

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

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

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWSLETTER January 2007, no. 1
Equal Rights



Dear IAW members,

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has appointed staff members, who will help with managing the problems accumulating at the UN every day. We start this newsletter with the names of some interesting women, including Sheika Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, who were appointed recently to UN top positions.

The Commission on the Status of Women is as always high on the IAW agenda. At the end of the newsletter you will find a statement on the girl child, signed by IAW and other organisations. Other issues in this newsletter include: preventing cervical cancer; FGM in Germany; maternal mortality in India; the human rights situation in Darfur; disarmament, education of tribals. As usual at the end you will find some handy links to websites of conferences and interesting books.

New Appointments by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Tanzanian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation **Asha-Rose Migiro** as Deputy Secretary-General.

Vijay Nambiar of India, a former Special Advisor to Kofi Annan, was appointed as the Secretary-General's Chief of Staff.

Alicia Bárcena of Mexico, who served as Chef de Cabinet to Kofi Annan, was appointed as Under-Secretary-General for Management.

John Holmes of the United Kingdom was appointed as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Michelle Montas, an award winning journalist from Haiti, has become the spokesperson for the Secretary General with the press.

WOMEN GAIN IMPORTANT UN POSITIONS

Alicia Bárcena Ibarra - a sustainable development official as UN management chief

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Ms Bárcena as head of the United Nations Department of Management, voicing confidence that the Mexican national, who has extensive experience both within and outside the world body, will contribute to his efforts to strengthen it.

Prior to joining the Secretariat in New York, Ms Bárcena, was Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), a position she assumed in 2003.

She also was Chief of ECLAC's Environment and Human Settlements Division for four years. With extensive policy experience in the field of sustainable development, she was the Founding Director in Costa Rica of the Earth Council. Ms Bárcena also worked as the Director-General of the National Institute of Fisheries and as the Vice-Minister of Ecology for the Government of Mexico.

More on <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21150&Cr=UN&Cr1=staff>

Asha-Rose Migiro

Tanzanian Foreign Minister Asha-Rose Migiro became the third person – and second woman – in history appointed United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, when she accepted the post offered to her by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “Through her distinguished service in diverse areas, she has displayed outstanding management skills with wide experience and expertise in socio-economic affairs and development issues,” Secretary-General Ban [said](#) of Ms Migiro, who was selected from a short list

of candidates including men and women.

On <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21166&Cr=Deputy&Cr1=Secretary>

Michele Montas

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's new spokesperson, Michele Montas, pledged to bring her experience as a hard-hitting and award winning journalist in Haiti to the assignment, by providing access to information that is not otherwise readily available.

Read more on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21141&Cr=secretary&Cr1=general>

World Health Director-General: Dr Margaret Chan

Dr Margaret Chan is the Director-General of WHO, appointed by the World Health Assembly on 9 November 2006.

Before being appointed, Dr Chan was WHO Assistant Director-General for Communicable Diseases as well as Representative of the Director-General for Pandemic Influenza.

Prior to joining WHO, she was Director of Health in Hong Kong. During her nine-year tenure as director, Dr Chan confronted the first human outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza in 1997. She successfully defeated the spate of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Hong Kong in 2003. She also launched new services to prevent disease and promote better health.

Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa - President of the General Assembly

The United Nations General Assembly will discuss in 2007 *gender equality* as a key element of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as holding a separate debate on *relations between peoples of different beliefs*, president Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa told reporters after the conclusion of the main part of the Assembly's 61st session.

"I also intend to hold a third informal thematic debate, on 'dialogue among civilizations'. On this issue, I believe that the press have a particular responsibility in the way that they represent other peoples and cultures. You can also play an important role in supporting tolerance and mutual respect."

UN Resolutions on Development

Adopting a text entitled "Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence," the Assembly reaffirmed the need for the UN to play a fundamental role in promoting international cooperation for development, while resolving to strengthen coordination within the Organization in order to facilitate growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development".

This text was among more than 40 development-related resolutions adopted after being put forward by the Assembly's Second Committee (Economic and Financial).

For more information, go to: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2006/ga10564.doc.htm>

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The fifty-first session of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) will take place from 26 February to 9 March 2007. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2007-2009, the Commission will consider "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child" as its priority theme. Based on this theme, an [online discussion](#) was held from 14 August to 8 September 2006. DAW, in collaboration with the UNICEF, also organized an [Expert Group Meeting \(EGM\)](#) on this theme. The EGM was hosted by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, from 25 to 28 September 2006.

Please click on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/51sess.htm> and on the links for further information and resources.

