

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER March 2010, no. 3



Equal Rights

Dear members,

The weak political 'Declaration', adopted on the first day of CSW, was a delusion for women's rights activists by the total absence of new and forward looking commitments on the part of governments and the UN to the agenda of Beijing. At the end seven important resolutions were adopted.

IAW did very well at the side events ... and thank you dearest Kay, for what you have done for women's rights and for IAW in all those years!

In this newsletter articles on women's leadership. Some ups with a third of all legislative seats in India and a new law on gender quotas for companies in Iceland. Some downs too like an all-male UN Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing!

Gender based violence is another subject we have to focus on and ring the bell whenever possible - on the arms trade, sexual assault, trafficking, but also on an action against gun violence and with 'Women who strike back'. There are problems with primary education in Africa; there will be a conference on global health in Australia and an EU photo competition for young women; small grants; important links, hearings for the MDGs Summit etc.

Please read the letter from IAW president Rosy Weiss inviting you to come to Congress in South Africa!

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Resolutions adopted

On March 12 2010 the CSW adopted seven resolutions relating to:

- * Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS (after a lot of discussion)
- * Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts
- * The situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (31 against 2)
- * Women's economic empowerment (after a lot of discussion)
- * Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women
- * Strengthening institutional arrangement of the UN support of gender equality and the empowerment of women by consolidating the four existing offices into a composite entity
- * Ending female genital mutilation

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the last day of the CSW

On the closing day of the 54th session of the CSW Secretary of State (US Minister of Foreign Affairs) Hillary Clinton addressed the CSW with an inspiring speech.

She recalled her 'maiden' speech at the NGO Forum in Huairou on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995. That was an important event for herself, as first lady then.

She inspired by underwriting the, then fresh, acknowledgement of women's rights as human rights and human rights as women's rights.

Fifteen years later, Clinton is not satisfied with the progress made. She called for recommitment as individuals, as nations and as United Nations to the principle of equal rights and opportunities for all women and girls on the globe. *"It is the right thing to do and it is smart to do so, women's progress is human progress and human progress is women's progress."*

Four commitments on behalf of the US

She ended with sharing four commitments on behalf of the Obama administration.

- * First of all US ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This was met with applause from the floor, above all from US civil society representatives.

- * Second support to the establishment of a single, vibrant UN agency dedicated to women's issues with strong leadership who will sit at the table of the Secretary General.
- * Thirdly, support to strategies to promote more women in positions of leadership.
- * And fourthly, the promise that the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action not only hold a promise to women in developing countries but hold a promise to women in all countries, including the US.

Hillary Clinton's speech was an important energizer for CSW attendants, in particular women's rights activists, who got frustrated and disillusioned by the total absence of new and forward looking commitments on the part of governments and the UN at large to the agenda of Beijing.

She concluded: *"In every country talent is universal, but opportunity is not. Let's go forward and be reenergized in this work."*

From a blog by Ireen Dubel, Hivos, on: <http://womeninnewyork.blogspot.com/>

CSW - European Youth Forum highlights its concern regarding the weak political declaration

"The outcome document of the CSW's 54th session fails to strengthen the commitments undertaken in Beijing. The fact that effective implementation is still not achieved in key areas of life for young women, such as education and training and sexual and reproductive health and rights, will certainly not be contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals", said Tine Radinja, President of the European Youth Forum. Website: www.icyo-india.org
More on: <http://www.euro.who.int/parma2010>.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Letter from IAW President Rosy Weiss

Dear members!

Starting the year 2010 also means getting ready for the next important IAW gathering: our 35th World Congress, scheduled for 23 to 27 November in South Africa. The venue chosen by our hostess, the Mmabatho Foundation for Women's Development, is the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg, near Johannesburg's airport Tambo (JNB). Visit this excellent hotel and conference centre at <http://www.birchwood.co.za>. I hope that once again we will be all together in one single venue. Thanks to Secretary General Lene Pind, all of you already received the first call to Congress sent December 4, 2009 in English and French. That mail also contained a list of positions to be filled by elected in November. Please consult this list carefully and come up with excellent candidates for the vacancies.

