

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER - May nr. 5



Equal Rights

Dear IAW members,

The main three items in this newsletter are: news about the UN,, a lot of reports to read for the Millennium Development Goals and the latest news about IAW. A list with books, projects, funds etc. are as usual at the end of the newsletter.

Heartfelt congratulations to IAW Affiliate, the Kuwaiti Union for Women's Associations, and to all Kuwaiti women who, after years of perseverance, will be able to vote and stand for office in 2007. The IAW Health Commission is attending the 58th World Health Assembly: we wish them all the best. There is more to tell about IAW because we have some very active members. For the month of June we are preparing 'special Flashes' about 'special issues'.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Surprise measure gives Kuwaiti women the vote

Kuwait's Parliament granted full political rights to women, making way for them to both vote in and contest parliamentary and local elections for the first time in the country's history.

The surprise amendment to Kuwait's election law on May 18th ended a decades-long struggle by women's rights campaigners for full suffrage and promised to redefine the city-state's political landscape.

Kuwait's Legislature met Monday to discuss legislation introduced two weeks ago to allow women to run in city council elections. But in a surprise move, members of the cabinet opened the session by proposing a complete amendment of the country's election law, which had permitted only men to take part in the country's Parliament.

Order for urgency

The government also invoked a rarely used "order for urgency" to push through the legislation in one session, despite heated debate by Islamist members.

By Monday evening, legislators had passed an amendment that removed the word "men" from Article 1 of the elections law, with 35 voting in favour and 23 against. But Islamist legislators, apparently trying to appease their conservative voting base, included a requirement that "females abide by Islamic law". The implications of that clause were not immediately clear, though women's advocates were saying it might just mean separate polling places for men and women.

In 2007

The vote came just two weeks after the Parliament had thwarted a measure to allow women to take part in city council elections. The prime minister, Sheik Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah has been under growing pressure to allow women's suffrage and is believed to have forced the measure through before a planned trip to Washington. He is widely expected to appoint a woman as minister of health in coming weeks.

Although women can now stand in all elections, the legislation comes too late for them to contest the council elections next month. They will be able to stand for any office for the first time in 2007 for parliamentary elections. By Hassan M. Fattah, New York Times

Congratulations! The Kuwaiti women have persevered and done a great job!

Read more on <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/05/17/news/kuwait.php>

The Inter-Parliamentary Union gives an overview of all women, worldwide, in Parliaments on <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>

NGOs comment on the Report of the UN Secretary General

"In larger Freedom: towards freedom, security and human rights for all"

The report, an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, can be downloaded from <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/contents.htm>

Comments of the *International Alliance of Women and of the Netherlands Association of Women's Interests* are to be found on <http://www.un-ngls.org/sg-report-NGOs-comment.htm>

Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly

Members of the IAW Health Commission have been attending the 58th World Health Assembly at Geneva, May 1-26, 2005. We received from convenor Gudrun Haupter the following (draft) statement to agenda item 13.18 Ministerial Summit on Health Research. We are giving here the highlights.

IAW statement

* The International Alliance, IAW, notes with **concern that only about 4 percent or 4.3 billion US \$ of global funding for health research are currently spent in middle- and low-income countries**. As many inequities in health stem from biases related to gender, ability to pay, race or social class, the IAW, in a resolution on Health Research adopted in 2004 urges the international community and governments to establish policies enhancing sex- and gender-sensitive research and demands that health research be action-oriented, cross-sectoral and address the socio- economic determinants of health.

* With a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goal 5 Improve Maternal Health we therefore call upon governments and civil society to **better research and address socio-economic determinants of both maternal mortality and maternal morbidity**.

To reach a large segment of the population, especially teenager, young women and men, research may be needed on which other local settings – e.g. youth health clubs, youth health centres with peer educators, training of peer messengers – are likely to encourage responsible behaviour and improve reproductive and sexual health.

* From a health point of view the focus of Goal 3, Gender Equality and Empowerment, needs to be broadened to **address critical aspects of women's and girls lives and the range of inequalities they experience**.

