

**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 2006, nr. 4



Dear IAW members,

The main issue of this newsletter is 'education' and in particular 'the education of girls'. In a way it is a preparation for the main issue of CSW 2007: 'The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child'.

At the UN the Human Rights Council will start its work in Geneva, the Peacebuilding Commission will develop its own rules and there will be a campaign to support the UN Food Programme for the hungry people in this world.

Malaria and child killers like measles and polio are still making victims, but there is progress.

Miscellaneous issues and some events and conferences are, as always, at the end of this newsletter.

UNITED NATIONS

Human Rights Council

Following three rounds of secret voting, the following members were elected: Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Zambia.

Voting for the Regions

All regions – Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and Other states – obtained or exceeded the required 96-vote majority needed to fill their allocated number of members, except the Eastern European States, where only the Russian Federation, Poland and the Czech Republic won seats on the first ballot, while Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Romania were elected in a second round.

Drawing lots for terms

The Assembly proceeded to draw lots to determine the terms of the elected Member States. From the Group of African States for example, it was determined that South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria would serve for one year; Ghana, Zambia, Mali and Gabon for two years; and Djibouti, Cameroon, Senegal, Mauritius and Nigeria would serve for three years.

Start – 19 June 2006

The new Council, which will start work on 19 June, is required to conduct **a regular review of the human rights record of all countries, beginning with its own members.**

Read more on: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ga10459.doc.htm>

United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Poland, Brazil and Belgium will hold seats on the standing body responsible for developing the Commission's own rules of procedure and working methods. The Commission was set up to bolster the UN's ability conflict resolution function, with a strong post-conflict feature to help prevent countries or regions from relapsing into war.

Construction

The Peacebuilding Commission's membership will include seven members of the Security Council, including its five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States); seven States from the Economic and Social Council, elected from regional groups; five top contributors to the UN budget; and five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to UN

missions. The General Assembly will elect seven additional members, with special consideration for States that have experienced post-conflict recovery. On <http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/>
Convenor for the IAW Commission on Peace: Heide Schutz.
Editors comment: let's hope that many women will take part in the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

United Nations World Food Programme - for 850 million Hungry People

On 21 May - the 'March the World' will start in each country at 10 a.m., with some 360 such events being organized and will cover about six kilometres in an effort to sensitize people to the food shortages around the planet. From fake colourful fibreglass cows grazing on Paris streets to on-screen public service announcements in the biggest British railway stations to a march against hunger in more than 100 cities around the globe, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is pulling out all the stops to raise both money and awareness for its cause, the 850 million hungry people around the world..

A good and serious cause

In Paris, 150 life-sized fibreglass bovines decorated by artists have been dotted around the French capital where they will continue grazing for two months before being auctioned off. The profits will go to WFP and the Africa Alive Foundation. In past auctions elsewhere such as in New York, Sydney and Prague, the so-called "Cow Parade" has raised up to \$25,000 for a single animal.

Meanwhile across the English Channel, British commuters will be able to tune in to on-screen broadcasts of a selection of WFP's public service announcements. Huge outside screens at railway stations in London, Manchester and Edinburgh, will carry footage, including WFP's "Horn of Africa" appeal.

The screening has been made possible by a generous donation of time by one of Britain's biggest outdoor advertising companies, "Titan Outdoor". The company says that in the space of one week, some 28 million people will walk past the screens carrying the WFP commercials. Of these, it is estimated that almost 2 million will stand and watch for a period of time while they wait for their trains to arrive.

IAW representative in the UN Food and Agricultural Commission (FAO), Bettina Corke

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

IAW website

The IAW website has a new face! Please have a look at www.womenalliance.com and you will see IAW President Rosy Weiss chairing a meeting on the home page. That is not all. From there it is easier to navigate to all the other IAW topics. And we, the electronic editors, are pleased in particular with what webmaster Trevor Bennett did with the newsletter page. Our compliments!

