada como uno de los factores que influyeron en la decisión.

RÉSUMÉ

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RESUMEN

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One of the soldiers, a man around 30, ordered me into the house. He told me to undress. I was terribly afraid.... I closed my eyes. He did it to me. I cried.... I had been a virgin. He went out and invited two other soldiers to come in. I cried. The two repeated what the first had done to me. I didn’t even know when they left. I stayed there, lying on the floor alone in a pool of blood.

—A 16-year-old Muslim girl

In February 1993 Equality Now sent its first mission, consisting of Vice-Chair Feryal Gharahi, a Muslim lawyer, and Nicaraguan activist Bianca Jagger, to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to investigate the systematic use of rape and forced pregnancy by Serbian forces in the genocidal campaign of “ethnic cleansing.” Equality Now’s mission delegates met with refugee women and women’s groups in Bosnia and Croatia, with Bosnian government authorities, and with officials representing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other relief agencies providing refugee services. Based on their findings, Equality Now’s mission delegates testified in Congress at hearings organized by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, co-chaired by Senator DeConcini and Con-
gressman Hoyer. Equality Now also issued its third Women’s Action, calling on the United Nations to take immediate action to stop the rape and killing in Bosnia. The Women’s Action included a “Wanted” poster highlighting the role of Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, in using rape and forced pregnancy as an official weapon of war, carried out under orders. The poster has been widely used by other human rights groups, and was enlarged by one group and draped over the front entrance of the UN Human Rights Conference held in June 1993 in Vienna. Led by Vice-Chair Feryal Gharahi, Equality Now’s campaign on Bosnia brought the findings of its mission to the attention of the public through newspaper, radio, and television interviews, public rallies, university campus events, and conferences. In June 1993, in the face of media silence on the use of rape in Bosnia, Feryal Gharahi returned to Croatia on behalf of Equality Now and traveled to the border of Bosnia-Herzegovina for a first-hand update on the situation. Her findings on the continuing systematic use of rape formed the basis of Equality Now’s Women’s Action Update issued in June 1993. In October 1993, at the request of the United Nations War Crimes Commission, Equality Now undertook the recruitment of volunteer women attorneys to gather evidence of rape and sexual assault in Bosnia on behalf of the UN Commission.
In December 1993 Equality Now issued its fourth Women’s Action on the death of Maricris Sioson, a 22-year-old Filipina dancer who went to work in Japan in 1991 and died there on September 14, 1991. On her death certificate, Japanese doctors listed her cause of death as hepatitis, and her body was returned to the Philippines. When the family of Maricris Sioson opened her coffin for the funeral, they found that she had been beaten and stabbed. They requested the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct an autopsy, which was performed in Manila on October 4, 1991 by Dr. Floresto P. Arizala. The autopsy findings included a subdural hemorrhage in the cerebral cortex, presumably caused by blows to the head, and two stab wounds, one in the thigh indicating that a double-edged blade had been twisted upward, downward and diagonally in the flesh, and one in the genital area indicating that a blade had been inserted vertically. Dr. Arizala found evidence of hepatitis in early stages, but identified the cause of Maricris Sioson’s death as traumatic head injuries, and not hepatitis as claimed on her Japanese death certificate. Despite forensic evidence that Maricris Sioson was killed, the Japanese police took the position that she died as a result of
natural causes, and no one was ever charged or tried in connection with her death. In October 1993 Equality Now board member Surita Sandosham met in the Philippines with the doctor who had conducted the autopsy of Maricris Sioson. Equality Now also enlisted Dr. Fred Jordan, the Chief Medical Examiner of the State of Oklahoma, as an independent expert to review the medical records relating to Maricris Sioson’s death. His conclusion, after review, was that the death should have been classified as a homicide. Equality Now’s Women’s Action, which was researched and written in consultation with the BATIS Center for Women in the Philippines and the HELP Asian Women’s Shelter in Japan, calls on Japanese authorities to investigate the death of Maricris Sioson and to prosecute those responsible. It is also intended to highlight the vulnerability of the tens of thousands of Filipino women working in Japan’s entertainment industry.
Female genital mutilation is the focus of Equality Now’s fifth Women’s Action, issued in November 1993. An estimated one hundred million girls and women around the world have undergone female genital mutilation, a practice which takes different forms in different countries ranging from circumcision of the clitoris to removal of all external genitalia. For the girls and women who survive these procedures, the lifelong health consequences include chronic infection; severe pain and suffering during urination, menstruation, sexual intercourse, and child-

