

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

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

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales
IAW NEWSLETTER – March 2006, nr. 2
Equal Rights



Dear IAW Members,

A delegation of the Alliance is at the moment attending the Commission on the Status of Women. We wish them all the best! The situation at the UN is not a walk through a rose coloured garden. The side-events IAW has been preparing together with other organisations are looking very interesting. We do hope to let you know more about the content in IWNNews and in the next electronic newsletter.

In the meantime Hélène Sackstein, convenor of the IAW Economic, Social and Cultural Commission, has delivered a written statement to the 62nd session Commission on Human Rights, and IAW member Soon-Young Yoon from the Health Commission submitted a report on Women and Tobacco.

We also direct your special attention to the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. A good outcome of this international conference on water is so important, for women and children in particular.

Special Announcement - IAW International and Board meeting

The April meeting of the Board of the International Alliance of Women and the International Meeting of Presidents of IAW Affiliates and Associates 2006, has been postponed.

It is now planned for Kuwait at the end of October 2006.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

50th Session 27 February – 10 March 2006

Resolutions

- * Measures taken and progress in gender mainstreaming
- * Proposals for a Multi-year Programme of Work for CSW 2007-2009
- * Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women
- * Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan
- * Release of women and children taken hostage
- * Economic Advancement for Women
- * Appointment of a special rapporteur on laws that discriminate against women
- * Joint Workplan DAW and UN Office of the UN High Commissioner For Human Right
- * UNIFEM
- * INSTRAW
- * Analysis of Education, Health and Work

Resolutions

On the resolution of **CSW 2007-2007**. Each year the Commission will **review** the progress in implementation in relation to the theme from two years before.

- * **2007** - The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

Review - Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding.

- * **2008** - Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Review - The equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels.

- * **2009** - The equal sharing of responsibilities between women, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS.

Review - The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

Question marks:

- * on the resolutions of Afghanistan and Palestine - should the Commission continue to accept resolutions of

situations at a **national level**?

* And on the resolution of the **special rapporteur** on laws that discriminate women - should the Commission and/or clarify the mandate of a new special rapporteur in order to avoid *duplication* with existing mechanisms? Comments of the United States, the Holy See, the EU, Mexico and New Zealand, but also of women's organisations like Equality Now, Centre for Women's Global Leadership and WEDO, are to be found on: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=32110>

Documents

CSW documents on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw50/documents.htm>

Conclusions and recommendations on:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/614/26/PDF/N0561426.pdf?OpenElement>

Parallel events on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/conf/seforms/dspUNcalendar.asp>

Press releases on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/50sess.htm#press>

THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN AT CSW

Each year the Alliance sponsors and co-sponsors workshops and discussions. This year they are:

Empowering Young Women in Politics through Mentoring Programmes

IAW / co-sponsored by: Austrian National Youth Council, Swiss National Youth Council Workshop

Women in Political Decision-making

IAW / co-sponsored by: All-India Women's Conference

Trafficking of Women and Girls, Especially in the Third World

International Federation of Women Lawyers / co-sponsored by: IAW

Voting Parity for Women: Recent Developments

International Federation of Women Lawyers / co-sponsored by: IAW

UN Special Rapporteurs: Mechanisms within the UN System that May Often Be Overlooked

International Federation of Women Lawyers / co-sponsored by: IAW

Muslim & Arab Women Speak Out

United States Federation for Middle East Peace / co-sponsored by: IAW

IAW AND THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Written Statement to the 62nd session Commission on Human Rights

Item 10 – Economic, Social and Cultural rights

The need for rights-based approaches to health

D-day for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is fast approaching and the MDGs are closely related to the national strategies to reduce poverty (PRSP). Less than 10 years remain for all governments to fulfil their development commitment.

Dr. Lee Jong-wook of WHO noted for the five-year review last year that 3 of the 8 goals, 8 of the 16 targets and 18 of the 48 indicators for the attainment of the MDGs relate directly to health. Health is also an important contributor to several other goals. The significance of the MDGs lies in the linkages among them and better health - in all its forms – makes a major contribution to the reduction of poverty.