IWNews

There has been a change of printer for IWNews and unfortunately the first edition has been delayed due to having to set up new systems for printing and mailing. Please be patient and be assured that the first edition will be with you as soon as possible.

Welcome to the Platform of Women's Empowerment and Rights, Bangladesh

A cordial welcome to the Platform of Women's Empowerment and Rights (POWER), which has been provisionally approved as an Associate of the International Alliance of Women. Final acceptance is the prerogative of the Congress in 2007.

New e-mail address for the Deutsche Staatsbuergerinnen-Verband

IAW Affiliate Deutsche Staatsbuergerinnen-Verband can be reached at mail@staatsbuergerinnen.org
Their cheery website is on www.staatsbuergerinnen.org

The Black Tongue, by Anjana Basu

Congratulations for IAW Member Anjana Basu, who got a good third place in the 2006 Million Writers Award with her book 'The Black Tongue' (Gowanus). You can read the first chapter of this intriguing tale on: http://www.gowanusbooks.com/black_tongue_basu.html The book will be coming out sometime in September.

(Anjana Basu's novel Curses in Ivory was published by HarperCollins India in January 2003. She is also the author of The Agency Raga, a collection of short stories [Orient Longman], and her poems have been featured in an anthology published by Penguin India. Her work has appeared in Wolfhead Quarterly, Amethyst Review, The Blue Moon Review, Kimera and Recursive Angel.)

EDUCATION

“End oppression with education”

(refer A Courageous Woman below)

UN-sponsored ARAB REGIONAL FORUM focuses on supporting girls' education

May 2006 – Arab media professionals, human rights organizations, academia and United Nations agencies have begun in Dubai to hammer out ways to improve girls' access to quality education, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) tells, highlighting that while there have been advances in the Arab world, out of 70 million illiterates an estimated two-thirds of these are women and girls.

Challenges ahead

UNICEF said that while girls' access to education has improved dramatically over the past few decades and primary school enrolment is high or universal in most countries in the region, nevertheless “great challenges remain”, with many children – especially girls – still excluded from education, and many more enrolled in school but learning too little.

Further, countries and territories that have experienced decades of internal conflict and displacement – such as Iraq, Sudan and Palestine -- need to recreate strategies for school reintegration with a focus on areas where resettling occurs.

Education for girls requires action on several fronts

UNICEF said that eliminating gender disparity in education requires action on a number of fronts, such as **training teachers** who are aware of gender and child rights; identifying women teachers who can become **role models** and inspire girls; developing learning environments that are sensitive to **health and nutrition** issues; providing girls access to **sports** so as to boost their confidence; and supplying **safe water** and **latrines**, since many girls drop out of school partly because of the lack of separate toilet facilities.

The Forum is an initiative spearheaded by UNICEF in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Dubai Humanitarian City, the Dubai Press Club, Al Bayan Newspaper, the Arab Institute for Human Rights and the Centre for Arab Women for Training & Research.

On: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18330&Cr=girl&Cr1=education>

Convenor of the IAW Commission on Education: Meena Pimpalpure, India

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

A wide partnership of United Nations agencies, national and local governments and non-governmental organizations launched the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) Regional Network for West and Central Africa in Dakar, Senegal, with UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, popular musician, Yvonne Chaka-Chaka in attendance.

According to a press release from the UNGEI regional network, girls' education and quality education in West & Central Africa face many challenges, from emergencies and HIV/AIDS, to deepening poverty and persistent gender disparities. The result is that approximately 1 child out of 2 is out of school-most of these are girls are from poor rural areas. 81% of children out of school have mothers with no formal education, and region-wide only 86 girls are in school for every 100 boys.

Reaching for MDG2

"For countries in the region to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), MDG 2: to achieve universal primary education and MDG 3: to promote gender equality and empower women, there is a need for increased attention and programs to promote girls education. The launch of the regional UNGEI is an important step in making that happens," notes the release.

