

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

IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.com>

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

IAW NEWSLETTER February 2005, Nr. 2



Equal Rights

Dear IAW members,

*The tsunami and the help that is needed in the coming years is still uppermost in our mind, so we start this newsletter with a word from IAW president Rosy Weiss and requests of donations we received from affiliates and members. Please visit also the IAW website at www.womenalliance.com
Prominent in the news this week were the elections in Iraq. On TV we could see the proud gestures of Iraqi women who were going to vote. We heard that there could possibly be 1/3 of women in Iraqi government. That would be wonderful and then they can go straight for a good and fair constitution!*

*A good number of IAW members will be at CSW. We wish them lots of strength and wisdom, because negotiating the 12 chapters of Beijing+10 will not be easy.
Just have a look at a selection of the news around the world, including the list of upcoming events on the website of UNESCAP eNews Bulletin, February 2005, at the end of this newsletter.*

Women and the Tsunami Disaster – Presidential Message

IAW members extend their deeply felt sympathy to all their friends in the countries so severely hit by the tidal waves of December 26, 2004. Besides our engagement in the respective national humanitarian aid programmes there is however an aspect of the tragedy that an international non-governmental organisation has to bring to the attention of governments. We cannot remain silent to the fact that, while geophysical tracking stations all over the world registered the earthquake, which resulted in such disastrous waves hours before they reached today's devastated coasts, due to a lack of communication systems and agreed-upon contacts, they were unable to alert the endangered people.

Rosy Weiss

Read

more on the IAW website www.womenalliance.com, also about the support the IAW Affiliates All India Women's Conference and Sri Lanka Women's Conference need to help the victims.

Women and the Tsunami Disaster – WEL Australia

In disaster as in war women and children are not among the decision makers but are well represented among the victims. Many of the relief organisations are faith based and by definition have views frequently overlooking women or are hostile to women. There are at least two organisations which are non-faith based, non-political and whose work is directed to women – **IWDA** and **PLAN**, an international organisation. PLAN's many projects are in Asia and are directed to girl children and to women. Many are small projects but are aimed at reducing female poverty and assisting girls and women to realise their potential. If you wish to donate to **PLAN** visit their Website: www.plan.org for instruction on how to do so.

If you want to donate by mail send it to : Tsunami Fund. PLAN. 1/533 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000. or GPO Box 2818AA, Melbourne Vic. 300.

Women must play a key role in the reconstruction and you can help **IWDA** and our partners to make this happen. Donations can be made via the website www.iwda.org.au

Newsletter of IAW Affiliate WEL Women's Electoral Lobby in New South Wales Australia. By IAW member Joan Bielski and sent to us by Membership Officer Pat Richardson.

Note from Priscilla Todd: International Women's Development Agency is a small but effective organisation that works with women at grass roots level in many countries.

The Tsunami Disaster and Non-Violence International

IAW member Rebecca Peters writes:

The beginning of this year has been dominated by the horror of the tsunami tragedy, and some members of IANSA's network have been affected directly. We express our deep sorrow and solidarity with all the victims including the Banda Aceh Peace Education Program in Indonesia, part of Non-Violence International, which suffered terribly. One of its staff, Curriculum and Training Coordinator Sayed Subhan Almabrur, is still missing. Several other staff members have lost their children, parents, sibling or spouse. In addition, the office has been completely washed away. Everything is gone - the library, computers, thousands of books, including unfinished pieces of academic research representing years of work. All this destruction is a bitter blow, and our thoughts are with our colleagues as they struggle to rebuild. Donations to their relief appeal can be made through the website:

<http://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/>

The ramifications of the catastrophe for all the countries affected are unimaginable.

Children

Apart from the loss of life and property, the loss of a predictable future is something that cannot be measured. As we have all heard, children have been especially traumatised and now there are reports from Sri Lanka of Tamil Tigers recruiting child soldiers from among the chaos of the relief camps. Our thoughts are also with IANSA members who continue to work to prevent children being preyed upon by armed groups.

UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women is scheduled for 28 February to 11 March 2005 in New York. On the agenda: Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"; and current challenges and forward looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

The IAW will be represented at this session by President Rosy Weiss, Past-President Pat Giles, Executive Vice-President Lyda Versteegen, Board members Mmabatho Ramagoshi and Marilyn La Tona, Commission Convenor Heide Schütz, Permanent Representative to UN New York Kay Fraleigh, and many others. Rosy asks all IAW delegates to kindly mail her the name of your hotel in New York, your arrival and departure time as well as any position paper prepared for the session in relation to your respective fields of competence <to iawpres@onemail.at>

During CSW Rosy Weiss is planning to be at the Vienna Cafe every morning from 9.45-10 o'clock for a briefing and coordination meeting of IAW representatives.