* With a view to goal 6 we **urge district level research into the best and most effective ways of how to better link the fight against HIV/AIDS including preventive measures to reproductive health services**.

* Some areas of vital importance for women and girls – directly or indirectly – are notoriously under-funded such as research on **appropriate ARV drugs and dosage for infected children; on childhood obesity** and on new forms of malnutrition; on non communicable diseases caused by modern diets and lifestyle, and of course, on mental illness. Unfortunately, this list is far from exhaustive.

Gudrun Haupter, convenor IAW Health commission, May 2005

News from IAW Affiliate ADDEM in the Dominican Republic

A year ago IAW was alarmed by the devastating floods in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti, but our IAW members were safe, and ADDEM immediately offered help for people in the flooded areas. Months later the people of Haiti were confronted with internal conflicts and violence. The situation is much better now. The UN did the following:

Resolution 1325

Resolution 1325 is quoted in the preamble of Security Council Resolution 1542 of 30 April 2004, establishing the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), with a view to support the transitional government in its endeavours to reinstall property rights, education, environmental protection and infrastructure, e.g. the road towards lasting peace in the country.

In operational para. 9 Resolution 1542 in particular stresses the importance of humanitarian assistance to women and children.

ECOSOC has reactivated its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and has conducted a fact-finding mission very recently. There are the Military or Civilian Police Groups of the UN Security Council, the ECOSOC Advisory Group and the International Donors Conference on Haiti, Washington, D.C., 19/20 July 2004.

Empowering Haitian women

In all this IAW is very interested in the empowerment of Haitian women to get involved in the preparations and in the voting during the elections planned for spring 2006 and also in the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security assistance.

In this resolution, for the first time, the UN Security Council stresses the importance of women's contribution at the peace negotiations table!

ADDEM

In the meantime ADDEM - Alliance for the Rights and Development of Women and the Family, Dominican Republic, went steadily on with their social work for women and girls. We salute them!
See also http://www.familycareintl.org/countries/pl_LA_Dominican-Republic.php

FAWCETT in the News

Fawcett presents the UK's campaign for equality between women and men. Their vision is of a society in which women and men are equal partners in the home, at work, and in public life. They are wonderful campaigners, also during election time ! See: <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk>.

Placements

Fawcett is a not-for-profit organisation, which relies on members and donors to fund its work. It has a range of intern and work experience placements on offer for the spring and summer 2005, starting in April and May. Most of their policy projects as well as their fundraising and events team need support over the next months, offering opportunities to assist with event planning and delivery, research, contacts management, communications, supporter services and sales. Available placements and the application pack are available on <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Volunteer.htm>

Fawcett Commission on Women and the Criminal Justice System

At the end of March Fawcett held their One Year Review to see what had been done since 12 months ago when their commission concluded that women were suffering from a "man-made criminal justice system". Reports included coverage in: Metro newspaper, Sky News, BBC Online:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4373253.stm> and The Observer
http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,6903,1441798,00.html

Pensions

The joint report with Age Concern showed the way forward for women pensioners - and told the parties that half of the nine million women voters over 55 would cast their vote according to who had the best pensions policy. There was lots of broadcast coverage, including ITN news, BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio Five Live and interviews on lots of local BBC stations. Press articles included pieces in the Sunday Express and The Guardian: http://money.guardian.co.uk/news_/story/0,1466529,00.html

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Task Force Reports

The detailed analysis and recommendations the UN Millennium Project Task Forces are presented in a series of in-depth reports on <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/reports2.htm#01>.

To download any of the Task Force reports, please select the appropriate link below.

