

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER June 2007, no. 7



Equal Rights

Dear IAW members,

The Commission on the Status of Women 2008 will be on 'Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women'.

That's why we are quoting figures in this newsletter. On financing for development, in an excellent statement by Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalif; on the arms trade and on the 'failed states', with their conflicts spilling over to neighbouring states. Conflicts which are especially disastrous for women. Preparation on-line for CSW 2008 has started this month - you can still join!

Women are on the move around the world: in Iceland, Africa, Asia, Latin-America, Turkey.

IAW is always on the move including also planning a Board Meeting and Congress in Delhi, India, later this year.

Commission on the Status of Women 2008

Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

You are invited to participate in the online discussion on the theme "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women", which is being organised by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women.

The discussion will run for four weeks from 18 June to 15 July 2007. The online discussion is part of the preparatory process for the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to be held 25 February to 7 March 2008. To register please click on:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/forum/forum-daw-financing.htm>

More information on gender budgeting and financing gender equality on:

* <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/tffinfdevelop.htm>

* UNIFEM www.gender-budgets.org

* <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/news/165726/200607newbook.htm>

* http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/oxfam_edPaper7.pdf

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

The agenda for the pre-Congress **IAW Board Meeting in Delhi 27-28 October 2007** has been sent to IAW Board members, with the draft of the new Action Programme and the Bylaws with the proposed amendments. Information: IAW Secretary Alison Brown: iawsec@womenalliance.org
Please respond before August 30, 2007 if you are planning to attend the Board Meeting.

Icelandic Women's Rights organised an excellent international conference on the 8th of June 2007 in Reykjavik on: "A Place for Prostitution? Gender Equality and Respect in Modern Societies".

Introductions are on <http://www.krfi.is/Joombla/> The introduction by IAW President Rosy Weiss is on: <http://www.vrouwenbelangen.nl/english/prostitution.htm>

WOMEN ON THE MOVE

HIV Positive Women's Forum

HIV positive women from around the world will gather in Nairobi, Kenya on July 4, 2007 at the Positive Women's Forum to address issues of concern for positive women such as women's leadership and economic empowerment; affordable health care and treatment; advocacy around gender inequality; stigma and discrimination and human rights including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of women and girls.

"We hope to further unite the positive women's movement to move the HIV and AIDS agenda forward for positive women. We also hope to nurture new leadership and partnerships between the

YWCA and the positive women's movement," says Sophie Dilmitis, World YWCA HIV and AIDS Coordinator, who has lead the organising team in preparation for the Forum.

Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland, and honorary patron of ICW, will open the Positive Women's Forum and **Dr. Musimibi Kanyoro**, General Secretary of the World YWCA will provide closing remarks.

The Positive Women's Forum is open exclusively to HIV positive women.

More on: <http://www.icw.org/node/225>

Six Nobel Peace laureates - all women - gathered in Dublin -

Individually they are impressive; together they are formidable. Six Nobel Peace laureates from around the world - all women - gathered in Dublin in June to take part in a major conference on the issue of female empowerment and the advancement of peace in the Middle East.

Describing the conference, one of the six, Professor Jody Williams, said: "We looked at the violence against women resulting from the war in Iraq, which has its roots in the oil industry's lust for the reserves in the Middle East and the resulting interests at stake".

Issues of peace and women's rights

Last year, the laureates established the Nobel Women's Initiative, which they described as a collective voice on issues of peace and women's rights. Its purpose is "to address and work to prevent the root causes of violence by spotlighting and promoting the efforts of women's rights activists, researchers and organisations working to advance peace, justice and equality".

Those attending the conference included 80 women's rights activists from 30 different countries, as well as ex-political prisoners, founders of international rights organisations, disarmament experts, journalists and emerging activists.

One of its stated aims was "deepening our understanding of how the private and public dynamics of violence against women, particularly in the Middle East, intersect and therefore how solutions must reflect a more integrated approach."

The conference concluded that the root causes of violence were inequalities, including those of power, control of resources, racism, intolerance and the denial of rights for women.