Annotated Provisional Agenda and proposed organization of work (new)

[Relevant Documents](#)

[Interactive Dialogue](#)

[Directory of related UN Resources](#) (Role of Men and Boys)

[Special events organized by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women](#)

[Parallel Events Request and Coordination System](#) (The deadline for requests by NGOs has passed)

Official Documents on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw51/OfficialDocuments.html>

HEALTH

Female genital mutilation in Germany

At present an estimated 19,000 immigrant women from African countries where FGM is practiced, live in Germany, and 4,000 to 5,000 girls are in danger of being excised.

A national conference “End female genital mutilation: Experiences from Africa and Europe – Perspectives for Germany” took place in Berlin, December 12/13, 2006. The conference was organised by GtZ (German Technical Cooperation) and INTEGRA (German Network on FGM where *IAW affiliate Deutscher Frauenring* is a member).

The conference examined how to reach satisfactory results with a view to improving the situation of women with FGM, medically and otherwise, and how to discourage the practice and reduce the incidence of new cases.

Among the 160 participants were representatives of a wide segment of civil society as well as experts from Africa, Germany and other European countries, from WHO and the media.

Follow-up meetings between the organisers and the ministries in question will take place. It is hoped that a national plan of action for Germany will be established. INTEGRA will propagate a detailed set of recommendations for the medical, societal and legal fields.

Gudrun Haupter, convenor IAW Commission on Health

Cervical cancer can be prevented

Every year some 500,000 women worldwide get [cervical cancer](#). More than 600 women in the world die every day from cervical cancer, mostly in the developing world. Cervical cancer is a poverty related disease and that is why in developing countries cervical cancer is the leading cause of death. It generally strikes women with young children who are playing a crucial economic and social role in their families and communities. But unlike many cancers, cervical cancer can easily be prevented.

250,000 deaths per year

In contrast with the majority of women in Western countries women in many developing countries have a large risk of suffering and dying from cervical cancer, the most common cancer in women in their region.

The estimated figures of 2004: 500,000 new cases and 250,000 deaths per year, with almost 80 % occurring in developing countries.

The primary approach to control is through regular preventive screening; condom use also helps. Screening all women above 30 years with the Pap smear test, the technique currently recommended by WHO, is for various reasons no option in poor resource settings.

A promising less expensive and less complicated approach for identifying women with high-grade pre-cancerous cervical lesions or cancer is *VIA, Visual Inspection with Acetic acid*.

Studies are underway which will, inter alia, provide information on the effectiveness of VIA in preventing such high-grade lesions or cervical cancer.

VIA's advantages as a screening tool for cervical cancer prevention programs: relative low cost for launching and sustaining programs, easy technique, little infrastructure required.

Main source: *Progress in Reproductive Health Research No. 65* published by WHO

Website: check also with the www.femalecancerprogram.org

The [Female Cancer Program Foundation](#) supports the fights against this disease in developing countries.

Together with local partners in Suriname and Indonesia, the FCP Foundation helps the setting up of cost effective screenings programmes in low resource areas.

Besides the prevention programmes in [Indonesia](#), [Suriname](#) and [South Africa](#) the Female Cancer Program Foundation is also supporting complementary [research](#) studies which focus on the durable solution of a vaccine. Website <http://www.femalecancerprogram.org/FCP/>

From Gudrun Haupter, convenor of the IAW Health Commission

Maternal mortality in India - compared with Africa and China

At the 50th All-India Congress of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, the annual meeting of The Federation of Obstetric & Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI), gynaecologists from across the globe advocated the need to adopt advanced strategies practised in some of the countries in Africa.

“Lack of access and inadequate utilisation of healthcare facilities are responsible for maternal deaths in India. Countries like Mozambique have made good progress in reducing maternal mortality ratio (MMR),” explained Staffan Bergstrom, from Sweden.

Bergstrom added that healthcare facilities in remote areas of countries like India are virtually absent, with no specialist doctors and advanced treatment facilities. “In a number of countries with low per capita income, there is a scarcity of specialist doctors. Non-specialist doctors do major surgeries and fail to diagnose complications. Besides, many medical and clinical officers are being trained to perform surgeries in remote places, where specialists are not available. This is very risky,” Bergstrom explained.

Children's health

“We should remember that children’s health is directly related to mother’s health. The MMR reflect the health of our nation. So, we should introduce advanced facilities in our villages,” said Gita Ganguly Mukherjee, former head of obstetrics and gynaecology, RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

In India, one of 48 expecting mothers is at risk of dying during childbirth. According to the data of National Health Policy 2002, the MMR in India is as high as 407 per 100,000 live births. Other sources have put the MMR as high as 540 (NHFS and UNICEF data, 2000).

“*The chances of death of an Indian mother during childbirth is roughly 10 times more than that of her Chinese counterpart,*” said Bergstrom. To check the maternal mortality rate in India, health experts have stressed on changing the traditional treatment and delivery system being practised in most villages.