[Task Force on Hunger](#)

Halving hunger: it can be done

[Task Force on Education and Gender Equality](#)

Toward universal primary education: investments, incentives, and institutions

[Task Force on Education and Gender Equality](#)

Taking action: achieving gender equality and empowering women

[Task Force on Child Health and Maternal Health](#)

Who's got the power? Transforming health systems for women and children

[Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, and Access to Essential Medicines, Working Group on HIV/AIDS](#)

Combating AIDS in the developing world

[Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, and Access to Essential Medicines, Working Group on Malaria](#)

Coming to grips with malaria in the new millennium

[Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, and Access to Essential Medicines, Working Group on TB](#)

Investing in strategies to reverse the global incidence of TB

[Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, and Access to Essential Medicines, Working Group on Access to Essential Medicines](#)

Prescription for healthy development: increasing access to medicines

[Task Force on Environmental Sustainability](#)

Environment and human well-being: a practical strategy

[Task Force on Water and Sanitation](#)

Health, dignity, and development: what will it take?

[Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers](#)

A home in the city

[Task Force on Trade](#)

Trade for development

[Task Force on Science, Technology and Innovation](#)

Innovation: applying knowledge in development

MDGs - UN West Asia conference

The annual session of the United Nations Regional Commission for Western Asia wrapped up today in the Syrian capital of Damascus with delegates adopting a declaration on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and deciding to prepare studies on improving national technological capacities, and on enhancing management of integrated water resources in the region.

ESCWA – gender equity issues

Participants at the twenty-third *Ministerial Session* of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), which opened Monday, adopted the "Damascus Declaration" on pressing ahead with efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals to reduce or eliminate a host of socio-economic ills by 2015. They also approved a decision demanding that member countries adopt policies that take into account gender equity issues, calling for the establishment of national strategies to empower women and institutional frameworks for their implementation with the purpose of integrating women's issues in political activities and programmes. May 12th 2005, on <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=14266&Cr=arab&Cr1=development>

International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs, Pakistan

The International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the Millennium Development Goals was held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 28-30 March 2005 and was organized by “**All Pakistan Women’s Association (APWA)**”, an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC and the UN-NGO-IRENE/Pakistan Coordinator with the extensive support of UN-NGO-IRENE/NGO Section. The International Conference was initiated by APWA to review worldwide progress made so far in achieving gender equality with and through the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

During the three day Conference, participants from 22 countries representing Governments, UN, NGOs, the private sector, academia, and civil society engaged in comprehensive and fruitful deliberations, ultimately submitting guidelines for action, comprehensive best-practices and recommendations for the way forward to achieve gender equality and the MDGs.

These proposals were finally reviewed by a Drafting Committee and incorporated into the “Islamabad Plan of Action: For Achieving Gender Equality, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, Five-Year Plan (2005-2010)” which was adopted by all participants and will be submitted by APWA on behalf of the participants to the 2005 HLS of ECOSOC. Read more on <http://www.pakconference2005.com/aboutconf.html>

NEWS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

US hawks put Annan's job on the line

The United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, is fighting for his job in the face of an increasing campaign by Republican congressmen who have launched a series of investigations into the Iraqi oil-for-food scandal.

Mr Annan is facing three separate congressional investigations into oil-for-food and a UN security council source said a further four are pending. George Bush's Republican party is hostile towards the UN in general but Mr Annan in particular, especially after he last year declared that the war in Iraq was illegal. Senator Norm Coleman, the Republican senator whose committee yesterday published a report naming George Galloway, the MP for the anti-war Respect party, and Charles Pasqua, the former French minister, in connection with oil-for-food, has called on Mr Annan to resign.

To withhold funding?

Mr Coleman also hinted that the US could withhold its funding, which he said amounted to about 22% of the UN's total budget. Mr Annan, who was badly undermined by revelations that his son Kojo was paid by a company that secured a lucrative UN contract for Iraq, is refusing to resign.

Retirement in December 2006

He is due to retire in December 2006. If Mr Annan does not resign before then, the US will try to ensure that the next appointee, who is due to be chosen from Asia, will be in the American camp. *Ewen MacAskill, Diplomatic Editor, the Guardian Friday May 13, 2005 turned around*

UN, Under-funded and Over-managed?

19 May – Reminding a United States House of Representatives committee that the UN has undergone more reform under Secretary-General Kofi Annan than under any of his predecessors, his Chief of Staff, Malloch Brown, today said the UN is under-funded and over-managed.

