

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER November 2010, no. 10



Equal Rights

Dear members,

In this newsletter we try to inform you on the Conferences which are coming next at the UN. The Conference on Climate Change in December 2010, CSW in 2011 and also the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Violence against Women will sadly stay a permanent issue in our news, but it is important to keep ringing the bell. The horrifying rape of women by criminal gangs in conflict areas have become known worldwide. We see a few rays of hope and action to help and to empower our unfortunate sisters.

The United Nations installed an Executive Board for UN Women and also agreed unanimously on three draft resolutions, including one on Violence against Women. The Human Rights Council asked the United States for a review of its human rights record. Interesting to read!

Cholera in Haiti and an outbreak of poliomyelitis in Congo demanded immediate action.

And: in Myanmar people were very happy with the freedom of Aung San Suu Kyi!

INTERNATONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

This newsletter will reach you just before IAW delegations and Individual members are leaving for Congress in Johannesburg. Throughout the year all documentation has been well prepared and distributed by IAW Secretary Lene Pind together with general planning in collaboration with Mmbatho Ramogosi and her team in South Africa. Regrettably Lene herself will not be able to join us at Congress as she has to take it easy for a few weeks on doctor's orders. Former Secretary Alison Brown has kindly stepped in to take her place at Congress.

Thank you Lene for preparing Congress so well! We are sending you our best wishes for a good and fast recovery. Thank you Alison for your support. Delegates from around the world are all looking forward to seeing each other and to meeting our African sisters at what promises to be a very interesting and, we hope, productive Congress.

IAW is preparing for three important Conferences

I. UN Climate Change Conference Cancun - COP 16 & CMP 6

29 November-10 December 2010: Cancun, Mexico

In her statement to the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, Christiana Figueres (UNFCCC Executive Secretary) said there is a strong sense that Cancun can achieve a meaningful outcome, which is necessary to restore the credibility of the climate change process. She urged developed country Parties to show bold leadership, and all countries to show a willingness for compromise and flexibility.

More on: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

II. Commission on the Status of Women

22 February – 4 March 2011, New York, US

Priority Theme: 'Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work'.

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

More on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw55/online discussion3.html>

III. Commission on Sustainable Development, 5-16 May 2011 - New York, 3rd Implementation Cycle - Review Session

Countries stress long-term solutions for sustainable agriculture and rural poverty as Commission on Sustainable Development concludes...

As a Review year, the session focused on the following thematic issues: - [Africa](#) - [Agriculture](#) - [Drought & Desertification](#) - [Land](#) - [Rural development](#)

IAW Team at Headquarters - 'Informal' Report from the Field

The IAW team in New York continued to focus on the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the CEDAW Committee, and women's issues throughout the UN system.

On the lighter side, the IAW was represented by Kay Fraleigh, Irini Sarlis, Judy Gordon, and Soon-Young Yoon at the NGO CSW luncheon held in July in honour of the CEDAW Experts. IAW members Johanna Sterbin and Denise Scotto also attended. There was an opportunity to interact with the Vice Chair, from Brazil, and Rachel Mayanja, of OSAGI.

Kay attended the dinner hosted by the Baha'i for the CEDAW members at the end of the session. She also attended an event by Soon-Young for CEDAW at her home in New Jersey.

Resolution 1325

Irini participated in the week-long 10th Anniversary Celebrations of Security Council Resolution 1325 organized by PeaceWomen (WILPF) with many other NGOs, and by the Culture of Peace sub-committee of SVGC, in the last week in October.

The Administrator of UNDP, Helen Clark, launched the events, with Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, and with link-ups with women in Asian and African locations. IAW Members who work in Committees conveyed separately.

Sent by IAW member Irini Sarlis (Thank you, Irini!)

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Margot Wallström - sexual violence is a 'cheap and silent' weapon of war

While the nature of war has changed over the years, the fact remains that civilians bear the brunt of today's conflicts, with women and children paying a particularly heavy toll.

Margot Wallström, the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict said:

"Rape has become a tool to spread terror and exert control on communities.

