

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

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

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER July 2007, no. 8**



**Equal Rights**

*Dear IAW members,*

*The situation of women in the MDGs needs constant monitoring. One of the possibilities for change in their situation is the quality of funding projects. A good example of that quality is to be found with Mama Cash. Funding is also one of the issues of CSW 2008.*

*In this newsletter news for women from Africa, India, Egypt, the Maldives, Madagascar, the European Union and a poem from an African girl child.*

*IAW members from Greece and Vienna have mailed us their contributions to the women's movement, and the [All-India Women's Conference](#) is busy preparing for the IAW Congress 2007.*

*As usual you will find some publications and coming events at the end of the newsletter.*

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

**IAW Congress 29 October - 3 November 2007**

Registration Forms are to be found on the IAW website (read the last announcement from IAW President Rosy Weiss and have a look at the picture) and click on [All-India Women's Conference](#)

**League of Women's Rights, Greece**

The League of Human Rights in Greece has a new president! It is Soula Panaretou. In her lead article in the League's excellent journal she suggests a campaign for more women in office - at present women make up 13.3% of parliamentarians. "The main demand of this campaign could be the passing of a law dictating that each of the two sexes should be represented in the electoral lists by at least 1/3 of the total number of candidates."

The next parliamentary ballot in Greece is scheduled for Spring 2008. A result of a previous campaign was "the law imposing the participation of women by 1/3 in electoral lists of municipal elections."

For some background information on this issue, one may refer to

<http://www.equalisnotenough.org/followup/papers/MariaKyriakidou.pdf>

A new National Commission for Equality between Women and Men was established this year and one of the 2 women's NGO members (in addition to 17 members of various ministries) is the Greek League for Women's Rights. *Proficiat!*

**Sixty Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

The 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008 is fast approaching. The commemorative year will kick off on **10 December 2007, Human Rights Day**, and will extend through 2008.

The commemoration is intended to be as inclusive as possible, highlighting the role of people everywhere, as the custodians and beneficiaries of the UDHR.

The message is that the UDHR is a living document that can continue to inform and inspire the struggle for rights and freedoms around the world if people reclaim it and make it our own.

It is an articulation of two core principles of the UDHR: Universality and Justice.

**What is being planned?**

*More in the next IWNNews and in the next e-newsletter!*

**Good Governance !**

Statement on women participating in and contributing to good governance at the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women to the participants of the 7th Global forum. The statement has been displayed all over the meeting place and was very well received by participants. The final declaration of the Forum has incorporated a distinct paragraph on women.

For background information on the 7th Global Forum on reinventing Government, please visit the forum website at <http://www.7thglobalforum.org>  
*Congratulations! The statement, with a good picture of IAW President Rosy Weiss, is to be found on: <http://www.vrouwenbelangen.nl/english/index.htm> and clicking on Good Governance.  
Also see the next edition of International Women's News.*

## MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### INDIA - Millennium Development Goals

The [UN Millennium Campaign](#) in India will launch Mid-Term Status Reports in July on assessing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in ten states: Bihar, Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Only 2.9% instead of 6% of the national income goes to education, and a mere 1.4% instead of 3% is shared out to public health. In rural employment, an average of 39 days of work has been generated instead of the promised 100 days.

#### **Promises Are Not Enough!**

On May 24, the WNTA (Wada Na Todo Abhiyan) Campaign presented a Public Report Card called "Promises Are Not Enough!" Over 500 civil society organizations rated the Indian government's performance as poor and gave it only 30% marks as it failed to deliver on promises.

The Indian economy may have experienced an eight percent growth rate in the last four years yet it is estimated that two-thirds of its 1.1 billion inhabitants live off less than \$2 a day.