Shirin Ebadi noted: "We discussed the role of the media in dismissing and sometimes trivialising the voices of women, saving our environment, equal access to resources of all types, equal access to justice, stopping the madness of the proliferation of weapons around the world that fuel the wars, killing us, our children and our husbands".

By David McKittrick. More on: <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/politics/article2606452.ece>

The seven living Nobel Prize women are: Wangari Muta Mathai, Kenya 2004 - Shirin Ebadi, Iran 2003 - Jody Williams, USA 1997 - Betty William, Ireland 1976 - Mairead Corrigan, Ireland 1976 - Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala 1992. Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma 1991, remains imprisoned in Burma.

RIGHTS-ASIA: Women's Quotas - No Magic Formula but a Start

Bangkok, Jun 21 - Setting quotas designed to have more women in politics and government may not have been the magic formula for more balanced political representation in many countries, but it has certainly been a key first step in many cases.

On <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38256>

LATIN AMERICA: Black Women on the Bottom Rung

Mexico City, Jun 19 - There are at least 75 million black women in Latin America and the Caribbean, but those who occupy high-level political or public administration posts number less than 50. As activists pointed out to IPS this week, black women are at the very bottom of the social ladder in this region. On: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38231>

AFRICA: "If You Want More Development, Include Women in Decision-making"

Kampala, Jun 15 - The four-day gathering in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, took place under the

theme of 'Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy', reflecting fears that women's rights are slipping down the development agenda.

Just a handful of member states have reached a 30 percent representation of women in national legislatures - the proportion that is widely seen as the threshold for women to begin influencing parliamentary affairs. A 1997 gathering of Commonwealth leaders held in Edinburgh had pledged to achieve 30 percent representation of women in decision-making positions across the public and private sectors by 2005.

On: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38201>

Turkish Women Gain Voice in Fight to Stay Secular

The head of one of Turkey's top courts, Sumru Cortoglu, called on fellow women in May to defend the rights given to them by Ataturk and to take a larger role in politics.

The parties also seem to be listening: some have cut or waived for women a fee charged for being a candidate. The AK Party has said it wants 81 women for Turkey's 81 provinces.

Secularism

"We think that in order to protect secularism, women being represented is a very important example," said Inci Bospinar, who has applied to be a candidate for the staunchly secularist main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP).

Some obstacles remain: internal polls are not held for candidates and voters choose lists not individuals, so women's success depends on where party leaders put them on the lists.

But activists and politicians say a new momentum has been built, helped partly by the protests which got women noticed as a political force and made them feel they had popular support.

New momentum

"Women are moving now. It's new, it's a big change," said CHP deputy Gulsun Bilgehan. "(It's) fear of losing their freedom and their independence ... Turkey is a lonely single country in the Islamic world."

More on: <http://www.reuters.com/article/inDepthNews/idUSL226775020070604>

QUOTABLE INFORMATION ON WORLD ISSUES

Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa on financing for development in Doha

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the beginning of the 21st century, a global family is more interdependent than ever before. We also have the capacity and resources available to make sure that each member of the family is lifted out of poverty. But in terms of development financing, **aid dropped** from US\$106 billion in 2005 – a record high due to debt relief operation to Iraq and Nigeria – to US\$104 billion in 2006. This represents a drop in real terms of 5.1% ...

Closing statement "FINANCING DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE THE MDGs", **Doha, Qatar, 18 June 2007**. This excellent statement gives an overview, with figures, of the quantity and the quality of aid needed, the role of NGOs, etc. Very useful for IAW members to quote in articles and introductions. On: <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/statements/statement20070618.shtml>

The Failed States Index 2007

It is an accepted axiom of the modern age that distance no longer matters. Sectarian carnage can sway stock markets on the other side of the planet. Anarchic cities that host open-air arms bazaars imperil the security of the world's superpower. A hermit leader's erratic behaviour not only makes life miserable for the impoverished millions he rules but also upends the world's nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Ripple far beyond their borders

The threats of weak states, in other words, ripple far beyond their borders and endanger the development and security of nations that are their political and economic opposites.