It is unfortunately a very effective, cheap and silent weapon with a long-lasting effect on society.

It is a way of demonstrating power and control.

It inflicts fear on the whole community.

It is also to send a message to the men: 'You are not able to defend your women'."

A Swedish politician with a long history in defending women's rights, Ms. Wallström was appointed to her current post in February. In April she visited the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which she has described as "the rape capital of the world." [see Human Rights Council below]

According to the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)), more than 8,000 women were raped in the DRC during fighting between warring factions last year.

Just a few months ago, reports emerged of rape and assault of scores of civilians in the remote and troubled far east of the DRC over a four-day period.

"You can see that it was systematic, it was planned. There were no killings at that time but this was used as a way to spread terror and fear," the Special Representative said, referring to the atrocities committed in Walikale between 30 July and 2 August.

Go after the perpetrators

Ms. Wallström has repeatedly stressed the need to make the prevention of sexual violence a top priority, and to end impunity for the scourge. "I think the most important signal is to demonstrate that we go after the perpetrators of crimes, that we will find them and they will be punished."

While much of the focus in recent months has been on DRC, "sexual violence in conflict is a global scourge," said Ms. Wallström, who plans to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina soon.

There are also regular reports coming from Nepal, Timor-Leste, Myanmar and Colombia, among other places, she added.

“We will demonstrate that we have a global war. It’s not only Africa.”

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36732&Cr=sexual+violence&Cr1=>

Hundreds Were Raped on Congo-Angola Border

NAIROBI, Kenya — More than 600 women and girls were recently raped along the Congo-Angola border during a mass expulsion of illegal immigrants, according to the United Nations. Many of the victims said they were locked in dungeon-like conditions for several weeks while they were raped repeatedly by security forces. At least one woman died from her internal injuries, United Nations officials said.

Maurizio Giuliano, a United Nations spokesman in the Democratic Republic of Congo, said Friday that it was unclear on which side of the Congo-Angola border the women had been attacked, and that the United Nations was calling on both countries to investigate promptly.

For the past decade, Congo has been torn apart by dozens of rebel groups that have often swept into villages and brutalized women.

UN officials call Congo the worst place in the world for sexual violence, and even the long standing presence of international peacekeepers has not been able to stop it.

The two countries often expel each other’s citizens. Last year, Angola expelled 160,000 Congolese, while Congo expelled 51,000 Angolans, according to United Nations officials. Angola is fast becoming an economic powerhouse, with a booming oil business and diamond exports, after decades of intense civil war.

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu More on:

[Basuhttp://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/06/world/africa/06congo.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=th21&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/06/world/africa/06congo.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=th21&pagewanted=print)

Human Rights Council - UN examines US Human Rights Record

Due to a round of reforms adopted in 2006, each of the 192 UN member states are required to undergo a review of its their human rights record every four years by the newly created UN Human Rights Council.

For the first time in its history, the United States defended its human rights record before the United Nations Human Rights Council under the new Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process last week.

"For the United States, the UPR is a conversation in Geneva, but also one at home with our own people, to whom we are ultimately accountable. We have made the participation of citizens and civil society a centerpiece of our UPR process," [said](#) Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Dr. Esther Brimmer in her opening remarks before the 47-member rights body.

In August, the U.S. released a [20 page self-audit](#) of its human rights record reflecting in large part its nationwide consultations on such topics as post-Katrina recovery, housing discrimination, racial profiling, hate crimes, and disparities in access to quality health care.

Positively noted rights

While addressing shortcomings, the government's report also positively noted rights enshrined in the US Constitution, underscored the lasting legacy of the civil rights movement, and applauded more recent achievements such as health care reform and President Barack Obama's signing of several key civil rights bills into law.

Nevertheless

Nevertheless, the U.S. faced criticism for failing to ratify a number of human rights treaties — particularly the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW) — for lacking a national human rights institution, for not shutting down Guantanamo Bay, and for its continued use of the death penalty.