Listing cases of under-funding, he said the UN was operating 18 peacekeeping missions, with 67,000 uniformed personnel, on a budget of \$4.5 billion; that is less than 0.5 per cent of the world's military spending "and means a unit cost for peacekeeping that is a fraction of that spent by the US and UK in comparable operations".

More on <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=14331&Cr=UN&Cr1=reform>

UN - disaster reduction – the Tsunami – early warning system

Joint Asian-African Leader's Statement on Tsunami, Earthquake and Other Natural Disasters

During the recent *Asian-African summit* held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 22-23 April 2005, Heads of State and of Governments of Asian and African countries emphasized the urgent need to invest in the development of proactive, integrated, multi-hazard and multi-sectoral standby arrangements and early warning system to mitigate natural disasters in the Indian Ocean Rim.

Multi dollar project

Special conferences are underway to plan and determine how the tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean should be most effectively organized, supported by a multi dollar project coordinated by ISDR/PPEW.

For the Indian Ocean region, a new project proposed by ISDR-PPEW titled "Evaluation and Strengthening of Early Warning Systems in Countries Affected by the 26 December 2004 Tsunami in South East and South Asia" is facilitating the first steps toward a tsunami early warning system. This multi million dollar project involves close collaboration with the UN's tsunami authorities, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), and other UN and regional partners. On <http://www.unisdr.org/ppew/tsunami/ppew-tsunami.htm> Millennium

AROUND THE WORLD

EU - Health - Chemical Regulation

REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) is the EU's draft chemicals regulation, currently under discussion in the European Parliament and Council.

Humans in Europe are exposed to synthetic chemicals everywhere on a daily basis: in the shower, in front of the computer, in the kitchen and in the workplace. This exposure takes place without our knowledge or consent. Many of these chemicals pose a threat to human health on the basis of their intrinsic properties. Many such chemicals do not break down in the body and accumulate in human body fat. They might be carcinogens, some of them have the ability to alter our DNA (mutagenic chemicals), or they are toxic to reproduction. Again others interfere and disrupt with the hormone system of animals and humans. Many such chemicals do not break down in the body and accumulate in human body fat and in the environment.

Man-made chemicals in the body

To date, up to 300 man-made chemicals have been detected in the human body. These chemicals accumulate over a life time and then are passed on by each generation, directly from mother to child. Alarmingly, of the 100.000 chemicals on the European market, the vast majority have very little information on their health and environmental effects.

Editorial comment

I could not find this article on the Reach website <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/reach/>

IAW members who are interested in the whole article can mail me at: <iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>

Somalia - deforestation

Among UN list of '10 Stories the World Should Hear More About' 3 May 2005 – Does deforestation improve or worsen human health? What exactly has happened in Somalia since Hollywood released a film called "Black Hawk Down?" How can farmers living at the mercy of

middle men far from urban centres in Africa, Asia, or Latin America learn how much their produce is worth in distant markets?

These are among the questions members of the public might ask and which are answered by what the head of the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI), Shashi Tharoor, presented today, on [World Press Freedom Day](#), as "[Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About](#)."

Read more on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=14156&Cr=xxx&Cr1=>

Central Asian countries launch AIDS project with help from UN, World Bank

12 May 2005 – Four Central Asian countries which have suffered a dramatic increase in HIV infection rates in recent years today launched a nearly \$27 million project to lessen the human and economic impact of the pandemic, the World Bank said.

Officially reported cases in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the members of the Central Asia Cooperation Organization (CACO), jumped from about 500 in 2000 to over 12,000 last year, it said.

At a project launch workshop, whose organizers included the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the *World Bank*, representatives of the four countries signed agreements for a \$25 million grant from the Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and a 1 million pound sterling grant from the Department for International Development (DfID) in the United Kingdom. The project has three components: regional coordination, policy development and capacity strengthening; the Central Asia AIDS Fund to contain the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs); and project management, monitoring and evaluation, the Bank said.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=14267&Cr=hiv&Cr1=aids>

Bonded Labour – a life of virtual slavery

Under a scorching midday sun, a group of men survey a row of thatched huts built on a barren stretch of land. Palabakam is a very basic, almost primitive village that has just been built in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, just a few hours drive north of the capital Madras.