The year 2006 began with violent protests that erupted from Indonesia to Nigeria over the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.

February brought the destruction of Samarra's golden-domed mosque, one of Shiite Islam's holiest shrines, unleashing a convulsion of violence across Iraq that continues unabated.

After Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers last July, southern Lebanon was bombarded for a month by air strikes, sending hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing into neighbouring states.

And in October, the repressive North Korean regime stormed its way into the world's nuclear club.

What makes these alarming headlines all the more troubling is that their origins lie in weak and failing states.

Ranking of the twelve most failed states in 2007:

1. Sudan - 2. Iraq - 3. Somalia - 4. Zimbabwe - 5. Chad - 6. Ivory Coast - 7. Republic of Congo - 8. Afghanistan - 9. Guinea - 10. Central African Republic – 11. Haiti - 12. Pakistan.

The Fund for Peace and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

More on: <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>

Arms Trade - International Peace Research Institute - SIPRI

The task of this Institute is to conduct research on questions of conflict and cooperation of importance for international peace and security, with the aim of contributing to an understanding of the conditions for peaceful solutions of international conflicts and for a stable peace.

Select a [research project](#) or see their [publications](#) or consult [databases](#) or the [library](#) for interesting references.

For information: the total amount of the international arms trade has increased last year with 3.5% to 900 billion Euro. China and India have been the biggest importers during the last 30 years, followed by Saudi-Arabia, Iraq and Turkey.

Suppliers

The ten largest suppliers for the period 1977 to 2006 are:

1. USA (46 % of the total amount or 394 billion Euro); 2. USSR (till 1991); 3. France (about 5% of the total amount); 4. Russia (after 1991); 5. Germany; 6. UK (about 5% of the total amount); 7. China (36.9 billion Euro); 8. Italy; 9. Netherlands; 10. Czechoslovakia.

Information from the SIPRI Arms Transfers Project, URL <www.sipri.org>

Small Arms survey on: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/index.html>

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Violations in the OSCE Region of Europe, Central Asia and North America, Report 2007, events of 2006.

The “Annual Report” of the **International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF)** focuses mainly on the state of civil and political rights in 39 of the 56 OSCE participating states, paying particular attention to developments in Central Asia, the Russian North Caucasus region, and Belarus, which are the IHF priority regions in 2006-7.

The authoritarian regimes of **Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan** repressed virtually any expression of dissidence and violation, on a systematic basis, of civil and political as well as social, economic and cultural rights.

The human rights situation in **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyzstan** and **Tajikistan** improved in some areas.

Other long-term problems persisted, such as violations of freedom of expression and association, due process and fair trial rights and the ban on torture.

The **Russian** government continued its efforts to limit the influence of opposition forces, and politically motivated persecution of opponents; misuse of anti-extremism legislation to put pressure on civil society, and restrictions of the rights to freedom of speech, assembly and association were of major concern in the country. Other pressing problems included lack of independence of the judiciary.

More on: http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=4387

and <<http://www.womenaspeacemakers.org/>>

OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe Region) countries:

Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (Serbia), Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Russia (Chechnya), Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

Sent to us by IAW President Rosy Weiss

AROUND THE WORLD

The Stop Stoning Forever Campaign - Petition

The objective of this campaign is to change the Islamic Penal Code of Iran such that stoning will never

again be issued as a sentence or practiced as a punishment.

Stoning is a punishment for adultery decreed by the Islamic Penal Code of Iran. Most of the victims are women. In December 2002, Ayatollah Shahroudi, the Head of Judiciary ordered a ban on the practice of stoning. However, rumours about executions by stoning continued to be heard around the country.

Meanwhile, the Network of Volunteer Lawyers initiated a search for people sentenced to be stoned within the prisons of the country. After two months of research, 9 women and 2 men were identified - some of those cases were critical. Some members of the Network of Volunteer Lawyers decided to represent these 11 prisoners to save their lives.

The Stop Stoning Forever campaign has begun through the coordinated efforts of some women's non-governmental organizations, a group of women activists and the Network of Volunteer Lawyers.