Development goals as well as effective poverty reduction strategies provide a vision of development in which health and education are squarely at the centre.

No one can claim any longer that development is just about economic growth. However, an essential ingredient is glaringly absent: that is the urgent need to ensure that both outcomes and processes respect the **principles of universality, equality and non discrimination, participation and inclusion and accountability for all, including the private sector.** In short, a human rights based approach is absolutely crucial for the attainment of the MDGs and the reduction of poverty.

With regards to *the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, we call upon governments to:*

- Address health within a **broad developmental framework with equity, social cohesion, social protection, empowerment and participation of the poor, of women and youth in decisions which concern them directly.**

- **Strengthen public health systems.** According to the WHO, **universal access to broad-based health systems** would ensure attainment of 60% to 70% of the MDG goals related to child mortality and 60% to 80% of those related to maternal mortality.
- Support the establishment of **equitable health systems** as prerequisites to meet the goal related to **combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.** Health programmes focusing on specific conditions or diseases can only achieve full coverage and access –and promote equitable outcomes– if they contribute materially to strengthening health systems.
- Ensure that **earmarked health funding from private sources**, targeting short-term specific programmes such as immunization, **provide adequate funds for national public health systems** to ensure **sustainability** and to develop **independent mechanisms to monitor accountability.**
- Undertake concerted and urgent international action to **curb the drain of trained health professionals from poor countries** - where shortages are increasingly acute - to rich ones, in order to ensure the adequate delivery of quality health care and services in the countries of origin.
- Ensure that all development and poverty-reduction strategies are informed by an understanding of the disastrous consequences of **gender inequities** – such as early marriage, violence against women and girls, forced or unwanted sex, among others - which take an enormous socio-economic toll.
- Place **equity concerns at the centre of health strategies and policies.** National statistics can easily hide huge disparities between the health status of different population groups and the MDGs could conceivably be achieved without improving the health of the poorest and most vulnerable who are typically the most onerous to reach. Addressing this challenge requires a fair distribution of good quality health services which are too often concentrated in urban areas and serve a relatively better-off population.
Inequitable health systems could even be a cause of poverty if health care costs push the poor or near poor into destitution or if lack of access to care creates life-long disability, limiting earning power.
- Take into account of the impact of **environmental factors** on human health.
- Finally, address urgently the **10/90 health research gap whereby 90% of health research funding serves the disease burden of only of 10% of the world population.** Many of the inequities. in health research stem from biases on factors such as gender, ability to pay, race or social class There is massive under- investment for the needs of low- and middle- income countries as well as for poor and marginalised populations everywhere. Some areas are notoriously **under-funded** such as research on **appropriate retroviral drugs and dosage for children infected by HIV/AIDS**, research on **the social determinants of health, childhood obesity** and new forms of malnutrition, **non-communicable diseases caused by modern diets and lifestyles and mental health.**

This list is far from exhaustive but will hopefully provide an overview of the importance of human rights to ensure that development goals are met and poverty reduction strategies effective.

Hélène Sackstein on behalf of IAW, February 2006. She is the Convenor of the IAW Economic, Social and Cultural Commission.

IAW, Gender and Tobacco

A shadow report on gender and tobacco was submitted by the International Alliance of Women to the 34th session of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 16 January to 3 February, 2006 New York.

Bravo to Australia

Bravo to Australia which was the only government that submitted data on women and tobacco. In 2001, more Australian girls (16.2 percent) smoked than did boys (14.1 percent)
Countries reporting were: Cambodia, Eritrea, Macedonia, Togo, Australia, Mali, Thailand, and Venezuela. Passive smoke in these countries is a major issue where male rates of tobacco use are high such as in Cambodia (66.7 percent), Thailand (39.3 percent), Venezuela (37.4 percent) and Australia (21.1 percent). Smoking among girls is also rising in some countries.

