

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN  
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES**

**IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.org>**

**Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities  
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales**

**IAW NEWSLETTER August 2010, no. 7**



**Equal Rights**

*Dear members,*

*Women, Peace and Security! All hands are on deck for the debate on the implementation of resolution 1325, in the Security Council in New York in October. Even appointing the new head of UN Women should be helpful in the debate – why the dilly-dallying? A ray of hope: the Cluster Munitions Convention will enter into force in November.*

*The disaster in Pakistan was foremost in the news and discussed at length at the UN General Assembly – lots of speakers and many words, but also promises of financial help.*

*Twelve Asian Countries are comparing data with Shadow Reports on MDGs 3 (empowerment of women) and 5 (maternal mortality). An excellent piece of work!*

*Also in this newsletter: more countries are banning the burqa and the hiqab; recent data on Cyber Child Pornography and the victimizing of children (the data are extremely worrying).*

**UNITED NATIONS**

**General Assembly hears calls for global solidarity to help flood-hit Pakistan**

19 August 2010 - Speaker after speaker took the floor at a special meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to call for global solidarity to help flood-hit Pakistan in the wake of the country's worst disaster in living memory and for generous support for vital relief operations.

"It is one of the greatest tests of global solidarity in our times," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the 192-member body, which adopted a resolution calling for international assistance in support of the Government's efforts to address the crisis.

More than 45 speakers, including high-level officials from a number of countries, were scheduled to address the meeting.

The World Health Organization ([WHO](http://www.who.int)) urged greater donor support for health projects in Pakistan, where more than 200 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed, adding that reports from the field already indicate a significant rise in the number of cases of acute watery diarrhoea, skin infections and malaria.

The Secretary-General thanked the international community for the generosity it has shown so far, especially in response to the \$460 million requested by the UN and its partners through the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan that was launched last week, which is now 47 per cent funded.

A Working Group will be established and co-chaired by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy and the Pakistan Foreign Minister to coordinate response to the flood emergency.

The Secretary-General indicated that a High Level ministerial meeting on Pakistan will take place on 19 September.

More on: <http://www.un.org/ga/61/news/news.asp?NewsID=35670&Cr=pakistan&Cr1=>

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

**Pat Goble**

Sad news for us all in IAW when on August 8th Pat Goble passed away. She was the representative of the League of Women Voters Victoria, Australia and recipient of the Dame Phyllis Frost Award in recognition of her promotion of the role of women. A great feminist, a good friend, always positive and supportive, always cheerful.

She will be missed very much at future meetings of the Alliance and also by her many IAW friends.

**The Greek League for Women's Rights** – a few quotes from their excellent Journal

In an oral statement at CSW 2010, composed by the Marangopoulos Foundation on Human Rights and other organisations, 'emphasis is added *to the States' duty to eradicate any conflicts which may arise between the rights of women and the harmful effect of certain traditional or customary practices*' (Beijing 1995).

An example of good national practice in the years following Beijing was the adoption of Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2004 of the Pakistani Penal Code by virtue of which honour crimes incur, hereinafter, more severe penalties. Nevertheless, the majority of traditional inequalities against women as a rule continue. Traditional harmful practices affect mostly the Arab region, the African continent and South Asian countries.

#### **Human Rights Council**

At the UN level, the Human Rights Council adopted by vote on 2 October 2009 the Resolution 12/21 on '*Promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms through a better understanding of traditional values of humankind*'.

This means a clear regress from Beijing. The oral statement continues with three requests, of which we quote only one:

'To adopt a resolution recalling States their international obligations to effectively address all traditional practices resulting to violations of women's and girl's rights and to acknowledge the supremacy of human rights over traditional practices at both the national and international level'.

#### **South Africa Tour, 29 November – 9 December 2010 after IAW Congress**

Anje Wiersinga would like to know if there are IAW members who are interested in a South African tour after Congress - the Drakensburg mountains, Krugerpark, a tribal area and a Nature reserve, with an excellent guide! For particulars, mail Anje at <[anjew@hetnet.nl](mailto:anjew@hetnet.nl)> before September 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

#### **Women, Peace and Security, 15-16 September**

The implementation of 1325, as part of the : 'From Resolution to Action Geneva High-Level Consultation, 15-16 September 2010 '.