1. The **health sector** continues to pose a major concern. A 2005 Citizens' Report on the MDGs pointed out that India had failed to make any significant improvement towards health sector targets under the MDGs (in fact the relevant statistics were held comparable with India's position in the 1990s).
2. In the area of **education**, the goal of providing quality education for all appears to have remained elusive as well.
3. With reference to the task of **poverty alleviation**, one of the major contentions has been that official estimates do not capture the ground realities of the masses living in poverty. While official statistics indicate a decline in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line (BPL) (to 27% in 1999-2000), the representation is contradicted by the numbers of frequent starvation deaths, farmer suicides, and agricultural labour migration.
4. Access to **safe drinking water and sanitation** facilities for all remain a distant dream for now.  
More on: <http://southasia.oneworld.net/article/view/150791/1/1893>

### **The MDGs: a wonderfully well designed website**

On: <http://www.undp.org/legalempowerment/>

## AFRICA - Child Brides and the failure to achieve the MDGs

CAPE TOWN, July 13 (IPS) - The woes of the child bride in many ways illustrate the conditions underlying the failure of African countries to achieve many of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The recently released United Nations report entitled "The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007" states that "although there have been major gains in several areas and the goals remain achievable in most African nations, even the best governed countries on the continent have not been able to make sufficient progress in reducing extreme poverty in its many forms".

Many of the MDGs deal directly with children and women, such as targets to reduce child mortality, maternal mortality, increasing enrolment at primary education level and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

### **MDG 2**

In societies where girl children as young as ten years are married off, there is a failure to meet the MDG which makes provision for primary education for all children by 2015 (MDG 2). Young brides are taken out of school to meet the demands of their husbands.

When a young girl of 12 or 13 becomes pregnant, there is also an increased risk that she may die in childbirth or during pregnancy. Not only is her body not yet properly developed to carry a child to

term, but lack of access to medical care in the rural areas further increases her chances of dying.

#### **MDG 5**

MDG 5 is aimed at the improvement of maternal health and reducing the maternal mortality rate by three quarters by 2015. Pregnant women of all ages are at risk, but a young girl even more so. Lack of education and early marriage draw the child bride into a spiral of poverty, addressed in MDG 1 which is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

#### **MDG 3**

According to MDG 3, gender equality and the empowerment of women should be promoted. Needless to say, a girl who marries prematurely probably has little experience of equality in a marriage and will probably not be empowered.

#### **MDG 6**

MDG 6 is aimed at combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The child bride is at increased risk as she is often the third or fourth wife of a much older man. This exposes her to the HI virus and other sexually transmitted diseases. Due to her young age and lack of knowledge, she may also be more vulnerable to other diseases.

### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

The figures for *maternal mortality* exhibit the discrepancy between sub-Saharan Africa and the developed world most starkly. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in every 16 women dies during childbirth or pregnancy. In the developed world the figure is 1 in 3,800.

Preventing *unplanned pregnancies* could prevent around one quarter of maternal deaths, including those resulting from unsafe abortion. But only 21 percent of women in sub-Saharan Africa used contraceptives in 2004. Few women in the region receive adequate antenatal care. Improvement in *women's access to health care* has been negligible in sub-Saharan Africa. The proportion of deliveries attended by skilled healthcare personnel went up from 42 to an almost equally dismal 45 percent between 1990 and 2005, while showing an overall increase from 43 to 57 percent in the developing world during the same period.

**Primary education level:** the 30 percent of children not going to school in sub-Saharan Africa translates into 72 million individuals of whom 57 percent are girls. These figures may suffer from underreporting as many children are registered but do not attend school.

**AIDS, malaria, war and conflict** contribute to high child mortality figures.

But progress was recorded with the prevention of measles and a decline in deaths caused by the disease, thanks largely to improved immunization coverage throughout the developing world. In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of children immunised between the ages of 12 and 23 months has improved from 57 to 64 percent between 1990 and 2005.

Although *HIV infections* have decreased in the developing world, deaths from AIDS continue to rise in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the 39,5 million people who have the illness worldwide, live in this region. Africans dying annually from AIDS rose from some 200,000 in 1990 to two million in 2006. Globally an increasing number of married women are becoming infected with some 48 percent of people infected with HIV being women.