At the current rate of progress, gender parity will not be reached until 2038

To reach the 2015 MDGs related to girls' education, countries in the region must increase the enrolment rate by 3.5% per year, the release suggests, noting however that the annual increase

observed between 1980 and 2001 has been only 1%. According to the release, Oxfam predicts that at the current rate of progress, gender parity will not be reached until 2038.

Girls education needs a tremendous effort

The United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) partnership comprises **UNICEF, ILO, World Bank, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDESA, UNESCO, UNPF, UNHCR, UNIFEM, WFP, WHO and UNDG**, along with other key partners including national and local governments, ministries of education, grass-roots organizations, local and international NGOs and donor governments.

"Partnerships already struck with the African Union (AU) and the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) are critical in mobilizing country ownership for the UNGEI objectives and outcomes so that girls' education programs can be scaled up and gender gaps reduced. These are prerequisite conditions for attaining the MDGs," the release further asserts.

By Awareness Times on http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_20052206.shtml

LIBERIA

Two United Nations agencies announced that they have completed the rehabilitation and refurbishment of 13 government schools in four Liberian counties. With more than \$500,000 from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) its partner, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) undertook the rehabilitation work, which ranged from repairing walls, roofs, and installing windows and doors to building a brand new schoolhouse in Kpotomai, Lofa County.

Damage as result of war

"Rural schools in Liberia suffered acute damage as a result of war," said Wendy MacClinchy, Country Coordinator of UNOPS in Liberia. "Some of these schools were badly damaged with collapsed walls, no roof, or their physical structure was completely destroyed. What could be more important for Liberia's development than making sure its children have good schools to learn in? It was also terrific to work with UNICEF in making a difference in the lives of so many Liberian children, and for generations to come." Read more on:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18521&Cr=liberia&Cr1=>

A COURAGEOUS WOMAN

Pakistani rape survivor turned education crusader honoured at UN

2 May 2006 – Mukhtar Mai, a Pakistani woman who became a world-renowned education and women's rights activist after she was gang raped as clan vengeance in her native village for crimes allegedly committed by her brother, spoke at United Nations Headquarters in New York today, drawing praise from UN officials for her bravery.

"I think it is fair to say that anyone who has the moral courage and internal strength to turn such a brutal attack into a weapon to defend others in a similar position, is a hero indeed, and is worthy of our deepest respect and admiration," Under-Secretary-General for Communications Shashi Tharoor said in introducing Ms Mukhtar, who was invited to the UN by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Pakistan's UN Mission.

Not to be cowed by traditional strictures

Mr. Tharoor said that after the horrific crime, which occurred in 2002 in a rural village called Meerwala, Ms Mukhtar refused to be cowed by traditional strictures under which she was expected to commit suicide out of shame. Instead, with the support of her immediate family, her Imam and some journalists, she took steps to ensure the full force of the law was levied against her attackers.

Education and Women's Rights

Instead of leaving the region, Ms Mukhtar returned to the village in which she had experienced such pain, founding a school that now has 300 girls and 200 boys, along with a crisis centre that advises women and girls threatened by childhood marriage and other practices. She explained the importance of education for woman's rights. "When [I was pursuing justice], the uneducated people tried to stop me and the educated people supported me. So I thought education was important," the soft-spoken woman said through an interpreter. "My slogan is: '**End oppression with education**,'" she added, noting that after her efforts in her rural village, attitudes there have changed quite dramatically.

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

HEALTH

Fighting malaria - measles - polio

Change of Malaria Treatment

The United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) announced today that 13 pharmaceutical companies have agreed to comply with its recommendation which means the companies will now focus their marketing efforts for malaria primarily on **Artemisinin Combination Therapies (ACTs)**, because when used with other anti-malarial drugs, artemisinin is nearly 95 per cent effective in curing uncomplicated malaria and the parasite is highly unlikely to become drug resistant.

WHO will continue to closely monitor those companies that have not yet declared their position. In addition, the Organization will provide guidance to companies manufacturing ACTs that are seeking prequalification of their products, a process which involves meeting internationally agreed standards of efficacy, safety and quality. WHO will support exclusive procurement of quality ACTs for treatment of uncomplicated malaria.