The current campaign activity is to collect signatures for a petition to the Head of Judiciary, Ayatollah Shahroudi. On: <http://www.meydaan.com/Stoning/petition.aspx?cid=46&pid=9>

Sent to us by IAW member Helen Self

Editor's note: a current case of stoning has been postponed but the campaign must continue – IAW members are urged to sign the petition

The defiant Afghan women promised a better life who refuse to be victims

In a filthy corner of a clinic in Lashkar Gah, a heavily pregnant 12-year-old lies wailing at a curt, dismissive doctor. Down the road some of the thousands of widows in the area beg in the mud. In the local hospital, women lie recovering from the horrific burns of failed suicide attempts. The brave new world promised by Tony Blair, President George Bush and Afghanistan's President, Hamid Karzai, appears not to have reached the women of Helmand.

When asked whether life was better now than under the Taliban, Fowzea Olomi, 40, the director of the women's centre, laughs: "The Taliban have gone?"

Life is worse

Life now, she says, is worse. Pointing to her burkha flung to one side, she added: "I never used to wear that before, just a scarf. But now we are all scared of the Taliban because of kidnappings and suicide bombers and shooters." Ms Olomi, who defied the extremist regime to keep teaching in secret, believes that fewer girls are now receiving an education. Most girls in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand, go to school but in remote towns and villages, many parents are afraid to send children to classes.

Teachers, like doctors, are being kidnapped and beheaded with impunity. Only yesterday, a gunman sped past a school on a motorbike firing into a crowd of female pupils, killing two girls and wounding six.

Wounded girls - a risk?

Wounded girls risk being abandoned; in Afghanistan women are seen as a commodity to pay off debts or to settle disputes. Take the story of Malay, eight. An Afghan army vehicle ran over her arm and she was flown to the British field hospital at Camp Bastion where doctors explained to her uncle that she might have to have it amputated. He turned to leave. He no longer wanted his niece because without an arm she could never be married off.

Malay is still at the base, and her arm has been saved. "She is adorable. The staff love her and she has learned to say 'cheeky monkey'," said Lt Gill Pritchard, 25.

Two million widows

Across Afghanistan, the statistics make desperate reading for women. There are about two million widows with no rights or state support. Despite a new law passed recently that girls should not be married off until they are 16, it has made little difference. They are still forced into wedlock as young as nine, pregnant with the first of a dozen children within a few years, of which 20 per cent are likely to die before their fifth birthday.

Battling on

But while the women of Afghanistan are most certainly victimised, they are not victims. In Lashkar Gah, which is also known as Bost, Ms Olomi and her friends battle on despite endless death threats, either by phone or by the now-infamous night letters.

Norzia Mahboobsami, the head of the women's council, receives threatening telephone calls daily. "I simply tell them they have a wrong number," she explained matter of factly. Last year, Ms Olomi's driver dropped her off at the women's centre and then set off on another errand. He was shot through the car window as policemen stood by. Ms Olomi, who still carries his picture in her purse, was not

deterred and the centre reopened in the governor's compound.

Small Projects

Afghan women may have a ministry dedicated to their affairs, but so far as they are concerned it is making little difference outside Kabul. Women fall far below security and counter-narcotics when it comes to funding priorities. Yet with the few dollars that have reached them, small projects have sprung up. Among the British-funded schemes is a sewing school in the sprawling internally displaced camp at Mukhtar.

Squashed cheek by jowl in a couple of mud huts, widows work away at old-fashioned, hand-wound sewing machines, creating beautifully embroidered clothes to sell at market.

For an investment of £4,400 over three months, the British/Danish-funded project has trained the women. And graduates keep their machines, allowing them a revenue stream and a way to feed their children.

"It is just a drop in the ocean," said Capt Rebecca Moran, a trained midwife and British officer who has spent the past nine months working with the women of Helmand. "But when you think that each of the 60 women has 10 to 15 mouths to feed, you see the difference it makes."