The report also shows that prevention measures are inefficient, that most young people do not have a comprehensive grasp of HIV and that only 11 percent of pregnant HIV-positive women in low- and middle income countries were receiving services to prevent the transmission of the virus to their newborns. However, HIV prevalence has shown a slight decline between 2000 and 2006 in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **Margaret Chan, WHO**

World Health Organization director general Margaret Chan said that gender inequality and domestic violence are among the factors which drive the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

She pointed out that 500,000 babies are born with the virus every year and 80 percent of them are in sub-Saharan Africa.

More on: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38527>

### **Development Banks Lag on Support for Sexual Health**

The study by Gender Action, a Washington-based group that monitors the banks' policies towards women and gender equality, examines both the quantity and quality of funding for reproductive health during a four-year period from 2003 to 2006 by MDBs (Multilateral Development Banks) that include the World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, as well as the restrictive fiscal and monetary policies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Along with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, they make up the five multilateral development banks that lend vast amounts of public funds to governments in developing countries under the mantra of alleviating poverty.

#### **Profound decline for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS**

The 90-page study records a "profound decline" in World Bank spending *and a shortage of other MDB support for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS*. The ebbing of funds occurred despite the fact that these banks have pledged to help countries meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The report estimates that the World Bank was the largest funder from 2003-2006 of both reproductive health and HIV/AIDS projects and components, approving a total of 7.5 billion dollars. Still, funding declined dramatically from 2.7 billion dollars for such projects in 2003 to only 1.5 billion in 2006.

*By Emad Mekay. More facts and figures on:* <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38454>

#### **The Value of Money for War versus Aid**

UN, July 2 2007 - The world's 22 rich nations, comprising the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), grudgingly doled out about 104 billion dollars in official development assistance (ODA) to the world's poorer nations in 2006.

But just one solitary OECD member -- the United States -- has spent or allocated a staggering 456 billion dollars on the ongoing five-year-old destructive war in Iraq.

*By Thalif Deen, IPS. More figures on* <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38399>

### **AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **Egypt bans female circumcision after death of 12-year-old girl**

Egypt has banned all female circumcision after the death this week of a 12-year-old girl undergoing the widely practised procedure. Budour Ahmad Shaker died from an overdose of anaesthetic at a private clinic in Minya province in upper Egypt during the \$9 (£4.50) operation. Her parents are threatening to sue the doctor involved after he reportedly tried to bribe them to withdraw their complaint.

Female circumcision, which involves the removal of the clitoris, and is also called female genital mutilation, was made illegal in Egypt in 1997. But the painful and sometimes deadly practice was allowed in exceptional cases, and is common in the south despite educational efforts by human rights organisations.

President Hosni Mubarak's wife, Suzanne, has been an active campaigner on the issue.

The ban was imposed on Thursday on every member of the medical profession, in public or private establishments, from carrying out a clitorodectomy. New legislation will be needed to enforce it.

#### **A percentage of 50?**

In 2005, research by UNICEF found that 96% of Egyptian women aged 15 to 49 who had ever been married reported they had been circumcised. The Egyptian government says a more recent study found 50.3% of girls aged 10 to 18 had been circumcised.

Muslims and Christians practise circumcision in Egypt and Sudan but it has no basis in either religion. The operation is usually performed by doctors in private clinics or, especially in rural areas, by barbers or midwives.

*The Guardian on June the 30th,* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/egypt/story/0,,2115290,00.html>

#### **UN rights expert welcomes appointment of first female judges in the Maldives**

13 July 2007 – A United Nations independent expert on judicial independence today welcomed the appointment of the first-ever women judges in the Maldives and called on authorities in the Indian Ocean archipelago to continue to take steps towards “an appropriate gender balance within the judiciary”.