For more information and copies of the Australian shadow report, contact IAW member Soon-Young Yoon at syngol@aol.com or read and download from the interesting website www.wrana.org.au

CARTOONS

"Reserve your right to think, for even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all."
(Hypatia (370-415) Egypt)

"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."
(Evelyn Beatrice Hall who wrote under the pseudonym of S.T. Tallentyre. Source: Wikipedia)

"The price of freedom of religion, or of speech, or of the press, is that we must put up with a good deal of rubbish." ([Robert H. Jackson](#), Associate Justice, United States Supreme Court 1941-1954 Wikipedia)

WORLD WATER FORUM - Mexico City March 16-22, 2006

Ministerial Conference

The Ministerial Conference will allow a dialogue between Ministers and stakeholders participating in the Forum, with the purpose of confirming the commitments acquired on water matters in international conferences, validating projects and actions that are carried out in this area, as well as in those where non-governmental stakeholders are involved, as well as local and national governments or international agencies and organizations. Information on <http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/home/home.asp?lan=>

Scuffles Over Water

There are many who predict that future wars will be over water supplies, but the wait won't be long for witnessing some intense skirmishes, expected in March at the 4th World Water Forum between those who favour and those who oppose privatisation of this essential resource.

Every day around the world 2000 to 5000 people die from causes related to water shortages or poor water quality, and one billion people do not have ready access to water. The investments needed to ensure universal access are huge, and although governments assume most of the costs, private sector participation in water services is growing exponentially.

The World Water Forum in Mexico is the fourth, following those held in Morocco (1997), Netherlands (2000) and Japan (2003). They are organised by the World Water Council, created in the mid-1990s by representatives from the business, academic, scientific communities and civil society.

Founders and Opposition

Among those founders are former officials from the World Bank and multinational corporate executives from the likes of France's Suez Group.

Their presence is an irritant to non-governmental organisations that are staunchly opposed to the idea of water being turned into a commodity of the private sector. These NGOs charge that the World Water Forum defends privatisation of this resource, and they lament that the event has become the main arena for global discussion of the issue since there is no specialised United Nations forum or treaty on water. There is currently no UN international convention dedicated to water, like those addressing the issues of climate change or biodiversity, for example.

The seventh MDG

Some 8,000 people from around the world will take part in the event, Mar. 16-22, at a luxurious convention centre in Mexico City, sponsored by commercial airlines, soft drink, beer and telephone companies.

The ultimate purpose, they say, is to halve the percentage of people who lack access to potable water worldwide by 2015. That aim is part of the seventh Millennium Development Goal, established by the UN in 2000, to "ensure environmental sustainability."

According to those who promote privatisation, only by putting a price on water and taking over water management from the "inefficient hands of state systems" can such an ambitious goal be achieved.

Read more on <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=31998>

Mexico City, Diego Cevallos, Feb. 1 (Tierramérica)

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND WATER

India - WATER - private sector participation and funding needed?

Finance Minister P Chidambaram today said India needed a large dose of private sector participation to fund the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"We need to develop indigenous private-public partnership (PPP) models to make progress. If panchayats become empowered, initiatives in rural India can be effective," Chidambaram said at the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS). "India would be able to fulfill two or three of the MDGs; however, in the case of water and related areas, private sector participation and funding was vital", he added.

More on: [http://www.business-](http://www.business-standard.com/common/storypage.php?storyflag=y&leftnm=lmnu2&leftindx=2&lselect=1&chklogin=N&auto=213819)

[standard.com/common/storypage.php?storyflag=y&leftnm=lmnu2&leftindx=2&lselect=1&chklogin=N&auto=213819](http://www.business-standard.com/common/storypage.php?storyflag=y&leftnm=lmnu2&leftindx=2&lselect=1&chklogin=N&auto=213819)

Drought en Desertification

New York, Feb 13 2006: The official celebrations of World Environmental Day will be held this year in Algiers, the first time ever in North Africa, to highlight the theme of Deserts and Desertification, the United Nations Environmental Programme has announced.