Lene Pind also asks you to kindly forward your organizational reports to jawsec@womenalliance.org by October 15, 2010 at the latest. She intends once again to issue the reports in the form of a printed booklet as she did last year in Switzerland.

The programme of the Congress, prepared in cooperation with our South African sisters, emphasises their priorities and addresses their needs as well as the necessities of an IAW Triennial Congress. Commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Mmabatho Foundation is preparing a national event in the form of an inter-generational dialogue on gender, race, culture and religion to which we have invited Ms Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, as keynote speaker. Other topics to be discussed during Congress will be trafficking, the impact of conflict and war as well as the impact of small arms on women, the role of women in conflict resolution, women's access to justice, the economic and financial crisis and its impact on women, the role of cooperatives, the impact of climate change on rural women.

An international cultural evening featuring the different cultures present under the title "one human rights/one human race" and a Congress dinner, which will be addressed by the Deputy Minister of Public Works. Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, a children's right and disability activist to complete the interesting and attractive programme.

Recognising the need for the Alliance to become a stronger, more cohesive body which encourages the direct involvement of many more of its members, the International Meeting in 2009 appointed a Taskforce to plan how this might be done. The Taskforce plans to introduce a series of steps over the coming months to involve as many members as possible and to enable all of you attending Congress

2010 to arrive in South Africa with ideas and recommendations from your organisations and colleagues that can be shared and lead to commitments for firm action and events commencing in 2011.

I do hope to see as many of you as possible there – officers and members of member organisations, individual members, officers of the Alliance, interested guests... Look out for more information and details in your mail box, in the coming issues of our International Women's News and on the website. With kind regards

Rosy Weiss, President

Iceland – a new law on gender quotas in companies

Halldóra Traustadóttir the Icelandic Women's Rights Association writes us:

“The bill was passed on March 8, and applies to all limited companies, whether they are private or public. It states that all company boards should be composed of both women and men, at least 40% of each gender. In boards composed of 3 persons, each gender should have its representative.

The law will come into compliance September 1st in 2013.

Additionally I can inform you that regarding gender equality in Iceland, we are lacking mostly within the political and economic sphere of society.

Lately, the political empowerment of women has been on the rise: 43% of the Parliamentarians are women, there is equal gender ratio in the government, and the head of state (prime-minister) is a woman. The same cannot be said about the financial and business sector. This new law is therefore a very important step to making women's opportunities in Iceland equal to those of men.

Editor's note: congratulations members of the Icelandic Women's Rights, good work!

AROUND THE WORLD

Poor governance jeopardises primary education in Africa

A decade ago, the structure of primary school administration in Africa started to change from a centralised bureaucracy to a more decentralised management approach. The aim was to bring education closer to the ‘user’, and to give citizens at the local level -particularly parents- a greater stake in management. The change coincided with the [Education for All](#) target of achieving 100 per cent enrolment of school-age children by 2015. The goal of Transparency International's (TI) [Africa Education Watch programme](#) is to assess whether these new management systems are effective, whether they control corruption and are accountable to their constituents.

Seven countries

To do this, 8,500 parents, head teachers, heads of Parent Teacher Associations and district education officers were surveyed in seven countries: Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

[Africa Education Watch: Good governance lessons for primary education](#) brings together the findings from this research. The report identifies where the transfer of funds and supplies from central governments to schools can be diverted. It shows that most schools do not keep complete or even basic information about school finances, and that overall head teachers and those responsible for managing school budgets lack training in financial management.

Primary education free of charge?

In most African countries, and in all that were surveyed by TI, primary education is supposed to be provided free of charge. This has accounted for the steady rise in enrolment. Unfortunately, as the report shows, parents who can ill-afford it are often faced with illegal fees. Overall 44 per cent of those surveyed said they had paid fees. *Read more on:*

http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2010/african_education_watch

UN DPI/NGO's Conference in Melbourne, Australia on global health

Each year this Conference brings together hundreds of non-governmental organization representatives from around the world to focus on a topic of interest related to the work of civil society and non-governmental organizations in collaboration with the United Nations. The 2009 Conference took place in Mexico City and focused on disarmament.