##### **Three ministerial debates before October**

As part of resolution 1325 celebrations, a high level Ministerial debate is due to take place at the Security Council in New York in October.

To ensure input at this ministerial debate the European Union and Belgium (who will hold the EU Presidency from July 2010) have planned three events. These events in Brussels, Geneva and New York are focused around the three pillars of the resolution 1325: participation (Brussels), protection (Geneva) and prevention (New York).

##### **Protection in Geneva, 15-16 September**

The Geneva Consultation will be held on the 15 and 16 September 2010 and will focus on protection. It is organized by the Belgium mission and the EU Delegation, in partnership with relevant UN agencies and NGOs.

It will be coordinated by UNDP, UNHCR, with the support of UNITAR and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The Conference will bring together representatives from EU Member States, UN organizations and NGOs, from humanitarian, human rights and security domains.

##### **Public Discussion in Geneva, 2 September**

A public discussion '10 Years On: Conflict Prevention Mechanisms for UNSCR 1325' will take place on Thursday 2 September 2010, 10:00 to 13:00, at the GCSP (Kruzel Hall) WMO/OMM Building- 2nd Floor 1202 Geneva, Switzerland 1202.

*Sent to us by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).*

#### **UN Women Agency Must Confront Wartime Violence**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's appointment of the head of UN Women will be followed in the fall by a series of events marking the tenth anniversary of the first, groundbreaking UN resolution— Security Council Resolution 1325—demanding an end to the abuse of women not only by warring parties but also by UN peacekeepers, and the inclusion of women in peacemaking.

### **A divided and dithering Security Council**

The Security Council, divided and dithering for months over whether this was really an issue it should be addressing, acted in unison in the end.

It could not ignore the shadow of the horrific 1990s—rape camps in Bosnia, sex slavery in several African countries and numerous incidents where gender abuse had become a tactic of ethnic conflict. Regional war crimes tribunals and the International Criminal Court had made sexual abuse a war crime. It was time to act.

### **Ban is delaying the appointment of the head of UN Women**

Thus the focus among women's peace groups on the still-unnamed head of UN Women, an appointment Ban has delayed for more than a month because, officials say, he is still looking for the right candidate.

Whoever it is, says Cora Weiss, a peace activist prominent in the campaign, the nominee must commit to dealing not only with the abuse of women but also with the deliberate exclusion of them from peace negotiations and other tables of the powerful.

That task is not specified in the General Assembly resolution establishing the new agency, but it has four Security Council resolutions behind it.

### **The opportunity is now!**

A coalition of like-minded women from around the world is working through the [Global Network of Women Peacebuilders](#) to bring attention to the opportunity now at hand to force conflict violence and sexual abuse of women on UN Women's agenda for action, and not leave it to the inevitable commissions, panels and special representatives with plenty to say, but no clout with governments—let alone with lawless militias.

### **Civil society**

Among its other projects, the Global Network, in partnership with other organizations, plans to draw men into the cause, raising awareness and asking them to join in advocating for action on 1325 and subsequent resolutions.

Men are also victims of violence and sexual abuse in wartime, a reality that is beginning to get a lot more attention, especially in Africa.

*Whether diplomats will act on this request remains to be seen, since many will probably not want to spend much time jousting with resistant governments over a 'women's issue.'*

*The Global Network notes in its plan of action for the next two months that diplomats will be diplomats.*

*It says that though the UN Security Council has backed four resolutions on women, peace and security, when the cameras are off in the council chamber, 'few men participate in discussions and implementation efforts.'*

These are selections from an article by Barbara Crossette, August 10, 2010. More on:

<http://www.thenation.com/article/153966/un-women-agency-must-confront-wartime-violence>

*Sent to us by Irini Sarlis from the IAW team in New York.*

### **Cluster Munitions Convention Enters into Force**

UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon is particularly pleased that the Convention, which prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster weapons, enters into force in little more than two years since its adoption.

This highlights not only the world's collective revulsion at these abhorrent weapons, but also the power of collaboration among Governments, civil society and the United Nations to change attitudes and policies on a threat faced by all humankind. Such cooperation will be crucial as we seek now to implement the Convention, including through assistance to victims.

### **November 2010**

The First Meeting of States Parties will be held in November 2010 in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, a country that has suffered tremendously from the impact of cluster munitions.