Millennium Development Goals: India and other Third World countries have set a goal to reduce the MMR by three-quarters by 2015.

Website <http://www.telegraphindia.com/archives/archive.html>

Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

Human Rights Council - mission to Darfur

The Human Rights Council concluded its two-day fourth special session on 13 December 2006, adopting by consensus a decision to dispatch a high-level mission to assess the human rights situation in Darfur and the needs of Sudan in this regard after expressing its concern regarding the seriousness of the human rights and humanitarian situation in Darfur.

Five highly qualified persons and a rapporteur

The mission will be made up of five highly qualified persons, to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council following consultation with the members of the Council, as well as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan. The Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are to provide administrative, technical and logistical assistance to the mission, and the High Commissioner will consult as appropriate with Sudan. The mission was requested to report to the Council at its fourth session next spring.

The fourth regular session of the Human Rights Council will be held from 12 March to 5 April 2007.

Website (in general) <http://www.unog.ch/>

Convenor of IAW Commission of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights: *Hélène Sackstein*

Conference on Disarmament

The Conference on Disarmament will open the first part of its 2007 session on 22 January.

Other Issues Related to Disarmament being dealt with in Geneva include the following:

- * [Biological Weapons Convention \(BWC\)](#)
- * [Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons \(CCW\)](#)
- * [Small Arms and Light Weapons \(SALW\)](#)

Convenor of the IAW Peace Commission: *Susanne Riveles*

Education – Reaching out to the Tribals

“The next generation will come from the jungles and hills,” Swami Jitatmananda, secretary of Swami Vivekananda Ancestral House and Research Centre, quoted Swami Vivekananda’s prediction while lauding the efforts of the society in educating tribals. The chief guest also recalled how the visionary had inducted 40 lower-caste boys when he set up Belur Math in 1898, giving them the right to read the scriptures.

This is the work that the likes of Niranjana Oraon and Ranjan Bag do in Assam and Orissa, respectively. "We started with teachers from the cities. But that effort was a failure as they refused to stay on in villages. Now, we induct literate people from the village itself, train them and get them to teach their own folk," explained Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India president Vijay Maru.

Oraon, hailing from Jhapirbandh, about 15 km from Silchar, recalled how his fellow-villagers used to flee whenever they saw city folk in trousers.

"They are used to being exploited by representatives of the administration. But they trust us. We first do a survey of the number of illiterates and dropouts (from village schools) and then start convincing them to send their children."

Empowerment education

But an Ekal Vidyalaya goes beyond education. "We are also starting empowerment education," said Bag, busy studying land and panchayat rules now. "It would help the villagers to know about laws like the Right to Information Act or the guarantee of 100 days of work from the government," added the man from Tusra village, in Bolangir.

Other FTS projects cover health and hygiene. "Our gram sevikas get trained and then spread the word about midwifery, malaria or diarrhoea, in accordance with the local needs," said Maru. Employment opportunities are boosted through vermi compost plants put up in villages where the schools are run.

By Sudeshna Banerjee, on http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070110/asp/calcutta/story_7239988.asp

Convenor of the IAW Commission on Education: Meena Pimpalpure

Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

EVENTS - CONFERENCES - BOOKS - CSW STATEMENT

Committee on the Rights of the Child

15 January - 2 February 2007: 44th session meets in Geneva.

On 21 February 2007 11th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Headquarters, New York

More on: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs44.htm>

An updated edition of "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers Handbook".

With this Handbook, the focus shifts from getting more women elected at the parliament, to giving those elected the means to make a greater impact on politics.

Key findings include:

It is not all about numbers - While a critical mass of women is necessary to ensure women's representation, the quality of the representation is just as important. Training is crucial to avoid the trap of electing "token women".

Gender perspectives, not gender issues - Women elected to parliament change politics globally: they introduce a women's perspective into all areas of political life, they are not limited to gender issues.

Representation means more than elected politics - it means that more women must have seats at the Cabinet table, more women must be appointed to senior decision-making positions, and more women's voices must be heard and included when major political reform or transformation is undertaken.

The handbook includes case studies from [Argentina](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Ecuador](#), [France](#), [Indonesia](#), [Rwanda](#), [South Africa](#) and [Sweden](#), as well as regional overviews from the [Arab World](#), [Latin America](#), [South Asia](#) and a case study on the [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#) (IPU).

Direct Link to Publication: http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/upload/WiP_inlay.pdf

Gender, Development and the Media

Gender & Development Journal - Oxfam, November 2007

"If you would like to write on any of the above, or have other ideas that would make interesting articles on the theme of gender, development and the media, and would like to share your insights with your peers through /Gender & Development /, then please contact me, Joanna Hoare (jhoare@oxfam.org.uk <<mailto:jhoare@oxfam.org.uk>>) with a paragraph outlining your proposed idea, as soon as possible, and before the commissioning deadline: 26 January 2007. A core part of my role, as Editor, is to help you produce your article".