Trying to make the malaria treatment worldwide

WHO has also called on national drug regulatory authorities in malaria-endemic countries to prohibit marketing of oral artemisinin monotherapies.

So far, since January 2006, 13 countries have announced that they will withdraw marketing authorization for these drugs, and three have started undertaking regulatory measures to do so.

Read more on: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2006/pr23/en/index.html>

Convenor of the IAW Health Commission: Gudrun Haupter, Germany

Tackling Measles in Nepal and in India

Nepal

Across the impoverished kingdom of Nepal, 50,000 mothers, most of them illiterate, are foot soldiers in one of the great unfolding public health triumphs of modern times: the global push to slash the number of children who die from complications of measles.

Nepal's first national measles vaccination campaign last year cut by 90 percent the country's measles-related deaths, usually about 5,000 per year, the United Nations Children's Fund estimates.

That tremendous success is overshadowed by the grievous toll measles continues to take in neighbouring India. Experts estimate that more than 100,000 children a year still die there from complications of measles for want of a 15 cent vaccine. Nepal's campaign shows that quick, deep inroads can be made against measles with the proper financing and national will, as well as a tested strategy for winning public trust of vaccines.

"Vaccinating children against measles is the greatest return on investment for child health that we have," said Dr. Mark Grabowsky, who for five years was the adviser to the Red Cross for the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Measles is killing 450,000 children around the world each year

Still, measles kills 450,000 children worldwide each year. India, which has more measles-related deaths than any other country, has not made it a national priority in the way Nepal, Bangladesh and countries across Africa have. It has instead focused on its drive to eradicate [polio](#), building a stronger rural health care system and bolstering immunization generally, in hopes of protecting children from other diseases.

India

India's choice highlights a fierce but little noticed debate among international public health experts: whether it is better to attack a single disease (such as polio) with big campaigns or instead make long-term investments to improve public health systems.

Indeed, the crux of measles control is strong routine immunization, which is best provided by a solidly run health care system. The vaccine is 85-to-90-percent effective in the first year of life. But the airborne measles [virus](#) is so contagious that a second vaccination, given either routinely or in a mass campaign, is often needed. It is that second dose that India does not yet provide all its children.

Such second-dose campaigns, reaching into the world's most remote corners, have saved a million children since 1999, the World Health Organization says.

The strategy, first used in **Latin America** in 1994, eliminated measles from the Western Hemisphere by 2002. In **Africa**, the approach has more than halved measles-related deaths in just four years.

Measles weakens children's immune systems, making them vulnerable to fatal complications from diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition.

Nepal used the same plan, but several other things went right here. Not only has Nepal's measles effort been unburdened by competition from polio, which was wiped out six years ago, but also for more than a decade Nepal has used a **highly organized network of volunteer mothers** to deliver simple

health services in the lanes around their homes. (see above)
Article from the New York Times

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

UN Population Award for Bangladeshi doctor

April 2006 – A pioneering family planning doctor from Bangladesh and a major reproductive health foundation in Haiti have won this year's United Nations Population Award, (UNFPA) announced.. Dr. Halida Hanum Akhter is the Director-General of the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh, one of the world's oldest Planned Parenthood affiliates. She also chairs the Board of Directors of the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health. In 1986, she founded the Bangladesh Institute of Research for Promotion of Essential and Reproductive Health and Technologies.

The awards will be presented on 7 June at the United Nations, New York.

The Award goes each year to individuals and institutions for their outstanding work in population and in improving the health and welfare of individuals. The winners were chosen from 27 nominees, including top-level policy makers, researchers and health workers from around the world by a committee consisting of 10 UN Member States supported by UNFPA. Each winner will receive a diploma, a gold medal and an equal share of a monetary prize.