"Like many of its neighbouring countries, Algeria is plagued by soil erosion from over-grazing, and by drought and desertification," Chérif Rahmani, the Algerian Minister of Environment and honorary UN spokesman for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification said at a joint press conference with UNEP in Algiers. The UN General Assembly has designated the year 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, and, in keeping with tradition, UNEP has chosen the current year's theme for World Environment Day, observed annually on 5 June.

North Africa - urgency

"Human-induced land degradation now affects all continents and needs to be addressed urgently. It is appropriate that attention should focus on North Africa when we speak of the devastating effects of desertification," UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer said.

According to UNEP, desertification means loss of the land's biological productivity through human-induced factors and climate change. It affects one third of the earth's surface and over 1 billion people, with potentially devastating consequences in terms of social and economic costs, the agency said. **UNICEF.**

Children from Least Developed Countries may miss MDGs Benefits

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has warned that children in least developed countries were at risk of missing out of the benefits of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNICEF's latest report *The State of the World Children 2006* gave the warning, saying that more than one billion children suffer from one or more extreme forms of deprivation.

The deprivation include inadequate nutrition, safe drinking water, decent sanitation, education, health-care services, shelter and information.

Figures ...

The UNICEF report cited the 2004 MDG indicators as having showed that 4.3 million children, one out of every six live births, died before the age of five in the least developed countries.

Torn by strife and ravaged by HIV/AIDS

The statistics further indicated that under-five malnutrition and primary school enrolment show a widening gap in the health and education of children growing up in countries with lowest levels of development, torn by strife or ravaged by HIV/AIDS. "Without a concerted effort, children in these countries will become even more excluded over the next decade."

Sent by IAW member Anjana Basu

Globalisation

Globalisation is still something like seven blind men describing an elephant. Everyone has his own perception of the part of the elephant, which he touches and comes in contact with without having a full picture (C.M. Krishna).

Globalisation has different meanings in different context.

Some parts of the world see it as a process that can boost economies, improve living standards, reduce economic disparity and create more understanding by integrating different cultures under one roof-World.

Other parts of the world believe it is an instrument of destruction, making the least developing and developing countries economically weak.

Quoted from www.icgrd2006.org

UN - Feb 22 - Security Council - an Audit Report on Peacekeeping Operations

The 132-member Group of 77, which represents over two-thirds of the membership of the United Nations, rebuffed a U.S. claim that it has a right to virtually dictate the agenda on U.N. peacekeeping because it pays 27 percent of the budget.

Singling out the three major contributors to the budget, Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo of South Africa told reporters Wednesday that "just because United States, Japan and Germany pay more than 50 percent of the budget does not mean they have 50 percent of the voice at the United Nations".

Group of 77

"This is not a private corporation or a Fortune 500 company," he said. "They don't own class 'A' stock and the rest of us own only common stock. We are all assessed according to our ability to pay," said Kumalo, speaking in his capacity as chairman of the Group of 77.

Kumalo challenged the argument that the United States and Japan should have "a larger voice" because they pay "more money". Currently, the assessed contribution for the United States is 27 percent of the peacekeeping budget, for Japan 20 percent and for Germany 8.7 percent.

Several cases of fraud, corruption and mismanagement

On Wednesday, the 15-member Security Council, presided over by U.S. Ambassador John Bolton, held a rare meeting on a U.N. audit report on peacekeeping operations.

The audit highlighted several cases of fraud, corruption and mismanagement in its overseas missions. The Secretariat has temporarily suspended -- with full pay -- eight staffers who are currently under investigation. Despite protests by the Group of 77 that procurement and management were not within the purview of the Security Council, Bolton went ahead with a meeting of the Council arguing that U.S. taxpayers had the right to know how its money was being spent or misspent by the world body.

Read more on <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=32262>

UN - Human Rights Council - US isolated from its closest allies ?

The European Union gave its backing Wednesday night to a proposal to create a U.N. Human Rights Council, a move leaving the United States isolated from some of its closest allies in its opposition to the new body.