The 400 people who live here all have one thing in common - they were recently freed from a life of virtual slavery. All of them are Irulas - an indigenous tribe local to the area but displaced from their land over the years.

"Thousands of Irula tribal families are kept as bonded labour in hundreds of rice mills in Red Hills," says Sidhamma, a women's activist who helped free the bonded labourers. "They are mostly illiterate and completely unaware of their rights," she says. Lakshmi, 32, recalls her life in the rice mill as one that she would like to rapidly forget.

"We slept in the open - never mind whether the sun was beating down or it was pouring with rain.

"There was no drinking water, no toilets, nowhere to bathe. If I wanted to take a bath, I had to do it in the open, in front of all the men." She has three children, who were also forced to work - the younger ones cleaned the mill while the older ones helped dry the paddy. Despite approaching the local authorities, they received little help.

Intervention of India's National Women's Commission

It was only after mass demonstrations by the workers and the intervention of India's National Women's Commission - a federal government body - that they were rescued.

Under Indian law, employees must be paid a minimum wage of 86 rupees (\$2) for eight hours of work. The workers at the rice mill were paid 15 rupees (\$0.03) a day for 19 hours of hard labour. "Besides this, many of the workers were forced into high debt by the owners, lived a life of virtual imprisonment and could be traded by their employers," says Krishnan, himself a former bonded labourer. Most of them now work as labourers in nearby farms. "We are paid 50 rupees (\$1.15) for half a day's work, the women get 30 rupees (70 cents)," he says. Each family was also given 40,000 rupees (\$922) by the government.

BBC News on http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4511639.st

BOOKS - FUNDS - CONFERENCES - EVENTS – URL

A Report Card on sexual and reproductive health and rights

Klick on <http://www.countdown2015.org> and look for Report Card, to be downloaded from there.

Recommended by IAW Health convenor Gudrun Haupter

The Future of Women's rights

Global visions and Strategies. Edited by Joanna Kerr, Ellen Sprenger & Alison Symington. Zed Books London (224 pagina's) Hb ISBN184277 458 1 (£50.00/\$75.00)/Pb ISBN184277459 X £15.95/\$25.00)

Onlinepoliticalwomen

This bulletin highlights Asia Pacific women's involvement in politics, governance, decision-making and transformative leadership. You will also find summaries of the data and information which are recently uploaded in their website <http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org> plus announcements of events and other women-focused news stories from around the world.

Fund for Global Human Rights

The Fund for Global Human Rights is pleased to announce a new Request for Proposals and seeks your assistance in the dissemination of the attached announcements. In late 2005, the Fund will award grants to organizations based in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. Please forward this Request for Proposals to organizations you think would be strong candidates to receive grants. Attached to this message are copies of the Request for Proposals in English, French and Arabic. Proposals may be submitted in any of these three languages.

Please note that current grantees of the Fund (organizations that received a grant in 2004) do not need to complete the attached forms and should instead submit a renewal proposal form along with their midterm reports. Organizations that are seeking their first grant from the Fund must follow the full proposal guidelines included in the RFP. The deadline to submit proposals for both current grantees and first time applicants is July 1, 2005. On <http://www.hrfunders.org/index.php>

Sent to us by IAW member Soon-Young Yoon

Loupe Project, EU

Nowadays universities in higher technical education face two problems. Firstly, the inflow decreases because the majority of girls and many boys appear not to be attracted to technology education. This is predominantly caused by a lack on technical job profiles whereas especially female students have not a clear idea on the variety and interdisciplinary jobs there exist.

Secondly, companies complain that the content of engineering studies is outdated. Recent innovations in higher technical education (HTE) have focused on these problems, leading to a search for practical material (real life cases, projects, problems) and other forms of (knowledge) input into technology education that comes from actual practice.

If you are interested, go to <http://ilo.unibo.it/home/Women/WiTEC/Wprojects-en.html#preface>

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. 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.

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