More on: <http://www.civilrights.org/archives/2010/11/1092-human-rights.html>

IAW representative at the Human Rights Council, Hélène Sackstein

UNITED NATIONS

UN Women - UN elects Executive Board of new agency for women’s empowerment

The 41 board members were selected on the following basis: 10 from Africa, 10 from Asia, 4 from Eastern Europe, 6 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 5 from Western Europe and 6 from contributing countries.

Elected from the African Group were Angola, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria and Tanzania.

Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea and Timor-Leste were elected from among the Asian States.

Estonia, Hungary, Russia and Ukraine were elected from among the Eastern European States, while Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden were elected from the Western European and Other States.

In addition, the Council elected Argentina, Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada and Peru from the group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Council also elected Mexico, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, United Kingdom and United States from among the "contributing countries," for three-year terms beginning today.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36718&Cr=un+women&Cr1=>

India Elected to UN Women's Board

India along with 40 other countries has been elected to the board of the new UN agency to promote equality for women, but Iran lost its bid due to strong opposition from the United States and human rights groups.

Controversial elections

Saudi Arabia, although its candidacy was criticised, got an automatic seat. Other controversial countries to be elected were **Libya** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo** [see All Around the World above re DRC]. Both countries ran uncontested as did Saudi Arabia. **Congo** [see All Around the World above re Congo].

Iran lost its bid to Timor-Leste, a late entrant to the contest, in a vote at the UN General Assembly. Iran received just 19 votes and Timor-Leste got 36 from the 54 nations. In recent months, Iran has come under criticism for the decision of stoning to death Sakineh Mohammad Ashtiani who had been accused of adultery. Following an international outcry, the sentence has been reversed and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denied that Ashtiani had received such a sentence. Last week, however, reports emerged that Ashtiani may still be executed but the Iranian authorities have not conclusively decided on her fate.

Excerpts from an article by Betwa Sharma/United Nations, November 11 2010.

Read more on: <http://news.outlookindia.com/item.aspx?700736>

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

Three draft Resolutions in the third UN Committee

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) took action — all adopted without a vote — that would have the General Assembly welcome the establishment of UN Women; declare 23 June every year International Widows' Day and condemn all forms of violence against women and girls.

A draft resolution on *intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women* would have the General Assembly strongly condemn all acts of violence against women and girls, no matter who perpetrates them. Co-sponsored by France and the Netherlands, it includes a paragraph that stresses the importance of States refraining from invoking religion as a way of avoiding their international obligations to end violence against women.

Interesting to read, on: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/gashc3994.doc.htm>

The United Nations Democracy Fund invites civil society organizations to apply for funding for projects to advance and support democracy.

Project proposals may be submitted on-line **between 15 November 2010 and 31 December 2010** at www.un.org/democracyfund, where applicants can also find guidelines, FAQs and lessons learned from previous rounds at http://www.un.org/democracyfund/Applicants/applicants_index.html.

Only on-line applications in either English or French will be accepted.

Those who plan to apply are strongly encouraged to visit this page as soon as possible to familiarize themselves with what is required.

UNDEF supports projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes.

The large majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations -- both in the transition and consolidation phases of democratization.

In this way, UNDEF plays a novel and distinct role in complementing the UN's more traditional work -- the work with Governments -- to strengthen democratic governance around the world.

A rigorous and competitive selection process

This is the Fifth Round of Funding to be launched by UNDEF, which provides grants of up to US\$500,000 per project. In four Rounds of Funding so far, UNDEF has supported more than 330 projects in 115 countries at a total amount of US\$93 million.

Applications are subject to a highly rigorous and competitive selection process, with about three per cent of all applications approved for funding. Projects are two years long and fall under one or more of six main areas:

- * Community development
- * Rule of law and human rights
- * Tools for democratization
- * Women
- * Youth
- * Media

Sent to us by IAW President Rosy Weiss

HEALTH

Cholera reported in the Haitian capital

If Haiti's cholera epidemic follows a pattern similar to the last cholera epidemic in the Americas, it could produce tens of thousands of additional cases over the next several years said Dr Andrus, Deputy Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

Even before the earthquake last January, the city had inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure and crowded living conditions in many areas. Now, conditions in the city are "very ripe for rapid spread of cholera."