Opposition to the proposed council, which would replace the discredited U.N. Human Rights Commission, put the U.S. on a collision course with supporters including many U.N. member states, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, key human rights groups, a dozen Nobel peace laureates and now the European Union.

No abusers of human rights in the Council ?

The Human Rights Commission has been criticized for allowing some of the worst rights abusers to use their membership to protect one another from condemnation, or to criticize others. In recent years, commission members have included Sudan, Libya, Zimbabwe and Cuba.

The U.S. had lobbied for a permanent Human Rights Council of 30 members chosen primarily for their commitment to human rights by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. The U.S. believes that structure would help keep human rights abusers off the council.

Under the new proposal, the 53-member Human Rights Commission would be replaced by a 47-member Human Rights Council that would be elected by a majority of all the 191 members of the General Assembly, presumably making it easier for rights offenders to be elected to membership.

General Assembly President Eliasson said he is still hoping to unite all member states behind a resolution that would establish the new council before the commission meets in Geneva on March 13.

By Edith Lederer, The Associated Press, Wednesday, March 1, 2006

EVENTS - CONFERENCES - SPECIAL DAYS - APPOINTMENTS

First Euro-Mediterranean Conference

Cadi Ayyad University (Marrakech, Morocco) and the University of Foggia (Italy) have been organizing the first Euro-Mediterranean Conference on 'Women in the Euro-Mediterranean Context, on July 5-6-7, 2006 in Marrakech, the imperial city for so long considered a gem of Morocco.

The University of Foggia and the University of Marrakech have recently promoted and organized two international joint master degrees on gender issues. Both Higher Education Institutions aim to investigate topics and set up a solid network of Universities, NGOs, Associations dealing with women's dialogue and culture. During the international conference, experts and scholars will focus on different subjects within each session. Please apply to: Rita Saraò (mrs), Head, <r.sarao@unifg.it> **Also on:** www.unifg.it

Appointments

* Radhika Coomaraswamy of Sri Lanka was appointed the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Armed Conflict on 7 February 2006.

* Rosalyn Higgins of the United Kingdom was elected President of the International Court of Justice on 6 February 2006...

UN-HABITAT, 31 January 2006

The head of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Executive Director Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, is urging governments to enact new legislation to guarantee that women have equal access to housing. On http://www.unhabitat.org/women_empowerment.asp

On World Cancer Day, 3 February 2006

The most frequent cancers and their causes; quick facts about prevention and WHO's Strategy for prevention

and control of cancer can be found on the WHO page, WHO Fact Sheet No. 297.
Related links are Cancer Control Strategy www.who.int/cancer/en/index.html and WHO FCTC
www.who.int/tobacco/en/
Preventing Chronic Diseases: a vital investment, www.who.int/chp/chronic_disease_report/en/index.html

China, New Rules on Aids

For the first time, China has announced new rules to control and prevent the spread of AIDS. The laws, which are set to take effect on the first of March, will also ban discrimination against AIDS sufferers and require regional authorities to provide free testing and treatment. International experts say the regulations are promising for sufferers, their families and the medical profession.

International Days

- * International Day for the Elimination of Racial discrimination (21 March)
- * World Day for Water (22 March)
- * World Meteorological Day (23 March)
- * World TB Day (24 March)
- * United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012)
- * International Decade for Action: Water for Life (2005-2015)
- * International Year of Deserts and Desertification (2006)

International Women's Day, Bangkok - Task Force on Gender

International Women's Day 2006 will be observed on 8 March in Bangkok at the [UN Conference Centre](#) with a programme organized by the International Women's Day Task Force on Gender under the theme 'Women in decision-making.' The observance will include a keynote panel presentation on 'Women and Decision-making: Challenges and Opportunities,' a theatrical performance on women's issues by a local theatre group, and an exhibition.

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.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash	: Joke Sebus	<iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>
International Women's News	: Priscilla Todd	<iaw.iwnews@toddsec.com>
Membership Officer	: Pat Richardson	<iaw.membership@tsn.cc>
Treasurer	: Marieluise Weber	<marieluise.weber@web.de>