Ban calls on those States which have yet to accede to the Convention, to do so without delay.

On: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sgsm13030.doc.htm>

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Millennium Development Goals 3 & 5 Shadow Report in twelve countries in Asia**

The Live & Living MDG 5 Shadow Report is an interactive, web-based report on the progress of the Millennium Development Goals 3 & 5 in twelve countries in Asia.

The countries covered include the South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan; the Southeast Asian countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines; the Mekong countries of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam as well as the East Asian country of China.

Reporting is based on the traditional UN indicators and additional critical indicators around MDGs 3 & 5. This report aims to contrast and compare national numeric reporting with local evidence and research to show where the gaps are.

#### **Voices of NGOs - a shameful minimum**

More importantly, the space for NGOs to participate or to voice an alternative opinion to the reporting provided by governments is at a shameful minimum and the Live & Living MDG 5 Shadow Report serves as an internet campaign to remind governments and international agencies that women's organisations and feminist organisations around the region are still watching them closely to see whether they will deliver on their promises on gender equality and universal access to reproductive health. The objectives of this Live & Living MDG5 Shadow Report are:

1. To use technology as a platform to bring grassroots voices to the United Nations (UN)
2. To hold governments accountable
3. To bring information that is rights-based, women-centred and NGO-oriented
4. To comprehensively monitor MDGs 3&5 in the 12 countries ARROW works in Asia.

This internet report-cum-campaign has been generated by the [Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women \(ARROW\) and her partners](#).

Please be so kind to have a look at the MDG5 Shadow Report at : <http://www.mdg5watch.org>

### **UN - Access to Clean Water, Sanitation is a Human Right**

July 28 - By a vote of 122 in favour to none against, with 41 abstentions, the General Assembly adopted, as orally revised, a resolution calling on States and international organizations to provide financial resources, build capacity and transfer technology, particularly to developing countries, in scaling up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and good sanitation for all.

#### **A huge human toll**

Studies indicate that an absence of clean water or sanitation exacts a huge human toll. About 1.5 million children under the age of five die each year and 443 million school days are lost because of water- and sanitation-related diseases.

#### **41 abstentions**

Representatives who abstained recognized the right to clean water and good sanitation, as reflected in its assistance promoting access for 50 million people by 2015. However, the text placed insufficient responsibility on national governments, upon which citizens must be able to rely and from which they must obtain redress.

In addition, it would make reports of the Human Rights Council's independent expert counter-productive, since the resolution had unnecessary political implications.

On: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10967.doc.htm>

### **Syria bans full Islamic face veils at universities**

Syria has forbidden the country's students and teachers from wearing the niqab — the full Islamic veil that reveals only a woman's eyes — taking aim at a garment many see as political.

The ban shows a rare point of agreement between Syria's secular, authoritarian government and the democracies of Europe: Both view the niqab as a potentially destabilizing threat.

"We have given directives to all universities to ban niqab-wearing women from registering," a government official in Damascus told The Associated Press on Monday.

#### **The headscarf or hijab is all right**

The order affects both public and private universities and aims to protect Syria's secular identity, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the issue. Hundreds of primary school teachers who were wearing the niqab at government-run schools were transferred last month to administrative jobs, he added.

The ban, issued Sunday by the Education Ministry, does not affect the hijab, or headscarf, which is far more common in Syria than the niqab's billowing black robes.

More on: [http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jV\\_-6kvuvHL0KhskSm80Smyln5vAD9H2BJEG0](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jV_-6kvuvHL0KhskSm80Smyln5vAD9H2BJEG0)

### **More banning of the burqa and the niqab**

April 2010 - Home affairs committee of Brussels Federal Parliament votes unanimously to ban partial or total covering of faces in public places of burka and niqab.

13 Jul 2010 - PARIS, France's lower house of parliament overwhelmingly approved a ban on wearing burqa-style Islamic veils.

August 19 - In Australia judge Shauna Deane said that in the interest of a fair trial a witness should not be allowed to wear a niqab, commonly known as a burqa. The jury should have the opportunity to assess her facial expressions to help weigh up her credibility as a witness.

### **Invest in Women**

As a community health physician in India, I am regularly confronted by the challenges that women face when they try to bring a child into this world. Trained healthcare professionals, medicines and transportation to the nearest clinic are often in short supply, increasing the risk for complications or life-threatening situations.