Leandro Despouy, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, issued a [statement](#)

in Geneva after the Maldives appointed two female judges on Wednesday and announced that a third woman was due to be appointed next week. The Special Rapporteur called for “a successful transition towards a democratic system of governance based on a separation of powers”.

*UN News centre:* <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=23226&Cr=maldives&Cr1=>

### **“The Girl Child”**

They regard us as special,  
Yet they abuse us culturally.  
We are the slaves of the home,  
We cook, clean the house,  
And look after children.  
We are never given the chance to go to school.  
We are used to appease the evil spirits.  
We are forced to marry in times of hunger.  
But why the girl child and not the boy child?  
Parents, you need to change your attitude towards girls.  
Give us equal opportunities  
And we will prove you wrong.  
Parents, if you educate a girl  
You educate a nation.  
We need our nation to be educated.

Sarah, Aged 10  
Mureverwi, Chihota, Zimbabwe

### **No Change in Europe's Gender Pay Gap**

The gender pay gap across Europe remains almost as wide as a decade ago, despite women outperforming men academically, the European commission said. Women earn an average of 15% less than men and have done for at least the last 10 years, the commission's research shows.

In some European countries the pay gap has even widened. In Denmark, the pay discrepancy rose from 11% in 1994 to 15% in 2001.

#### **Absurd situation**

Vladimir Spidla, the European commissioner for employment and equal opportunities, said, given that girls do better at school and more of them make it on to university, the continuing discrepancy was "an absurd situation and needs to change". He blamed the pay gap on a range of factors including the need for women to spend time on unpaid work, such as taking care of the household and its dependants, as well as "pure discrimination".

#### **More use of legislation?**

An EU survey earlier this year showed that 77% of Europeans believed more women are needed in senior management positions, while 72% want to see more female members of national parliaments. Today's report proposed confronting the problem by making more use of legislation that outlaws discrimination, using European money to fund national employment policies and exchanging best practice between EU countries.

The Guardian on <http://money.guardian.co.uk/pay/story/0,,2129339,00.html>

### **UNICEF Congratulations for Madagascar - Legal Age of Marriage to Eighteen Years**

New ground was broken when the Government of Madagascar's Parliament approved two new laws; the first a broad bill to ensure increased child protection for vulnerable children throughout the country, and the second to change the legal age of marriage from 14 years for girls and 17 years for boys, to 18 years for both genders.

Even in exceptional cases, where parents have agreed to the marriage of their children between 14 and 17 or 18 years of age, a Judge's approval will still be needed to allow the union to take place, challenging the process of early marriage to the highest degree.

#### **In line with international standards**

These new laws are crucial steps in putting Madagascar's child protection legislation in line with international standards, namely the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



(UNCRC) and its optional protocols, and the African Charter for the Wellbeing of Children, ratified by the Government of Madagascar in March 1989, March 1991 and August 1991 respectively. *The Malagasy Parliament's decision to pass these new laws has been deeply applauded by UNICEF's Madagascar Country Office.*

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Mama Cash Funds - Call for Women's Projects on Peace and Security**

A large number of countries in the world today are engaged in conflict or are going through post-conflict situations. The source of the conflicts vary to a great degree – religious and ethnic tensions, cross-border conflicts, indigenous movements, refugee movements, internal rebel movements, separatist movements, etc.

While these cause an overall state of insecurity and instability, women in particular face the brunt of the situation through increased violence and insecurity.

Mama Cash wants their voices heard, and their position both during and after armed conflict radically improved. They support women's groups all over the world that take up projects in the areas of:

- Violence against women during and after conflict situations
- Creating understanding about the multiple roles of and effects on women in conflict situations (including women as civilians, refugees, IDPs, combatants, guerillas and soldiers)
- Promoting the application of legal standards (human rights, humanitarian and refugee law) and the use of appropriate instruments and mechanisms to address specific issues around gender issues in conflict situations, etc. etc.

Mama Cash welcomes applications from women's groups that are working on any of these issues.

Please contact Mama Cash directly if you would like more information.