By Terri Judd in Lashkar Gah

Published: 13 June 2007. More on: <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/asia/article2651049.ece>

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

The G8 at Heiligendamm, June 2007 - climate change

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called climate change the "defining issue of our era," and welcomed the agreement by the world's richest nations to address the threat as an "important first step. *Climate change was "the main reason I came here"*.

The agreement by G8 leaders on "strong and early action" to combat climate change, and to pursue related negotiations under UN auspices, is "only a first step – a beginning, not an end," the Secretary-General stated. Political will at the highest level is "desperately" needed now to make significant emissions reductions and to help countries adapt to climate change, Mr. Ban said. "On both, we will need leadership by the G8 countries."

Special high-level meeting

To facilitate further discussion on the issue, Mr. Ban announced he will convene a special high-level meeting in New York on climate change on 24 September, just ahead of the opening of this year's annual debate of Heads of State and Government.

Replacement of the Kyoto Protocol?

Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change Convention, welcomed the intention of leaders to conclude by 2009 negotiations on a replacement for the Convention's Kyoto Protocol, which contains legally binding targets for reducing emissions through 2012.

Japan, the host of next year's gathering, said it would again put Africa high on the summit agenda - promises made at Gleneagles in 2005 have so far not been met.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/offthecuff.asp?nid=1035>

Men and Women Share Cognitive Skills

Research debunks myths about cognitive difference

Are boys better at math? Are girls better at language? If fewer women than men work as scientists and engineers, is that aptitude or culture? Psychologists have gathered solid evidence that boys and girls or men and women differ in very few significant ways -- differences that would matter in school or at work -- in how, and how well, they think.

Conclusion

At the University of Wisconsin, Janet Shibley Hyde has compiled meta-analytical studies on this topic for more than 10 years. By using this approach, which aggregates research findings from many studies, Hyde has boiled down hundreds of enquiries into one simple conclusion: The sexes are more the same than they are different.

In a 2005 report, Hyde compiled meta-analyses on sex differences not only in cognition but also communication style, social or personality variables, motor behaviours and moral reasoning.

In half the studies, sex differences were small; in another third they were almost non-existent.

78 percent of reliable gender differences are small or close to zero.

What's more, most of the analyses addressed differences that were presumed to be reliable, as in math or verbal ability.

If males and females are truly understood to be very much the same, things might change in schools, colleges and universities, industry and the workplace in general.

Hyde is concerned about the costs of scientifically unsound gender stereotyping to individuals and to society as a whole. *American Psychological Association, January 18, 2006*

Sent to us by IAW Member Pat Richardson

HANDBOOK - NEWSLETTERS

Strategies to Eliminate Violence against Women

A Resource Manual, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy in cooperation with UNODC, the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (affiliated with the United Nations and the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, E/CN.15/1999/CRP.8.

While the above manual has been around since 1999, a new one is due out in 2007 called "Handbook for an Effective Law Enforcement Response to Violence against Women" A training guide for law enforcement and related service personnel, particularly in developing and post-conflict countries. Designed to be used in conjunction with an interactive training course, the Handbook provides extensive information about the issues associated with violence against women as well as the essential practices and policies of an effective law enforcement response in combating and preventing violence against women. On-line <http://www.icclr.law.ubc.ca/Publications/Reports/VAWMANUA.PDF>

Sent to us by IAW secretary Alison Brown

WEL-Informed, the Newsletter of Women's Electoral Lobby, Australia.

Website of IAW Affiliate WEL <http://www.wel.org.au/>

UNESCAP newsletter on the website: Housing the urban poor, people with disabilities, the Asian Highway etc. On: http://www.unescap.org/unis/What_s_Ahead/2007/07-Jun/Jun_07.asp

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@inter.nl.net>

International Women's News : Priscilla Todd (English)

<iaw.iwnnews@womenalliance.org>

: Michelle Duval (French)

<aifnfi@womenalliance.org>

Membership Officer

: Pat Richardson

<iaw.membership@womenalliance.org>

Treasurer

: Marieluise Weber

<iawtreas@womenalliance.org>