While there has been progress in recent years to improve the health of girls and women in India, too many still die of causes that are almost entirely preventable. Every year, 68,000 women in India die from pregnancy-related issues, more than any other country. An additional 74,118 women die from cervical cancer, the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in India.

#### **A few key investments**

We have the knowledge, resources and tools necessary to keep women and girls healthy. With a few key investments, we can avoid a significant number of these deaths. For example, cervical cancer is both preventable and treatable if women can get screened in time.

For maternal health, we have seen that simple solutions such as access to family planning services can save both money and lives. There is now clear evidence that investments in family planning yield a positive return every Rs 100 spent on family planning saves Rs 140 in medical costs due to the prevention of unintended pregnancies and, ultimately, maternal deaths.

#### **Millennium Development Goals**

These investments are also necessary to ensure that India meets the United Nations Millennium Development Goal Five (MDG 5) to improve maternal health and achieve universal access to reproductive health.

As India bears a disproportionate share of worldwide maternal deaths, the achievement of MDG 5 by 2015 in India is critical to meeting global targets.

To meet these ambitious goals, health delivery systems must be strengthened so that facilities provide women with the quality services they need to stay healthy during and after pregnancy.

In recent years, the government's Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) programme has successfully raised the number of births that are attended by trained healthcare professionals for poor women in largely rural settings.

More on: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/6252786.cms?prtpage=1#ixzz0vhjMN7Z7>

By Saroj Pachauri (*The writer is regional director for South and East Asia at the Population Council*).  
Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

## **CHILDREN ARE THE VICTIMS**

### **Child Pornography – the Girl Child – Victimization**

The figures are devastating. At any one time on the Internet it is estimated there are around three quarters of a million predators searching for sites featuring children. The UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Najat Maalla M'jid in a report to the latest session of the Human Rights Council says, "there is more and more child pornography on the Internet, becoming what is today a very profitable business, with a worldwide market value estimated at billions of dollars."

#### **Cyber child pornography**



Statistics for cyber child pornography are difficult to find but in her report M'jid points to estimates that over a three year period between 2001 and 2004 the number of sites carrying child pornography nearly doubled to around 480,000.

Estimates of the number of children who are victims vary hugely, from ten thousand to 100,000.

Pornographic images of children, from babies through to teenagers are posted on the web.

Figures cited in the report estimate nearly 20 percent of individuals possessing child pornography had images of babies and children aged under 3 and more than 80 percent had images of children aged between 6 and 12.

Full Statement: <http://www.ohchr.org:80/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/ChildPornography.aspx>

*Sent to us IAW member Anjana Basu*

### **UN launches massive feeding drive for children in drought-stricken Niger**

11 August 2010 – The United Nations World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) has begun a major round of feeding for 670,000 children under the age of two and their families in drought-stricken Niger, where as many as eight million people need assistance.

People in the West African nation are experiencing severe food shortages as a result of a prolonged drought that has caused crop failure and livestock deaths.

The children will receive a monthly ration of a nutritious blend of corn and soya to combat malnutrition, according to a news release issued by the Rome-based agency. Some 4 million family members will receive 50 kilograms of cereals, 5 kilograms of pulses and a ration of oil. The distributions come at the peak of the critical 'lean season' period, when family food stocks are exhausted ahead of the October harvest.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35589&Cr=+Niger+&Cr1=>

## **CONFERENCES - EVENTS**

### **On International Literacy Day each year, September 8, UNESCO reminds the international community of the status of literacy and adult learning globally.**

Despite many and varied efforts, literacy remains an elusive target: some 759 million adults lack minimum literacy skills which means that one in five adults is still not literate; 72 million children are out-of-school and many more attend irregularly or drop out. Topic for 2009/2010: Empowerment.

On: <http://www.unesco.org/en/literacy/un-literacy-decade/unld-topics/>

### **International Day of Peace 21 September [Peace Day](#)**

The International Day of Peace, observed each year on 21 September, is a global call for ceasefire and non-violence. This year, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is calling on young people around the world to take a stand for peace under the theme, *Youth for Peace and Development*.

On: <http://www.pfcmc.com/en/events/peaceday/2010/>

### **Note**

We are sending this Newsletter as an attachment, saved in Word 97. Please be so kind to advise Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address, so we can mail them this Newsletter too.

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