ITEMS RELATED TO CSW

The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) will convene an expert group meeting on "Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals", hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan in Baku from 7-10 February 2005. On <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/>

Millennium Development Goals: Progress Report

The newest report on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Goal 3: "Promote gender equality and empower women") has recently been published. A first overview (with regional charts) can be obtained from: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/mdg2004chart.pdf>. The full UN progress report on the MDGs is displayed at: <http://millenniumindicators.un.org>

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

IAW Commission on Health

IAW Commission Convenor Gudrun Haupter has sent a draft resolution for Congress about Health, a list of practical suggestions and also a table of 'Human rights applicable to women's health'. It was too much to put in the newsletter, but if you are interested, please mail Gudrun Haupter at <Haupter@t-online.de> or <iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>.

IAW Reports available

Report of the IAW CEDAW Commission; Report of the Commission on Health 2002-2004; Report from the Environment Commission, Report from the Commission for All Forms of Violence against Women and Trafficking; the United Nations Report New-York 2002-2004; the Report of the Regional Coordinator for Europe; Report of the Nordic and Baltic countries; Report of the IAW Membership Officer; Report of the IAW Newsletter

Reports from Member Organisations: Report from All India's Women Conferences; Focal Points of the Danish Women's Society; Communication de l'Ong La Colombe; Report of the Deutscher Frauenring. *These are the electronic reports only, diligently collected by IAW secretary Alison Brown. There were of course many more, lying around during Congress for all members to read. If you are interested in one of the electronic ones, please mail <iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>*

CEDAW

Countries with worst challenges for women fail to ratify women's right to complain

A new report marking the 25th anniversary of the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women" warns that the biggest future challenges for discrimination against women will be in countries that have failed to sign up to a key part of the Convention that actually allows women to complain about their country's stance on discrimination against women.

Ann Stewart, Reader in Law at the University of Warwick, and Shradda Chigateri compiled the report for British Council. Entitled "Aspirations to Action: 25 Years of the Women's Convention (CEDAW)", it does have some good news to report - particularly in the area of political representation where women are facing much less discrimination 30.7 % of Deputies in Argentina's parliament are women, there is a quota system for women in the Pakistan local and central government, and in Rwanda women won 27% of the seats in the sector and district 2001 elections.

Read more on <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/NE100000098539>

CEDAW concludes 32nd session, having examined situation of Women in eight Countries First Optional Protocol, Mexico

New York, 28 January (UN Headquarters) - Concluding a three-week session this afternoon, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted its draft report, as amended, making recommendations on the advancement of women in Algeria, Croatia, Gabon, Italy, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Paraguay, Samoa and Turkey.

Also during the session, the Committee released the findings of its first inquiry under the Optional Protocol, which allows for individuals or groups of individuals, having exhausted national remedies, to petition the Committee. The first-ever inquiry focused on the murders and disappearances of more than 320 women in the Ciudad Juarez area of Chihuahua, Mexico, since 1993 and included a visit to Mexico in October 2003 by two Committee members. (*Refer front page International Women's New August 2003*). See for particulars http://www.bayefsky.com/html/mexico_cedaw_article8.php

Next session 5 – 22 July 2005

By adopting the draft report today, the Committee decided that its thirty-third session would be held from 5 to 22 July 2005, during which it would consider the reports of Benin, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Gambia, Lebanon, Burkina Faso, Guyana, Israel and Ireland.

IAW CEDAW Commission Convenor: Lene Pind, e-mail <lene.pind@galnet.dk>

NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

Secretary-General Praises Courage of Iraqi People on Election

New York, 31 January (UN Headquarters) -- Following is Secretary-General Kofi Annan's statement on the Iraqi elections, issued in Abuja, Nigeria, on 30 January: Reports indicate that, despite significant attempts at violent disruption, Iraqis have turned out in large numbers to exercise their right to vote. It will be some days before final results are known, but current indications are that the elections have been successfully carried out.

"I wish to pay tribute to the courage of the Iraqi people, and to congratulate the Independent Election Commission of Iraq, as well as the thousands of Iraqi election workers and monitors, on having organized and carried out elections so effectively in such a limited time frame and such daunting circumstances. And let me also congratulate my own colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq who,

with other international electoral experts, have worked so hard to support this election. Security forces, both Iraqi and international, also made a notable contribution to ensuring a relatively safe and secure environment. The success of the election augurs well for the transition process. The next phase will be one in which the Transitional National Assembly drafts a permanent constitution for Iraq, which is expected to be put to a referendum in October 2005”.