"We have to prepare for a large upsurge in cases," Andrus said. "We have to be prepared with all the resources that are needed for a rapid response."

A cholera epidemic needs planning for the long term

The last cholera epidemic in the Western Hemisphere began in Peru in 1991 and spread to some 16 other countries, from Argentina to Canada. In Peru alone, the epidemic produced more than 650,000 cases over six years. Adjusting for population size, a similar pattern would produce upwards of 270,000 cases in Haiti, Andrus said.

"We have to think about and plan for the long term," he added. "The bacteria have a foothold in the rivers and the water system, so will be there for a number of years."

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36735&Cr=haiti&Cr1=> and also on: <http://www.who.int/en/> and also on

Poliomyelitis in Congo

The United Nations health agency is helping the government of the Republic of Congo tackle an acute outbreak of [poliomyelitis](#) which has killed 58 people and caused 120 cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP).

The UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) [says](#) that with Congo having recorded its last case of indigenous polio in 2000, the outbreak is believed to be due to imported poliovirus. Investigations are ongoing to determine definitively the origins of the virus.

The first case has been occurring in early October. Two cases have been confirmed to have been caused by wild poliovirus type 1 and laboratory testing continues.

See also: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36725&Cr=polio&Cr1=>

CLIMATE CHANGE - WAITING FOR THE NEXT DISASTER ?

First Asia-Pacific Disaster Report Launched by ESCAP and ISDR

26 October 2010. People in the Asia-Pacific region are four times more likely to be affected by natural disasters than those in Africa and 25 times more likely than those in Europe or North America,

says a UN report released at the Fourth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) in Icheon, Republic of Korea.

The first of its kind, the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2010 report (available at <http://www.unescap.org>) was launched at the AMC DRR by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

Lack of comprehensive regional assessment of disasters

The report notes that while the region generated one quarter of the world's Gross Domestic Product, it accounted for a staggering 85 per cent of deaths and 38 per cent of global economic losses due to natural disasters over the last three decades.

As a region highly prone to natural disasters with disproportionate impacts on human development, and facing new threats from climate change, the Asia-Pacific region has surprisingly lacked a comprehensive regional assessment of disasters. Accordingly, ESCAP and ISDR collaborated to produce the Asia and Pacific Disaster Report 2010.

Disaster losses are linked to and exacerbated by poverty

The report considers the socio-economic impact of disasters, and suggests ways of reducing vulnerability to disasters to protect hard-won development gains. It emphasizes that disaster losses are linked to and exacerbated by poverty, and that the vulnerability of the poor stems from multi-faceted socio-economic and environmental imbalances.

More detailed information about the events can be found at www.amcdrrkorea.org and also on: <http://www.unep.org/conflictsanddisasters>.

REPORTS - INTERESTING WEBSITES

There will be an **International Widows' Day on 23 June** each year, to give special attention to the situation of widows and their children.

See <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/gashc3994.doc.htm>

The current issue of Trends and Statistics is the fifth issue of **The World's Women**. It highlights the differences in the status of women and men in eight areas – population and families, health, education, work, power and decision-making, violence against women, environment and poverty.

Report - A Brief towards a **Typology of Wartime Crime** (43 pages) sent to us by IANSA. It can be read on: <http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/publications/briefs/brief43/brief43.pdf>

Radio Nisaa 96 FM is the first radio station in the Arab World that is run by women to present women's views and news. In Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine. It is been sponsored by **Smiling Children**. Both websites are well worth looking at. On: <http://www.radionisaa.net/english.html> and <http://www.smilingchildren.org/en/index.html>

Note

We are sending this Newsletter as an attachment, saved in Word 97. Please be so kind to advise Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address, so we can mail them this Newsletter too.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash : Joke Sebus

International Women's News : Priscilla Todd (English)

: Mathilde Duval (French)

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