The 2010 Conference will focus on global health as it relates to the Millennium Development Goals. Some of the key issues addressed by the Millennium Development Goals include Goal 4, reducing child mortality; Goal 5, improving maternal health; and Goal 6, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and

other diseases. From 30 August to 1 September 2010.
More on: <http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/index.asp>

Open Letter to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon - 9 March 2010, supported by IAW

His Excellency Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon,

We, the signatories of this letter, write to you to express our disappointment in your recent nomination of an all-male High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing. This appointment made during CSW-54, which also marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, is of great concern to gender equality advocates everywhere.

Yesterday, women and men around the world celebrated advancements towards securing women's rights and gender equality on International Women's Day. Unfortunately, while activism, advocacy, research, policies, budgets and programmes have contributed to progress in gender equality, there is much work yet to do. Women still make up the poorest of the poor, have unequal access to land, loans, education and resources, and are underrepresented in decision-making bodies.

The appointment of nineteen men to the new High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing proves this point.

While we applaud your initiative in establishing such an esteemed group of advisors to address climate change finance - surely one of the most critical issues of our time, we are deeply concerned that the panel neglects to include even a single woman. The panel is representative of North and South, industrialized and developing, public and private; but it is not representative of women and men.

You have highlighted the importance of women's participation at all levels of climate change decision-making throughout your tenure as Secretary-General. We urge you now to match your actions to your words by appointing qualified women to the High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing now.

The undersigned organizations respectfully and urgently request your appointment of an equitable representation of women and men on your crucial High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing. The second page is a suggested nomination list.

By Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

Mailed to us by IAW member Irini Nike Sarlis

A third of all legislative seats in India for women.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was ready to consult all parties for a consensus on the Women's Reservation Bill before it is tabled in the Lok Sabha, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Thursday.

"There is no harm in calling an all party meeting. The prime minister has pointed out that we can consult all parties (to arrive at a consensus) and for exploring ideas and possibilities to narrow down the differences," said Mukherjee, the leader of the house.

A third of all legislative seats in India for women

He was replying to a short discussion in the Lok Sabha over the government's flagship bill that seeks to reserve a third of all legislative seats in India for women.

The bill, which is vociferously opposed by the parties with mass base mainly in north India, was cleared by the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. It is expected to be introduced in the Lok Sabha in coming days. The legislation has led to frequent disruptions of the two houses of Parliament. On Thursday as well, both houses were adjourned amid uproar over the bill.

On: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Signs-of-resolution-over-impasse-on-womens-bill/articleshow/5671071.cms>

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

“women strike back” - on October 25th 2010, in Reykjavik, Iceland

It was with force unknown in Icelandic history that Icelandic women started the United Nation's women's decade in 1975. After 1975 and 2005 the women of Iceland have decided that it is now time to write a new chapter in the history of equality and we invite you to join us!

This time we will focus on gender based violence. We will have an international conference on Oct. 24th, and then a demonstration on Oct. 25th. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women Ms. Rashida Manjoo has accepted our invitation to be our guest of honour. We want to focus on the Justice system. How badly it is designed to protect women's rights. We demand that survivors of violence will be taken seriously by the Justice system and will discuss what needs to be done. The legislation has been improved, but we need implementation and action.

Women let's join forces and change the world, we can do it!

On behalf of Stigamot and the Icelandic Women's Rights Association and 15 other NGO's in Iceland Guðrún Jónsdóttir. Please visit the website at : www.kvennafri.is for particulars.

Rape to become gender-neutral, to be replaced by 'sexual assault'

NEW DELHI: The government has decided to amend the Indian Penal Code (IPC), replacing the word "rape" with "sexual assault" in the existing law in order to broaden the ambit of crimes covered under the sections and make the provisions gender neutral.

Making sexual assault "gender neutral" will imply that the relevant sections of IPC can be slapped on the accused of any gender who has committed the crime.