Source: <http://tokyo.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20050201-09.html>

Feminists gather at World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 26-31

Some 100,000 anti-globalisation activists have converged with backpacks and banners in the southern Brazilian city of Porto Alegre for the fifth World Social Forum (WSF). WSF organisers took the forceful step of holding the 2005 meeting at the same time as its nemesis, the World Economic Forum, at Davos, Switzerland. "We did not want to get too far from the Davos dates," said Benoit Berger of the FSM world committee. The Davos meeting from January 26-30 seeks to spread liberal, free-market economics that business favors, and the WSF does not. WSF took two years off from competing head-to-head with Davos, 2003 and 2004, and met in Mumbai, India last year. However, WSF will this year be held from January 26-31 and comes back to its city of origin, Porto Alegre, to return to its roots in a mostly Latin American and European movement.

Another World is Possible

The first three forums were held in Porto Alegre. The group's slogan is "Another World is Possible". The vast majority of participants will come from Brazil, the United States, France and Italy.

See website: http://www.indiadaily.com/breaking_news/21930.asp

Feminist Events at WSF organised by ISIS International/Manila

Feminist dialogues 2005 will focus on Militarism, Fundamentalism and Globalisation. The Dialogues will be conducted in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. The webcast and written reports will be in English and Spanish. Please visit the FD website at <<http://feministdialogue.isiswomen.org>> or the Isis International/Manila website <<http://www.isiswomen.org>>. or the Fire website at <<http://www.fire.or.cr>>

Sexual Violence against women in armed conflict Colombia - "Scarred bodies, hidden crimes"

Background of 40 years !

Civilians have been the main victims of Colombia's 40-year-old internal armed conflict. This violence, including sexual violence against women, has been perpetrated by all the warring parties. The statistics are chilling: in 2003, more than 3,000 civilians were killed for political reasons outside combat, over 2,200 were kidnapped, around half for political motives, hundreds of thousands were internally displaced, and hundreds were "disappeared". In the last 20 years, the conflict has cost the lives of at least 70,000 people, the vast majority of them civilians killed out of combat, while more than 3 million people have been internally-displaced. Since 2000, more than 10,000 people have been kidnapped, more than half of these by guerrillas or paramilitaries, while at least 1,500 have "disappeared", mostly at the hands of paramilitary groups often acting in collusion with the security forces.

Sexual Violence

Sexual and gender-based violence is not a new phenomenon in Colombia; it has been a constant in the country's history, and a defining part of the conflict. The conflict has pitted the security forces and army-backed paramilitaries against several guerrilla groups, with each group vying for control of territory and economic resources. Rape, used as a method of torture or a means of injuring the "enemy's honour", has been a common feature of the conflict.

Read more about the background of Colombia's armed conflict in an extensive article on the website of Amnesty International <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR230402004>

Economists plump for child labour

London, Jan. 31: Its horrors were highlighted by Charles Dickens and countless campaigners since, but child labour — including prostitution, mining, deep-sea fishing and drug-trafficking — should not be banned in poor countries, according to a study by the Royal Economic Society.

The research, by two professors of economics, says that making the worst forms of child labour illegal is misguided, does more harm than good, and can damage the economy and the living standards of many families in developing nations. India has about 1.2 core child labourers.

The study says that a worldwide ban, championed by the International Labour Organisation and supported by 151 countries, could deprive families of money that might otherwise be used to pay for children's food and education.

Research proposes a worldwide ban

The research, *A Theory of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, by Canadian University professors Sylvain Dessy and Stéphane Pallage appears in the *Economic Journal*, published this week.

The ILO, a United Nations agency, has campaigned against child labour for decades. It says worldwide more than 250 million children, aged five to 14 — including 153 million in Asia and 80 million in Africa — are in work, half of them full time. Many work in hazardous conditions as prostitutes, drug-traffickers, in quarries and mines or on farms and in factories.

The organisation's 1973 Convention 138, ratified by 135 countries, bans all forms of child labour, but in 1999 a new Convention 182 shifted this to cover only the worst examples. That convention has been ratified by 182 countries, including all developed nations, apart from Australia.

A link with Poverty

The new study argues that tackling poverty would be a better way to reduce child labour than using legislation. "The worst forms of child labour are all intrinsically linked to poverty," the study says. "Either poverty makes parents choose to submit their children to these kinds of activities (in which case the ban will constrain them further), or poverty acts as a catalyst to child trafficking... which is already recognised as a criminal activity worldwide."

The Daily Telegraph at http://www.telegraphindia.com/1050201/asp/nation/story_4321843.asp

Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

Needs and challenges of youth in Africa for sustainable development

The Genius International Organization is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation networking with community based organisations working towards meeting the needs and challenges of youth in Africa for sustainable development. Our main area of focus is on HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and youth sustainable development. It is looking for partners and collaborators.

Contact: Benson Ehiagwina, Coordinator, The Genius International Organization, Tokyo, Japan, Email: [<thegeniusintl@yahoo.com>](mailto:thegeniusintl@yahoo.com)

World Trade Organisation

The Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference will be held in Hong Kong, China from 13 to 18 December 2005. See http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min05_e/min05_e.htm

Trafficking Rises to 2nd Most Lucrative Crime

Trafficking people for forced labour and sexual slavery has become the world's number two most lucrative crime, and terrorists are using shadowy underground networks to move around, a senior US counter-trafficking official warned yesterday. Human trafficking, particularly the smuggling and enslavement of young women for prostitution, is tied with **weapons smuggling as the second-largest** illegal moneymaking activity, said T March Bell, the US Justice Department's senior special counsel for trafficking issues and civil rights.

Only the **narcotics trade** reaps more profits for organised crime, but traffickers are earning billions of dollars exploiting tens of millions of victims each year, Bell said, calling it "the No 1 human rights issue today". The profits are huge, he told reporters, citing the example of a brothel owner in South-east Asia who typically might pay \$8,000 for a young woman. "We think that owner can make a \$200,000 profit on that \$8,000 investment," Bell said. Although the traffickers are dealing mainly with young women peddled to brothels or men, women and children sold into virtual slavery on farms and in factories, "they're moving any kind of people for a price", Bell said.

Source: *Cape Times*, 26.1.05. Website: www.capetimes.co.za

Catholic Church on using Condoms for HIV Prevention

A senior Vatican official has supported the use of condoms to fight Africa's Aids pandemic, contradicting the Catholic church's official position. Cardinal Georges Cottier, theologian of the pontifical household, told the Italian news agency Apcom that the use of condoms was "legitimate" to save lives in the poorest parts of Africa and Asia, where there was no time to teach abstinence or faithful conjugal love.

Cardinal Cottier's comments signal a growing swell of realism within the church, with more and more prominent figures supporting the use of condoms to save lives, despite misgivings. Growing numbers,

including Cardinal Godfried Daneels, tipped as a possible future pope, have taken this stance publicly in recent years, but experts say the Vatican is unlikely to change its line under the current pope. See also <http://www.guardian.co.uk/pope/story/0,12272,1403083,00.html>

Eliminating AIDS in Infants

Across the United States, mother-to-child transmission of H.I.V. has dropped so sharply that public health officials now talk about wiping it out.

AZT or Azidothymidine

Doctors suspected that AZT could be effective at reducing the presence of the virus in the bloodstream and significantly decreasing the chances of transmission, but there was reluctance to give the drug to pregnant women. Eventually, faced with thousands of sick babies, the National Institutes of Health allowed a test in which some mothers were given a course of AZT and others were given a placebo. Public health officials anxiously awaited the results. "I remember the day," Dr. Mofenson said, recalling when the results were released in 1994. "It was absolutely incredible." The study showed a 67 percent reduction in the risk of transmission. By Marc Santora. *Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu. Read more on* <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/30/nyregion/30aids.html?pagewanted=2&th&oref=login>

UNECE Region - Gender Statistics – Beijing+10

The Beijing Platform of Action as adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995) states that "empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples". On <http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/web/welcome1.htm>
The report of the NGO working session "Beijing+10", Geneva 12-13 December 2004, can be found at www.unece.org. Click "gender activities" followed by "Beijing+10".

The United Nations Information Services (UNIS) is pleased to provide you with the latest issue of the **UNESCAP eNews Bulletin**, February 2005 for your reference. You can download from this url http://www.unescap.org/unis/UN_ESCAP_News_Bulletin/2005/05-Feb/feb_05.asp.

Debt Aid and Dollar on G7 agenda

February 4th: Gordon Brown is continuing his bid to persuade ministers from the G7 group of industrialised nations to back his plan to tackle debt in developing countries; Nelson Mandela urged G7 ministers to write off Africa's debts. The UK chancellor wants to provide \$10bn (£5.38bn) a year over a decade, using G7 backing so the money could be borrowed up front on financial markets. The US said ahead of the second day of London meetings it did not support it. But International Development Secretary Hilary Benn said a solution would be found by 2006 with or without the US.

International Finance Facility or IFF

Mr Benn told the BBC: "You don't need everyone on board to launch the International Finance Facility (IFF). The IFF is a key element of Mr Brown's proposals for a modern version of the Marshall Plan, which brought US aid to rebuild Europe after World War II, for the developing world.

For more news of this issue see: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4238045.stm>

An Aussie comment from Priscilla Todd: Goodonya Gordon Brown – at last a serious attempt to start finding a solution (with or without US support) – today Africa, tomorrow the world!!

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