See: [www.mamacash.org](http://www.mamacash.org) or contact Mamacash at: +31-(0)20-689 3634

*Sent to us by Sarah Masters, International Action Network on Small Arms – IANSA.*

*Website: [www.iansa.org/women](http://www.iansa.org/women)*

### **United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund**

The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Unit allocates project grants, for programmes of humanitarian, legal and financial assistance to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery.

Application forms should be duly completed and submitted by 15 September 2007.

If you need more information on the Fund, you can consult the website of the OHCHR:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/index.htm#s>.

*Sent to us by IAW secretary Alison Brown*

### **From: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Application for the newly established OHCHR and UNITAR Human Rights Fellowship for Students from Least Developed Countries. While fully aware that not all of you are located in or responsible for Least Developed Countries, any assistance in disseminating the attached information would be welcome. Please note that the application **deadline is 20 August 2007**.

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The 2007 fellowship is open to candidates from the following LDCs:

[Afghanistan](#), [Angola](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Benin](#), [Bhutan](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Burundi](#), [Cambodia](#), [Cape Verde](#), [Central African Republic](#), [Chad](#), [Comoros](#), [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Djibouti](#), [Equatorial Guinea](#), [Eritrea](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Gambia](#), [Guinea](#), [Guinea-Bissau](#), [Haiti](#), [Kiribati](#), [Lao People's Democratic Republic](#), [Lesotho](#), [Liberia](#), [Madagascar](#), [Malawi](#), [Maldives](#), [Mali](#), [Mauritania](#), [Mozambique](#), [Myanmar](#), [Nepal](#), [Niger](#), [Rwanda](#), [Samoa](#), [São Tomé and Príncipe](#), [Senegal](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Solomon Islands](#), [Somalia](#), [Sudan](#), [Timor-Leste](#), [Togo](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Uganda](#), [United Republic of Tanzania](#), [Vanuatu](#), [Yemen](#), [Zambia](#).

More on: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/ldcfellowship.htm>  
*Sent to us by IAW member H el ene Sackstein*

## EVENTS - CONFERENCES - PUBLICATIONS

**Asia-Pacific women's involvement:** the latest issue of the ONLINEWOMEN BULLETIN highlights Asia-Pacific women's involvement in politics, governance, decision-making and transformative leadership. On [www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org](http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org)

**CAPWIP:** The Center for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP) Institute for Gender, Governance & Leadership will held their 8th training on "Making Governance Gender Responsive (MGGR)", which will be held on November 12-19, 2007 in Manila, Philippines.  
On: <http://www.capwip.org/training/mggr.htm>

**AGEING:** NGLS invites you to participate in the following initiative of Global Action on Ageing for the Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).  
On <http://www.un-ngls.org>

**Information for NGOs:** The Civil Society Observer is a bi-monthly package of documentation of various kinds from all political persuasions to keep you informed of developments related to NGOs, civil society and the multi-lateral system.  
On: [http://www.un-ngls.org/site/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=25](http://www.un-ngls.org/site/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=25)

**EARTH VISION:** the 16th Tokyo Global Environmental Film Festival. Deadline of the Entry Film - August 31, 2007. On <http://www.earth-vision.jp>

**"The Road to Doha"** a monthly publication jointly produced by the DESA Financing for Development Office (FFDO) and the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) in the run-up to the International Conference to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to be held in Doha, Qatar in the second half of 2008 (A/RES/61/191).  
Suggestions and feedback are welcome to this monthly initiative.  
Please contact NGLS ( [ngls@un.org](mailto:ngls@un.org) ) or the FFDO office ( [ffdoffice@un.org](mailto:ffdoffice@un.org) ).  
More issues on: [http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id\\_article=229](http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=229)

### 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	< <a href="mailto:iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net">iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net</a> >
International Women's News :	Priscilla Todd (English)	< <a href="mailto:iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org">iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org</a> >
	:	Michelle Duval (French)
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