—Awa Thiam
BLACK SISTERS SPEAK OUT
birth; and indelible psychological trauma. The practice of female genital mutilation is prevalent in a number of African countries, as well as some Asian countries, and among immigrant populations in Europe and North America. In May 1993 Equality Now reviewed British and Swedish legislation and commented on draft United States legislation criminalizing female genital mutilation. Although female genital mutilation is practiced in the name of tradition and culture in many countries, many grassroots women’s organizations in these countries are fighting within the same tradition and culture to eradicate female genital mutilation. After consultation with the London-based group FORWARD and with other groups and individuals who have long been campaigning against this human rights violation, Equality Now issued its Women’s Action, calling on UNICEF to provide greater funding for efforts to stop genital mutilation of girls. The Women’s Action followed a “Day One” report aired in September 1993 by the American television network ABC, in which the Executive Director of UNICEF acknowledged that of the $922 million budget of UNICEF, only several hundred thousand dollars are spent on these efforts. As of the end of 1993, the campaign to increase these funds has generated letters and petitions to UNICEF from groups and individuals around the world.

RÉSUMÉ
En novembre 1993, Egalité Maintenant a lancé leur cinquième Action Femmes demandant à l’UNICEF d’accorder plus de fonds dans le but d’éliminer la mutilation génitale féminine. La pratique de la mutilation génitale féminine est répandue dans un certain nombre de pays africains ainsi que dans quelques pays asiatiques et parmi les populations d’immigrés en Europe et en Amérique du Nord. Depuis la fin de 1993, la campagne pour accroître ces fonds a produit des lettres et des pétitions adressées à l’UNICEF provenant de groupes et d’individus dans le monde entier.

RESUMEN
En noviembre de 1993 Igualdad Ya publicó su quinta Acción Mujeres haciendo un llamado a la UNICEF para que ésta aumente el financiamiento a los esfuerzos para detener la mutilación genital femenina. Aproximadamente 100 millones de niñas y mujeres alrededor del mundo han sufrido mutilación genital femenina. Esta práctica prevalece en varios países africanos, al igual que en algunos países asiáticos y entre las poblaciones inmigrantes de Europa y América del Norte. Al final de 1993, la campaña para aumentar estos fondos ha generado cartas y peticiones a UNICEF de grupos e individuos alrededor del mundo.

Maláísc
اصدرت منظمة المساواة الآن في الخضاس من فرشة موافقة المرأة في نوفمبر 1993 وحول عادة الخضاس الجنسى للنساء وقد طالب فيه منظمة اليونيسف بتعنيض دعم من أجل تحقيق المساواة التي تثير مسألة هذه العادة حيث أن هناك حوالي 100 مليون من نساء في فئة قد تم حفاظهن على مستوى العدل وعرض خاصا تتشر هذه العادة في عدد من الأطراف الإفريقية وبعض الأطراف الإسبانية وفي المهاجرين في أوروبا وآسيا الشمالية هذا وسماحة عام 1993 تم إرسال عدة خطابات ورسائل إلى منظمة اليونيسف من قبل kadın وجماعات تجاهد في المنظمة بضرورة زيادة المبادرة المخصصة لحماية هذه العادة.
Board of Directors

TAINA BIEN-AIMÉ
Taina Bien-Aimé holds a Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law and a Licence in Political Science from the University of Geneva/Graduate School of International Studies, Switzerland. From 1985 to 1988, she worked for the African-American Institute as a Program Assistant and Officer in Education and Training. She is currently practicing international corporate law at a New York-based international law firm.