As per Section 375 of IPC, penetration is sufficient to constitute sexual intercourse necessary to the offence of rape but with the proposed replacements coming in, sexual assault will also cover crimes like sodomy, fingering, insertion of foreign object and other similar offences which do not come under the present definition of rape. The move is seen as a way to harmonise the provisions of law to prevent sexual crimes among homosexuals as well.

Numbers are rising

On an average, about 191 women every day were either victims of rape, sexual harassment or molestation in three years from 2006. The figures show that a total of 61,552 cases of rape were registered during 2006-2008 in the country.

While 19,348 cases were registered in 2006, the number rose to 20,737 in 2007 and to 21,467 in 2008.

More on: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/5687643.cms?prtpage=1>

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence 12-14 July 2010

The Vienna conference of NGOs campaigning on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in February 2010, attended by representatives from over 60 NGOs most of whom are IANSA members, agreed to expand and further develop the campaign.

Conclusions, briefings and planning notices are being prepared to send to the network, including the idea of promoting "the People's Treaty" i.e. that the ATT must save lives and protect people worldwide by preventing the irresponsible arms trade.

The Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate global civil society's support for a strong and ethically principled Arms Trade Treaty before the first UN PrepCom 12-24 July 2010.

More on: www.iansa.org/WoA2010.htm

End Violence against Women – virtual knowledge by UNIFEM

UNIFEM has launched a [Global Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls](http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1044). The web-based site brings together lessons learned to date and recommended practices gleaned from initiatives on ending violence against women and girls, whether originating from the women's movement, civil society organizations, governments, the United Nations system or other actors.

The Global Virtual Knowledge Centre was presented on 4 March at the [Commission on the Status of Women](http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1044) and co-hosted by UNIFEM and the Government of Spain. In English, French and Spanish.

More on: http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1044

SMALL GRANTS - COMPETITION - HEARING - LINKS

UN.GIFT Small Grants Facility – Call for Project Proposals 2010

The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) Small Grants Facility is now accepting applications for the Call for Project Proposals. UN.GIFT invites non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations working on counter-trafficking issues around the world to submit their project proposals.

Project activities eligible for funding include:

1. Direct victim support
2. Empowerment of vulnerable groups and communities
3. Cooperation between non-governmental organizations from countries of origin and destination
4. Collection of evidence-based knowledge

Through the Call for Proposals, a total amount of USD500,000 will be disbursed to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Size of the grants: Minimum amount: USD30,000 – Maximum amount: USD50,000

The Call for Proposals will close after the first 300 applications have been received or on 5 April 2010, whichever comes first. Selected organizations will be notified and summaries of their project proposals will be published on the UN.GIFT website.

For more information on the Call for Proposals, please consult the guidelines.

European Women's Lobby photo competition – deadline 30 June 2010

On its 20th anniversary celebrations, the European Women's Lobby is pleased to announce the launch of a photo competition looking to expose the visions of young women of the world they live in. The competition seeks images that make a creative and powerful statement on the theme of '21st Century Feminism'. Have a look at: <http://www.womenlobby.org/site/hp.asp> and send your photos before 30 June 2010 to ewl@womenlobby.org.

Mailed to us by IAW member Marion Boeker

Hearings 14-15 June 2010 for the MDG Summit

UN Member States will again come together this September in New York for an 'MDG summit' (High-level Plenary Meeting), with the primary objective of accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, taking into account the progress made towards the internationally agreed development goals.

As a part of the process leading to the summit, the General Assembly will also convene 'Hearings' with representatives of civil society and the private sector from 14-15 June. The outcomes of these hearings will be integrated into discussions at the summit and the outcome document.

More on: www.un-ngls.org/mdg2010

In Focus in ECOSOC

[Commission on Population and Development, 43rd Session, New York \(12 - 16 April 2010\)](#)

[Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 9th Session, New York \(19 - 30 April 2010\)](#)

[UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 18th Session, New York \(3 - 14 May 2010\)](#)

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.

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