On: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18149&Cr=family&Cr1=>

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

Millennium Villages Project - MDGs - and Jeffrey Sachs

The Millennium Villages project, developed by experts at Columbia University's Earth Institute and the UN Millennium Project, but led and driven by community members, seeks to end extreme poverty based on the idea that villages can meet the MDGs if they are empowered with proven, powerful, practical technologies.

The project costs an average of just 140 dollars per person per year, with 50 dollars coming from the project's budget, 20 dollars from partners and only 70 dollars needed in external aid.

The project invests in health, food production, education, access to clean water, and essential infrastructure by working directly with the poorest of the poor. It focuses on simple solutions, from preventing and treating malaria to teaching improved farming methods.

The Risk in Africa

According to Jeffrey Sachs, director of the UN Millennium Project, a huge part of Africa is devoted to rain-fed savannah agriculture with tremendous water risk, worsened further by the looming threat of climate change. There also is very little fertiliser use in Africa. "It is 200 kilos per hectare in China and in South Asia it is 100 kilos per hectare, (but) in Africa it is zero on staple crops," Sachs said.

There are 78 so-called Millennium Villages, but in the estimated 100,000 other villages throughout Africa, many people continue to live on less than a dollar a day.

Read more on: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=33140>

MOROCCO- New Gender Law Upsets Everyone

A new family law intended to promote the rights of women seems to have pleased neither men nor women. The new family law, which has been in effect two years now, has given women several new rights, particularly with alimony, but less than those provided for under an earlier plan.

On the other hand, many men say they do not have the means to pay alimonies being granted under the new provision.

The new family law came into effect in 2004 as a compromise solution after Islamists strongly opposed the earlier National Plan for Women's Integration in Development (NPWID).

Under the 2004 family law, Moroccan women can get more alimony, have the right to marry without family permission, and the right to divorce on equal footing with men, but *the new family law has not forbidden polygamy, and has not given women equal inheritance rights.*

New law is hard on poor men

The guaranteed minimum wage is about 155 euros monthly, but this is not always respected. Monthly rent is around an average of about 55 euros a month for a single room in a central area.

More than eight million in a population of 30 million live below the poverty line. Earlier, alimonies were particularly low. They were worked out in proportion to husbands' salaries and would usually add up to less than 10 percent of his income. Inter Press Service

Commission on Sustainable Development 2006-2007

CSD works in a twoyear cycle: the review of 14th in 2006, the 15th session in 2007. In the review the UN report 2006 showed progress on atmospheric pollution, but urgent action is needed on energy access, industrial development and climate change. At the 14th session, 1-12 May 2006 in New York and Cologne, ministers called for more aid, debt relief, domestic funds to meet goals on water, sanitation, slums. On: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/media/media.htm>

The IAW delegation went for 'women's access to energy' and 'indoor air pollution, which affects women's health'. IAW representative at the UN: Kay Fraleigh

World Cup Football 2006 - Trafficking and Forced Prostitution

The Council of Women of Germany has started a campaign against the stream of prostitutes that will be imported into the German towns during the World Cup Football in June and July 2006. The issue of 'Trafficking and Forced Prostitution' has been on the agenda of the German Council of Women since the beginning of 2006, with its culmination during the months of May, June and July.

Their message is spreading. In Sweden women's organisations want Swedish football players to boycott the World Cup, as a protest against trafficking.

Read more on: <http://www.frauenrat.de/module/campaign/campaign.list.aspx>

EVENTS - CONFERENCES - REPORTS

Committee on the Rights of the Child - 42nd Session (15 May - 2 June 2006)

On http://www.wunrn.com/news/05_01_06/050706_un_comittee.htm

The Inequality Predicament - Table of Contents gives overview of gender topics in World Social Situation. Report. On <http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=A/60/117&Lang=E>

The State of the World's Refugees 2006 - Human displacement in the new millennium. Report on: http://www.wunrn.com/news/05_08_06/051206_un_report.htm

WHO will organize the fifty-ninth World Health Assembly from 22 to 27 May 2006, at the United Nations, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. On <http://www.who.int/en/>

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.

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