FERYAL GHARAH
Feryal Gharahi holds a Bachelor of Science in nuclear engineering from Oregon State University and a Juris Doctor from Georgetown Law School. She worked for seven years as an engineer at Bechtel Corporation and Stone & Webster prior to returning to Georgetown for a law degree. She is currently practicing as a criminal defense lawyer in Washington, DC.

JACQUI HUNT
Jacqui Hunt holds a Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Linguistic and International Studies from the University of Surrey and a Master of Science in International Relations from the London School of Economics. She worked for seven years at Amnesty International, in the International Secretariat in London and in various capacities for Amnesty International USA. She then studied law at the College of Law, London, and is currently working at an international law firm in London.

JESSICA NEUWIRTH
Jessica Neuwirth holds a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School and a Bachelor of Arts in History from Yale University. From 1985 to 1990, she worked for Amnesty International in various capacities, including as first Chair of Amnesty International USA’s Women and Human Rights Task Force. From 1990-1993 she worked at a New York-based international law firm, specializing in international finance for developing countries. She is currently practicing law part-time in New York, in the field of trusts and estates.

NAVANETHM (NAVI) PILLAY
Navi Pillay holds a Bachelor of Law from Natal University, a Masters of Law and a Doctorate in Juridical Science from Harvard University. She has been practicing law in Durban, South Africa relating to human rights and prisoners’ rights and has acted in political trials for trade unionists and members of the African National Congress, the Unity Movement and the Black Consciousness Movement. Navi Pillay is co-founder of the South African Advice Desk for Abused Women and co-author of Violence Against Women—Their Legal Rights and Remedies.

SURITA SANDOSHAN
Surita Sandoshan holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Political Science and History from London University, School of Oriental and African Studies, and a Diploma in Law from City University, London. She is a Barrister-at-Law admitted in Gray’s Inn, London, and is also qualified to practice law in the jurisdictions of Singapore and the State of New York. In 1990 she joined Amnesty International USA as Legal and Policy Advisor and is currently serving as Deputy Executive Director for Finance and Administration.
Advisory Council

VERONICA DE NEGRI
Verónica De Negri was arrested, “disappeared,” and held in a concentration camp in Chile after the coup d’etat in 1973. She was subsequently forced into exile and has since lived in the United States, where she has worked in community outreach and youth counseling in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. She is a former member of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA and is currently Director of the Rodrigo Rojas Fund, a fund dedicated to the memory of and justice for her son, who was burned to death at the age of 19 by soldiers of the Chilean Government, and to youth education on human rights issues.

JEWELLE TAYLOR GIBBS
Jewelle Taylor Gibbs has been a member of the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley since 1979 and is now a Professor in the School of Social Welfare. Her publications include Young, Black and Male in America: An Endangered Species (editor) and Children of Color: Psychological Interventions with Minority Youth (co-author). She serves on the Council of Advisers of the National Center for Children in Poverty and as a board member of the Northern California Steering Committee of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

JOHN G. HEALEY
John G. Healey served as Executive Director of Amnesty International USA from 1981 to 1993. He was Executive Producer of both the 1986 “Conspiracy of Hope” tour and the 1988 international “Human Rights Now!” tour. Prior to his work for Amnesty International, he served as Director of the Peace Corps in Lesotho, Africa. He has also worked as Program Director for the Center of Community Change and Director of the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation.