For more information about /Gender & Development, /including guidelines for contributors, please visit http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/gender/gad/index.htm
<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/gender/gad/index.htm>
Send to us by IAW president, Rosy Weiss.

UN Conferences

A handy overview of UN conferences is to be found on <http://www.un.org/events/index.html>

UN Key conferences outcomes on Women and gender equality

An overview of key conference outcomes on women and gender equality, from Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, Beijing 1995 en New York 2005, can be found on website <http://www.un.org/esa/devagenda/gender.html>

UN Key Conferences outcomes on **Children, Ageing, Food, Human Rights, Education, HIV/AIDS, Population** etc. etc, can all be found on: <http://www.un.org/esa/devagenda/index.html>

NGO Statement Submitted by the International Alliance of Women together with other organisations on: “Ending Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child”.

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-first sessions

26 February – 9 March 2007

We, Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, reaffirm and call attention to the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of the girl child. We acknowledge the important step taken in Section L of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) in emphasizing the Girl Child. However, we are concerned that after more than a decade of policies, promises and programs the girl child remains powerless, neglected and invisible.

The fifty-first session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, with the theme “The Elimination of Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child”, offers a unique opportunity for Member States to review progress, improve and accelerate policies and programmes designed to fulfill promises made at Beijing and beyond and to ensure all girls the full enjoyment of their human rights.

The recently released Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Children reveals the severe and pervasive nature of the violence endangering the lives of girls on all continents. The root causes of violence, including negative cultural attitudes and practices, poverty and inadequate access to education and health services, create barriers for girls particularly in the form of discrimination, insecurity and disempowerment. These root causes highlight the need for a holistic, rights-based approach to ending discrimination and violence against girls. Of particular note is the need to acknowledge the role of men and boys in ending violence and discrimination against the girl child.

A girl continues to experience many of the worst human rights abuses throughout her life-cycle. She is too often denied her right to life, food, health, education or the freedom to choose her life partner and her life’s work. She is repeatedly denied her political, economic, social and cultural rights and subjected to cultural and legally sanctioned behaviors that hinder her development and empowerment. Only a holistic approach grounded in a human rights framework, which considers the undeniable relationships of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural behaviors can effect the true elimination of discrimination and violence against girls. Indeed, this approach was recommended in a substantive assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action via the adoption of General Assembly resolution 60/141 at its sixtieth session.

We are encouraged by the commitments reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit, where Member States agreed to adopt comprehensive national strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the end of 2015. This agreement takes immediate steps toward saving and improving the

lives of millions of people within the span of a few years. However, since gender equality is the essential underpinning for the achievement of all of the MDGs, the failure to call particular attention to the empowerment of the girl child will limit progress on all of the millennium goals and targets. Forging a link between women and girls in interpreting and monitoring all the MDGs and especially Goal 3 on women's empowerment, can be a strategy ensuring progress in eliminating discrimination and violence against the girl child and for achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals.

The international legal architecture for girls, mainly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), mutually reinforce the principals of gender equality. These mechanisms should be used to end the invisibility of the girl child by adopting reporting procedures that require State Parties to evaluate their existing laws and policies relating to the girl child and bring them in compliance with these international standards. Adequate resources for the implementation and enforcement of these laws will aid their effectiveness.

Better qualitative and quantitative research will help us all understand the realities of girls and how to reach them. We urge countries, international organizations and universities to conduct research about girls at risk of discrimination and violence. Further, data disaggregated by sex and age related to children in critical sectors inter alia health, education, labor and protection will assist in creating a gender perspective for the planning, implementation and monitoring of government programs.

The skills, ideas and energy of all girls are vital for the full attainment of the goals of gender equality, education, sustainable development and peace. Therefore, we urge Member States, international organizations, national and local governments to ensure that girls have the opportunity to be heard and that their views are valued and incorporated into discussions and decisions, especially into those areas which affect their lives most directly. Participatory mechanisms must be created to enable girls to speak out about the realities of their lives and to share their thoughts and experiences with government and civic leaders who make policy and plan programs. Active engagement fosters, respect and understanding and contributes to the process of empowerment and equality.

The participation of girls must become common practice if policies for social and economic development are to be truly sustainable.

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.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash	: Joke Sebus	<iaw.newsletter@womenalliance.org>
International Women's News	: Priscilla Todd (English)	<iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.or
	: Cécile Ouédraogo (French)	<aifnfi@womenalliance.org>
Membership Officer	: Pat Richardson	<iaw.membership@womenalliance.org>
Treasurer	: Marieluise Weber	<iawtreas@womenalliance.org>