

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER January 2005, nr. 1



Equal Rights

Dear IAW members,

In our newsletter we stay first with one of the greatest disasters ever, the tsunami, which caused such an unimaginable loss of lives in so many countries. Our thoughts are with all who have lost family and friends. Although it cannot replace the loss and sorrow, the worldwide offers of help have been overwhelming. There is a letter from our IAW sister Mano in Sri Lanka, there is a plea from Thoraya Obaid of UNPFA to watch out for women and girls, who will be hit extra hard, and there is the Conference on Disaster Reduction at the end of January in Japan.

You will find in this newsletter also news of Beijing+10 at CSW, of CEDAW and of violence against women in different forms and situations. The usual selection of events and conferences are at the end of the newsletter.

Personal comment from Priscilla Todd

The support by communities, companies and individuals in so many countries has been overwhelming. It is wonderful to see how much can be done in so short a time. However, despite the 'feel good' outcomes of the Jakarta Conference, there can be no comparison between the amounts pledged by the '7 richest nations' at that conference with how much they spend on arms, military equipment and war. These wealthy countries also approved temporary debt-relief at that conference. Instead I suggest they could very easily forgive those debts. It will take years to build up infrastructures and provide a future for the citizens of the devastated countries and the psychological effects will remain forever. To be in a never ending situation of debt will only exacerbate the situation.

*These are my thoughts and they are far better stated by George Monbiot in *The Guardian* www.monbiot.com*

***From a letter from IAW member Mano Muthukrishna-Candappa,
Sri Lanka's Women's Conference,***

It has been quite sad for all of us to see our beautiful country devastated. So many people we know have lost their lives. So many hundreds have died and many more homeless. We just have to carry on and pick up our spirits. Aid has come from many countries. It has been a hard time for NGOs, the Government and individuals, to reach those in need, as whole villages have been washed away with no trace of the people. There are others who have escaped to remote areas, and are not easy to contact. It will take months and years to rehabilitate our country and our people. Perhaps the one good thing on the horizon is that the Government and people in the North may reconcile. There has been a Civil War for 20 years. It has been almost like a divided Nation. There has been devastation in the North as well as in the South. Both parties have suffered equally. Often it is easier in times of sadness to clasp hands in friendship. We shall have to prayerfully wait and see the developments.

On the bright side, are the numerous phone calls from friends around the world, emails too, inquiring about our wellbeing. I live not too far away from the sea, so we had reason to be troubled. A seafood restaurant on the beach, at the end of the road where I live, was completely washed away. The waves flowed over the rail track, entering the bottom of our road. The water level in the canal, also not too far away, had risen. We made tentative plans to escape to the 3rd floor of our school premises, should it become necessary. We thank God that our area was spared. All along the coastline, we have numerous seaside resorts. The fisher folk live in huts by the beach. The tourist season was at its height. It was sad to learn that many of them lost their lives. I do not wish to continue this depressing line of thought. There is, I am sure, a silver lining on every dark cloud. We just have to be patient.

UNITED NATIONS, New York - UNPFA

In the aftermath of devastating tsunamis that struck on 26 November, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is calling on governments, sister UN agencies and other humanitarian partners to ensure that the special needs of women and girls are factored into all short- and medium-term relief planning. To help meet immediate needs, UNFPA has committed up to \$1 million and additional staff for rapid health assessments, hygiene needs and health supplies, including water purification tablets. UNFPA is collaborating closely with governments and other UN agencies and humanitarian partners to assess immediate and longer-term needs and to develop an inter-agency Flash Appeal to be issued to major donors in the coming days.

Pregnant and nursing women

UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid said that “while the magnitude of this disaster may be unprecedented, we already know from our experience in previous crises – such as last year’s earthquake in Bam, Iran, and the hurricanes that struck the Caribbean earlier this year – that women and girls will be hit especially hard.” Among the affected are tens of thousands of pregnant and nursing women, who are especially susceptible to waterborne diseases and may require supplementary feeding, prenatal care and delivery assistance. Even in ideal circumstances, some 15 per cent of pregnant women require emergency obstetric care to avoid maternal and infant deaths. UNFPA warns that physical and psychological trauma will mean even more pregnant women in need.

See website <http://www.unfpa.org/news/news.cfm?ID=539&NewsType=1&Language=1>

UN calls for nearly \$1 billion of aid for Indian Ocean tsunami victims

At an international donor conference in Jakarta, Indonesia on 6 January, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched an appeal for \$977 million in assistance for the victims of the tsunami that struck Indian Ocean countries on 26 December. He said the UN had drawn up a “focused set of programmes” tending to the immediate needs of the survivors of the tsunami including \$229 million for food and agriculture, \$172 million for health care, \$61 million for water and sanitation, \$222 million for shelter and other urgent non-food items, and \$110 million for the early restoration of livelihoods.

Six-month period

The appeal covers a six-month period for the humanitarian emergency needs of an estimated 5 million people. Also on the meeting agenda is co-ordination of the huge aid effort, **temporary debt-relief** for the Indian Ocean nations affected by the disaster, and the establishment of a **tsunami warning system in the area**. The recovery effort will be coordinated with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, see <http://www.unescap.org/>

World Conference on Disaster Reduction (18-22 January, Kobe, Japan)

Organizers of the upcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) are hailing it as a milestone event to increase the profile of disaster risk reduction in development planning and practice. Over 2,000 delegates from 120 countries are expected to attend the World Conference, scheduled from 18-22 January, to draw up a plan to prevent the worst effects of natural hazards. UNESCAP's Water Resources Section of the Environment and Sustainable Development Division, focal point for the coordination its natural disaster reduction activities, will represent the Commission at the Conference.

Japan – a leading country in disaster engineering and planning.

On 17 January 2005 the citizenry of Kobe, Hyogo will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, the first major earthquake to hit a large city in a developed country in recent history. With its long history of living with geographical hazards, Japan is one of the leading countries in disaster engineering and planning. See <http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr/>

‘Small Islands, Big Stakes’ - UN Conference 10-14 January 2005

A United Nations conference on the future of small island nations worldwide, set for 10–14 January 2005 on the island of Mauritius, will tackle such problems as escalating trade losses, shortfalls in Official Development Assistance, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and a record number of natural disasters including climate change.

More than 2,000 participants from the islands, their traditional donor partners and other countries, including some 25 heads of State and Government, are expected to take part in the United Nations International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable

Development of Small Island Developing States, which was agreed a decade ago at a Global Conference in Barbados. More on <http://www.un.org/smallislands2005/>

ECE - Implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action

More than 300 participants from 42 countries took part in the Working Session on 12-13 December 2004, held in the Centre de Conférences de Varembe and in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, preceding the two days Regional Preparatory Meeting on the 10-year Review of Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Working Session was organised by the Working Group on Women in the ECE Region, in cooperation with subregional networks and the ECE Secretariat. Due to the generous contributions of UNIFEM, UNDP, OSCE and the Open Society Institute, an important number of participants came from CEE and CIS countries.

Workshops

- I. Women in the Economy (A. Employability and B. Social Security and Pensions).
- II. Institutional mechanisms (Chapter H of the BFA)
- III. Trafficking in the context of Migratory Movements
- IV. Emerging Issues: Militarism – Fundamentalism – Sexual Rights – Hiv/Aids – Information and Communication Technology – Public Services – Biotechnology/New Technologies – Women in the Environment.

V. MDGs and BEIJING+10 - Proposal for the Future

The working group expresses their concern about the lack of linkage between the Beijing PFA and MDGs at the UN and national level. "Without progress towards gender equality and empowerment of women, none of the MDGs will be achieved". In fact, six of the MDGs stem directly from the BPPFA : poverty, primary education, gender equality, child mortality, health of mothers and sustainable environment.

To speed up implementation of BPPFA and strengthen the implementation of the MDGs, they should be linked "horizontally". The Group wishes to remind the ECE Governments that UN conferences on women are not theme conferences, but an opportunity for women to come together and make up their minds on all issues on the UN agenda. Such conferences are an ideal opportunity for interaction with governments and civil society representatives. They are needed as long as other UN major conferences have an overwhelming male majority.

Recommendations :

- 1) Women are participants and not "target" groups when it comes to UN Conferences.
- 2) All MDGs should be gender mainstreamed and a gender sensitive budget and effect evaluation should be made for each goal.
- 3) Urges ECE Governments to provide adequate resources to implement the Beijing PFA and the MDGs and indicate the proportion of funds earmarked for the empowerment and capacity building of women.
4. Calls on the NGO Committee on CSW in New York to convene an NGO strategy meeting during the 49th CSW Session on prerequisites and feasibility of a 5th UN World Conference of Women before or in 2010 and/or alternatives.

(Editors note: it takes too much room to give you all the ECE recommendations to Governments. For the whole report mail Joke Sebus at <iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>

News from the IAW CEDAW commission

CEDAW is having its 32nd session from 10 to 28 of January 2005. During this session Italy's country report is up for examination by the committee. I specifically draw attention to Italy, because the IAW has members in Italy. I have contacted Bettina Corke and Marilyn la Tona to find out whether a shadow report has been produced by Italian NGOs. Italy's country report is available at this address: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/32sess.htm> CEDAW's 33rd session will take place 5 – 22 July 2005. The reports of the following countries will be examined during that session: Australia, Burkina Faso, Ireland and Israel. The country reports are available on the UN website at this address: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/33sess.htm>

The International Alliance of Women has active affiliates in all of these countries.

Therefore the IAW CEDAW Commission strongly encourages our member organisations in the countries mentioned to produce shadow reports and send them to the CEDAW Committee in time for the Committee to include the information gained through the shadow reports in their examination of the countries. The CEDAW Committee is always anxious to get information from NGOs as a supplement to the governments' reports, which often paint a brighter picture of the status of women in any country than is justified by reality.

If you need help in the production of a shadow report, the IAW Commission on CEDAW is willing to give advice. However, it is our experience that how you write and the form in which you choose to write is not nearly as important as what you write.

Use the Newsletter

The IAW Commission on CEDAW also encourages affiliates and associates to write brief summaries of their shadow reports to be published in the IAW Newsletter or in International Women's News. Such brief summaries would give us all a very good picture of the status of the women of the world seen from a grassroots level.

Lene

Pind, Convenor of the IAW Commission on CEDAW, lenepind@hotmail.com

Death Penalty in Iran 'vice' case

Iranian officials have confirmed that a court has sentenced a young woman to death for prostitution but denied that she is mentally disabled.

Leyla Mafi was sentenced more than a year ago at a court in Arak after being found guilty of having illegal sex. A human rights group monitoring the case said Ms Mafi had a mental age of eight, but this has been disputed by Iranian judicial officials. The decision is now under review by the Iranian Supreme Court.

Ms Mafi's case was given international exposure last week by London-based rights group Amnesty International. They said Iran was breaking its commitments as a party to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights - which include a promise not execute anyone under the age of 18.

The organisation said the woman's mother had forced her into prostitution at the age of eight. It also said she had been repeatedly raped and had given birth to a baby at the age of nine.

Iranian officials have rejected some of the group's findings. They say Ms Mafi is mentally and physically normal and had only been working as a prostitute as an adult. Under Iranian law, girls over the age of nine and boys over 16 face the death penalty for crimes such as rape and murder. In some circumstances, capital punishment is also imposed for illegal sexual relationships.

See also http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4118727.stm

Comments: Cruel and inhuman punishments continue in Iran, said a recent UN report.

IAW member Helen Self - Is Amnesty saying it would be alright if the woman was not mentally disabled? This is where it can end up when one lacks compassion.

THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS BETTER

*Violence 'must stop,' Amnesty report says - It urges nations to prohibit such acts by their militaries
Lynda Hurst The Toronto Star, Dec. 8, 2004. Also by Matt Everett.*

Sexual brutality against women and girls must no longer be seen as a tragic but inevitable outcome of war, says a harrowing report released today by Amnesty International.

Arguing that rapes, torture and killings don't occur "naturally" but are a deliberate strategy of combat, the report demands an end to impunity for the perpetrators - whether they are conventional soldiers, members of armed groups, or peacekeepers.

Prosecutions are the key

"This has to stop; we've had enough," said Hilary Fisher, director of Amnesty's worldwide Stop Violence Against Women campaign. "In recent years, the assumption that justice is an unrealistic goal in conflict situations has been challenged. Prosecutions are the key."

Ad-hoc international tribunals have successfully prosecuted armed groups in Yugoslavia and Rwanda on the basis that rape is a war crime. The International Criminal Court, which hears its first case (against the Democratic Republic of Congo) next year, will be crucial in spreading that message globally, says Fisher.

The court will recognize a broad spectrum of sexual-violence crimes - including rape, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilization - as crimes against humanity or as war crimes. But the court will step in only when national governments are unable or unwilling to prosecute.

Civilian, not military, jurisdiction

Amnesty is therefore asking individual nations to publicly denounce gender-based violence, to instruct their militaries and security forces on the prohibition, and then enforce it. Governments are called on to end impunity against prosecution for soldiers, in combat or in peacekeeping, who commit crimes of sexual violence. And it recommends they be subject to civilian, not military, jurisdiction.

Amnesty says that during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, 250,000 to 500,000 women were raped, one-third of them gang-raped. After the conflict ended, the victims were often ostracized by family and friends; 80 per cent of survivors were found to be "severely traumatized." The world was horrified, but a decade later, it says, nothing has changed.

Currently conflicts in 35 countries

Women and girls are still the unacknowledged casualties of the world's conflicts, currently raging in 35 countries from Iraq and Chechnya to Colombia and Sudan. This, despite various United Nations declarations, treaties and promises that underscore the gravity of violence against women caught in these conflicts. "Somewhere along the line, we have to say 'No. This can be stopped, it doesn't have to happen.'"

Rape a deliberate war strategy

The women of India continue to move and inspire me! May we all aspire to be as brave and committed,
writes Veronica Monet www.veronicamonet.com

"The documents of the Amnesty report show, earlier this year, how a group of women put an end to the military atrocities being committed in the Imphal region of India.

After a woman was arrested, mutilated and killed by security forces on suspicion of belonging to an armed group, the group stripped naked and publicly dared the soldiers to rape them. Word spread and mass protests erupted all over the region.

The action led the central Indian government to end the categorization of the region as a "disturbed area," and to stop the use of military "special powers" there."

A selection from: http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&call_pageid=971358637177&c=Article&cid=1102459811482

To view the Amnesty report, Lives blown apart: Crimes against women in times of conflict, go to:

[http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/ACT770752004ENGLISH/\\$File/ACT7707504.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/ACT770752004ENGLISH/$File/ACT7707504.pdf).

Send to us by IAW members Anjana Basu, India and Helen Self, United Kingdom

Woman quits French Muslim Council

One of two female members of a group set up to represent Muslims in France has resigned, saying it had failed to make any progress on important issues. Dounia Bouzar said she was stepping down from the French Council of the Muslim Faith because it had become dominated by men born outside France. She said they were too influenced by their countries of origin and failed to address young French Muslims' concerns.

The council was set up in 2002 as an official point of contact with Muslims. Its Algerian-born president, Dalil Boubaker, who is also rector of the main mosque in Paris, has said Miss Bouzar's resignation was a cause for regret.

But Miss Bouzar, an anthropologist and expert on Muslim integration, said: "For two years now I have been waiting for discussions to begin, but we never talked about anything. I don't see what qualified people like me are there for. All they talk about is procedures, who gets what positions, and the modalities of the elections which will take place in June. I do not see why I should continue with a mere walk-on part." She said the fact that mainly immigrants ran the council (CFCM) meant young Muslims felt unrepresented and received little advice on how to live as Muslims in a secular western state. "As long as there is not a majority of French-born Muslims on the board, the CFCM will suffer from rivalries that divide its members according to their countries of origin," she said.

See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4149323.stm>

Fistfight erupts in school over dress code

School principal Tapati Dutta had issued a circular in December, asking teachers not to apply make-up, wear danglers and stick to either only saris or salwar kameez. On Wednesday, a Trinamul delegation, led by Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, had come to urge the principal to repeal this 'archaic' order. But while the delegation was holding talks with Dutta in her office, some 50-60 local youth barged into the girls' school and started beating up the Trinamul delegation.

Shocking!

"It is shocking that the attack happened inside the school," said Ghosh Dastidar. The Trinamul leader added that a few students who were with them were also beaten up. "The ruffians didn't spare them. I tried to save some girls but we were surrounded and overpowered," said Ghosh Dastidar. The hoodlums even followed the delegation to Baranagar police station. "They mobbed the police station and started ordering around the officer-in-charge. However, the OC wrote down our complaint," she said. Baranagar officer-in-charge B.K. Haldar confirmed the complaint. "One of the men in the delegation complained of acute pain in his ear. We have sent him to a hospital," said Haldar.

Opinions

The state school education authorities remained discreet over the whole incident, perhaps apprehensive of the political overtones that the case has taken. Secondary Teachers' and Employees' Association secretary, Ratan Laskar, however, said that Calcutta High Court had allowed teachers to wear salwar kameez so no one should object. "As long as teachers are decently dressed, their lipstick, ear-rings and bindis are not an issue," he said.

A few school principals said they wouldn't impose similar restrictions on their teachers. "If the principal finds teachers dressing indecently, she, as the supreme authority, can object. However, she should put it across politely. In my school no watertight code exists and teachers wear both saris and salwar suits," said Preeti Mondal, headmistress of Bethune Collegiate School. Jharna Mazumdar, headmistress of Bagbazar Multipurpose School took exception to such a code.

Respect

"I don't think the dress worn by teachers affect students much. The relation that a student shares with her teacher is based on respect. Moreover, as long as the teachers dress decently there is no reason to object to their wearing makeup. Times have changed and teachers come from different backgrounds.

"A few teachers asked me if I had any objection to their wearing salwar suits. I don't," Mazumdar said. Principal of New Alipore Multipurpose principal Jayanti Roy felt that teachers who teach in the junior classes should wear colourful clothes and make-up "because kids like colour".

Kolkata, Times News Network, [_http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/981956.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/981956.cms)
Send to us by IAW member Arjana Basu

EVENTS - CONFERENCES

CSW ONLINE DISCUSSION

CSW: on 10 January, we will launch discussions on:

1. Women and the **Environment** sponsored and moderated by UNEP (UN Environment Programme) <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/environment/index.html>
2. Women and **Poverty** sponsored and moderated by the World Bank <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/poverty/index.html>
3. **Education** and Training of Women and the Girl-Child sponsored by UNESCO and UNICEF and moderated by UNICEF <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/education/index.html>

Other ongoing discussions on WomenWatch:

-Women and **Health** including Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS sponsored and moderated by WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS (the focus topic of the last phase is Rights And Needs of Women Affected by or Vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, 10 January To 21 January 2005)

Women and **Armed Conflict** sponsored and moderated by ESCWA (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia) (until 28 January 2005)

Soon to come

- **Mechanisms** for the Advancement of Women sponsored and moderated by ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) (12 January to 4 February 2005)
- Vision of **Young Women and Men** for Gender Equality moderated by the Division for the Advancement of Women (17 January to 6 February 2005)

Participation

Please go to <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/> to see how to participate in these discussions. You can also subscribe via e-mail by sending a message to <reviewforum-register@un.org> with the discussion topic of your interest (environment or poverty or education), providing the following information:

Online discussion

"Topic Name" - Name: [your full name] - E-mail: [your e-mail address] - Organization Name: [full name of your organization] - Organization Type: [specify whether organization is an NGO, UN entity, government, academia or other] - Country/region: [country/region you represent] - Areas of interest: [Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, other issues] - Sex: [woman/man] - (Registration may take up to one day.)
IWTC (International Women's Tribune Center) New York

IAW and the CSW ONLINE DISCUSSION

Editor's note: if you are interested in the CSW online discussion, and like to join the Communication Group of IAW, please mail <iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>

International Year of Microcredit – April 19-22 2005, Chile

The Latin America/Caribbean Region Microcredit Summit Meeting of Councils (LACRMS) will be held April 19-22, 2005 in Santiago, Chile. Working to ensure that 100 million of the world's poorest families, **especially the women** of those families, are receiving credit for self-employment and other financial and business services. For information and registration see <http://www.microcreditsummit.org/>

WSIS - The World Summit on the Information Society - Second phase (16-18 November 2005, Tunis
See for regional conferences and precoms website <http://www.itu.int/wsis/Contacts>

Note

To avoid misunderstanding, we always send the IAW Newsletter twice: 1) in the body of the e-mail, and 2) as an attachment, saved in Word 97 (changed). Both have exactly the same content. The only difference is, that the attachment has a better lay-out, so it will be easy for Affiliates to copy it and send it by post to IAW members without e-mail.

Also, please advise Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address.

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