GLORIA STEINEM
Gloria Steinem is a writer, editor and feminist organizer. She is currently an editorial consultant and writer for Ms. Magazine, which she co-founded in 1972. Her publications include Revolution from Within: The Book of Self-Esteem, Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions and Marilyn: Norma Jeane. She serves as a board member or advisor for the Ms. Foundation for Women, the National Women’s Political Caucus, Voters for Choice, and the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

ROSE STYRON
Rose Styron is a writer, poet and human rights activist. She has been a board member of Amnesty International USA and the P.E.N. American Center and currently serves on the boards of Helsinki Watch, America’s Watch, the Fund for Free Expression, the Lawyer’s Committee for Human Rights, the Rainforest Foundation, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. She is on the advisory boards of the Foundation for National Progress (Mother Jones), National Institute (The Nation), and the American Poetry Review.

LIZ YOUNG
Liz Young is an international relations specialist. She works for the Corporate Research & Planning Department of the Washington Office of Mazda. She serves as a board member for Mazda Foundation USA and is on the advisory board of Outward Bound in North Carolina.

The board and staff of Equality Now would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their advice, encouragement, support, and participation in the launch of Equality Now:

Deborah Ashford
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Jill Bullitt
Charlotte Bunch
Patricia Carbine
J. Speed Carroll
Iming Chen
Robert Clark
Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton
Ed Cohen
Stephanie Cotsirilos
Robert Craver
Paula Craver
Roger Craver
Craver, Smith, Matthews & Co.
Mary Daly
Verónica De Negri
Efua Dorkenoo
Maria Dugan
Chai Feldblum
Nina Feldman
Diane Fisher
Julie Hoch
Keith Gasser

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs
Carolyn DeSwarth Gifford
Jennifer Green
Bonnie Greenfield
Bob Guccione, Jr.
Ivan Guerra
Sophie Hahn
Kristina Hare
Hogan & Hartson
Harvard Law School Human Rights Program
John G. Healey
The Honorable A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.
Tammy Horn
Charlayne Hunter-Gault
Bianca Jagger
Dr. Fred Jordan
Stephen King
Frances Kissling
Melissa Knight
Lishet Koerner
Charles Krause
Kridel & Neuwirth
Kate Lauer
Amy Levene
Bob Levy
Judith Lichtman
Lance Lindblom
George Lopez
Suzanne Luell
Catharine A. MacKinnon
Michael MacLeod
Ellen Malcolm
Elizabeth Mitchell
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Gloria S. Neuwirth
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Mildred Newman
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Alicia Partnoy
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Julie Phillips
Anna Quindlen
Susan Rich
Jaana Rehnstrom
Maureen Rothschild
Gaye Salisbury
Jane Sandosham
Danny Schechter
Alison & Rob Seligson
Janet Shenk
Carly Simon
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
David Smith
Nina Solzar
SPIN
Lee Sterms
Cynthia Steele
Gloria Steinem
Henry Steiner
Rose Styron
Nahid Toubia
Makau Wa Mutua
Diane Wachtell
Joanna Wesclehr
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Liz Young
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Karen Bloom
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Anouchka Orenzow
Comptroller

Program Consultants
Efua Dorkenoo
Bonnie Greenfield

Translators
Cecilia Valdé1

Pierre Weill
Adil Yousif

Photos: (top) Anouchka Orenzow preparing a quarterly financial statement. (bottom, left) Karen Bloom signing up a new member of the Women’s Action Network. (bottom, right) Jessica Neuwirth with Elsa Gebreyesus of the National Union of Eritrean Women, following a workshop in Asmara on women’s rights as human rights organized by the National Union and the Women’s Program of the Fund for Peace.
## Financial Statements

### Foundation Support 1992/1993

The Arca Foundation
The Bydale Foundation
The J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation
The Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation
The Cissy Patterson Trust
The Fanny and Leo Koerner Charitable Trust
The Tides Foundation (Boca Lupo Fund)
Witness

### CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AND INCOME STATEMENT

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| Excess Revenue               | 29,452 | 19,849 |
In Memoriam

The answers quick and keen,
the honest look, the laughter,
The love—

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY