

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

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

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER – October 2005, nr. 8
Equal Rights**



Dear IAW Members,

The Alliance is already preparing for the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006. The program contains two subjects which have been on the IAW agenda for the whole of its hundred years.

With June Zeitlin we are looking back to the World Summit on MDGs. The international women's movement has done their uppermost to get more language on gender equality and women's rights in the document, but unexpected political moves can change a lot.

An in-depth study on Violence against Women will start this month – we invite our members to join it on-line ! Figures on Trafficking show how urgent this subject is.

We also go to the Arab countries to look at two courses, one in politics for women and one for young people in education, on how to prevent getting HIV/AIDS.

At the end of the newsletter you will find, as usual, URLs of interesting events and conferences.

**Commission on the Status of Women
February 27 – March 10 2006**

Carolyn Hannan, Director of the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, has provided information that the 50th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will take place from 27 February to 10 March 2006 in New York. The Commission will focus on two thematic issues :

- i) Enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and for the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the field of education, health and work;
- ii) Equal participation of women and men in decision making processes at all levels.

Registration online, no later than the end of December 2005. All documents of the 49th Session of CSW 2005, on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw49/documents.html#fin>

As usual, the IAW is invited to designate representative(s) to participate in the Commission by registering online the list of our official delegates no later than the end of December 2005. The registration process shall be coordinated by President Rosy Weiss ([mail to: <iawpres@onemail.at>](mailto:iawpres@onemail.at)). Please note that IAW's budget allows for no subsidies to assist with travel.

Please contact Rosy as soon as possible if you are interested in making a contribution to our lobbying effort at the CSW in 2006 so that she may assemble a strong and active delegation and register the IAW delegates online.

Alison Brown
Secretary / Secrétaire

Additional information about the session, its organization of work and reports to be considered are available on DAW's website at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/>

UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Women

On 22 December 2003, the General Assembly of the United Nations requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on all forms of violence against women ([Resolution 58/185](#)). The goals of the study are to:

- Highlight the persistence of all forms of violence against women in all parts of the world, and the unacceptability of such violence.
- Strengthen political commitment and joint efforts of all stakeholders to prevent and eliminate

violence against women.

- Identify ways and means for better and more sustained and effective implementation of Government commitments and obligations to combat all forms of violence against women, and increase accountability.

The study will be completed in June of 2006 and presented to the United Nations General Assembly at its 61st session in the fall of 2006. The UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) is responsible for the preparation of the study. A Task Force made up of both NGOs and UN agencies, of which the Center for Women's Global Leadership is a part, has been working closely with the Division for the Advancement of Women to devise ways that NGOs can provide input into the study.

Engage !

It is important for women's organizations and groups involved in anti-violence against women advocacy and policy development to contribute to the processes related to the study. Please consider the opportunities for input below and engage wherever possible:

- **The DAW has requested written NGO input in the form of brief papers (3 pages maximum) that draw from the organization's experience, flag trends and highlight key issues requiring attention, and give examples of good practice in combating all forms of violence against women.** Please see the [NGO Input form](#) for more information on how to submit, and please feel free to pass this invitation through your networks. You may also wish to consult the [study outline](#) to inform your input. **Input is due to the DAW by 15 October.**
- An **online discussion** will be held for three weeks, during the last week of September and the first two weeks of October, to increase opportunities for civil society to contribute ideas and recommendations. Please check the study website (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/index.htm) for updates as the dates approach.

Please consider providing input into the study through one of the above methods, to make sure the voices and ideas of NGOs working in the field are heard and reflected in the recommendations of the study. For more information on the study, please see:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/index.htm>.

See also <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-gp-2005/index.html>

Two weeks before the World Summit of MDGs

An interview with WEDO Executive Director June Zeitlin about her hopes for the Summit by Inter Press Service

Editor: Knowing the outcomes of the Summit, it is very interesting to look back at her comments.

IPS: *What specific issues will your organisation take to the World Summit?*

June Zeitlin: We have commented on each succeeding draft (of the U.N. reform document). It's our view that the last draft represented real progress in terms of gender equality and women's rights: these were integrated throughout the document, not just in the development section.

So we are very concerned to hear the informal talk about discarding the document and starting all over again (as)...has been suggested by (U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.) John Bolton.

Already the content of the document represents just the minimum necessary to achieve the MDGs, along with peace and security and human rights.

We also want to make sure that a commitment to **gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment** is explicitly stated in the document. We think that the section relating to **women's education, political representation, violence against women, reproductive health rights and women's situations in armed conflicts is absolutely essential.**

IPS: *Do you think that world leaders -- who are almost all men -- will take women's concerns around the MDGs seriously?*

JZ: We are visiting as many governments' missions as possible to remind our supporters that this is not something to take for granted. We are asking that the centrality of gender equality be reaffirmed in the heads of states' statements and in other documents and speeches at the summit.

IPS: *Do you believe that governments will be able to fulfil their commitments?*

JZ: That's the 64,000 dollar question. Are they capable of it? The answer is yes. Will they? That's a question of political will and resources. We have resources for war. The question is how we are going

to apply resources for peace and human development, and human security.

IPS: *Looking back at the promises made at various summits in the past, why do you think government leaders fail to demonstrate political will?*

JZ: I think getting commitments on paper is the easy part, but getting them implemented and raising the resources is the biggest challenge. There is a disconnect between what government leaders say, what the research shows about successful strategies for poverty alleviation and development, and what's in the interest of many rich and powerful countries.

What is discouraging is that the rhetoric is grand but the gap is so great when it comes to action. ***It's not just about helping women because women are half the population. Women are key agents of change, and yet this fact is not translated into public policy.*** This is what the monitoring report shows.

IPS: *Some civil society groups and diplomats from developing countries are saying the United States is trying to sabotage the summit. What is your view on this?*

JZ: There is no question that Ambassador Bolton was sent here to be a bully and disrupt the process. This is the policy of the current (U.S.) administration. I also think we have to put this into perspective, since we have a long history of working at the U.N.

The U.S. tends to stand by during the preparatory process -- they are present and make some contribution, but they don't roll up their sleeves and really get into the game.

Instead, they let everybody play their hands and then come at the last minute, usually from a fairly high level, and announce that whatever has been negotiated is unacceptable.

IPS: *What role should civil society play if the process does become disrupted?*

JZ: The process has already been disrupted and there is a lot of confusion about how to proceed with the summit only two weeks away. Things are happening behind closed doors and civil society is not able to participate or even observe what is happening.

We are very, very concerned. I don't think anybody who cares about the U.N. and multilateralism would like to see this process fail. *Summit Document on:*

http://www.undg.org/documents/6604-2005_Summit_Outcome_Document.pdf org

Political Participation for Women

Women from Arab Countries Learn How to Run for Office

Kuwait City, 26 September 2005. Women politicians from 15 Arab countries are in Kuwait learning how to campaign for elected office. A special campaign school opened Sunday, focusing on the skills needed to succeed in politics in a region where women's political voices are often muffled.

More than 50 women from all over the Middle East and North Africa split up into small groups to discuss different challenges they will face in running for office. For many of them, it will be a totally new experience, and they may face severe obstacles in their quest to get elected.

When Kuwait's new Minister of Planning took the oath of office in June, conservative lawmakers banged on their desks and howled in protest as she was sworn in. Massouma al-Mubarak became the first Kuwaiti woman to ever hold a cabinet office, just a month after Kuwait's all-male parliament finally granted women the right to vote, after a six-year battle.

Two years from now, Kuwaiti women will not only vote in their first election, they will be standing as candidates for the first time. Minister Mubarak says they have a lot of work to do before then, and the campaign school is a start. "Definitely, women in Kuwait did not have the chance to participate in an actual election campaign. But this is the chance for us all to learn from others experiences," said Minister Mubarak. "And also to share ideas and exchange thoughts about how to run a political campaign successfully."

Facing tough odds

In the Arab world, women who run for office are facing tough odds. In Bahrain, for example, 39 women ran for local and national office in 2002, but not a single woman won. Some countries, such as Jordan and Morocco, use quota systems to ensure women's representation in parliament. Many of the campaign school participants say the most stubborn resistance to their candidacy often comes not from men, but from other women.

Asma Mohamed Othman is a veteran politician from Yemen who wears a black veil covering her face

and represents a traditionalist party called Islah, which means repair or reform. Othman says, "The positive thing is that women do participate in politics. But the negative is that other women may not accept this. Sometimes the resistance comes from women themselves."

In a keynote speech earlier in the day, former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell had warned of the same thing. She said women have had the vote in Canada for nearly 100 years, but she was the country's first, and so far only, female prime minister. She was also the first female justice minister, and the first female defence minister of any NATO country.

Convincing people

She said part of the battle is convincing people, male and female, that women are capable of doing those jobs. "So even in countries where women have had the vote for a long time, they have to struggle against this broader social expectation that leadership is not a feminine quality," said Campbell.

The teachers at this U.S.-sponsored "campaign school" are pro-democracy activists, female politicians and campaign experts from around the world. Some of the lessons are concrete, how to convince people that they should vote for you. Raheela bint Amer al-Riyami, a member of the Shura Council from Oman, described how she went door-to-door in her district introducing herself to voters, and got her friends and family to hand out campaign flyers on the streets. The campaign school is the fourth one of its kind.

By Challiss McDonough. See also: <http://www.voanews.com/english/2005-09-29-voa5.cfm>

Expert Group Meeting in Addis Ababa

"Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on political participation and leadership" in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

From 24 to 27 October 2005, see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/eql-men/index.html>

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

30 September 2005 – The United Nations-backed Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria approved its fifth round of grant proposals since it was established in 2002, committing \$382 million over two years to 26 grants in 20 countries. Once all recommended grants have been approved, Round 5 brings the total Global Fund commitments \$4.6 billion for more than 370 grants in 131 countries.

The Round 5 grants will through their lifetime support AIDS treatment for an additional 229,000 people, provide voluntary counselling and testing for an additional 10 million people, provide 17 million more long-lasting bed nets and 119 million more new artemisinin-based combination therapy treatments against malaria, and an additional 1.5 million treatments against tuberculosis.

Overall the Fund aims to put 1.85 million people affected by HIV/AIDS on anti-retroviral treatment, reach 62 million people with voluntary counselling and testing services for HIV prevention, treat 5 million tuberculosis cases, and provide 108 million bed nets and 145 million artemisinin-based treatments against malaria.

Three quarters of the Round 5 funding will go to low-income countries, with Africa receiving 66 per cent, Asia and the Western Pacific 17 per cent, Latin America and the Caribbean nine per cent, Eastern Europe four per cent and the Middle East four per cent.

Arab Countries - Education to Help Contain HIV/AIDS

RIYADH, 30 September 2005 — Educating teenagers is the best way to contain HIV/AIDS in this part of the world where prevalence is still relatively low, said UNDP's program coordinator Mayssam Tamim at a workshop held here yesterday.

The workshop, organized by the local chapter of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), is the first of its kind to be held in the Kingdom. It aims at creating awareness about HIV/AIDS among teenagers. "This is a battle we must win," said Tamim adding that the workshop titled "Awareness Day" is the first of a series of sessions that UNDP plans to hold.

Most economic productive years 15 — 40

The workshop started with a brief presentation illustrating some facts about AIDS followed by activities that aim to raise the level of awareness among this age group. "Since HIV/AIDS strikes

people in the midst of their most economic productive years (15 — 40), it is crucial to address this issue,” said Tamim. The UN, she said, had organized the “Awareness Day” for teenagers to acquaint them with the threats posed by HIV/AIDS and also to inform them about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Arab World, its transmission and prevention methods and other related issues.

Increase of HIV/AIDS cases

The move to hold this event is significant keeping in view the fact that Saudi Arabia has reported some 9,000 HIV/AIDS cases until early this year. “There has been an annual increase of 10 percent in the number of Saudis afflicted with the disease,” said a report released recently by the Saudi Ministry of Health here. Among expatriates, the rate of increase is 7.8 percent, said the report.

Referring to the measures taken to check the spread of AIDS, a UNDP statement said that “halting HIV/AIDS is the sixth UN’s Millennium Development Goal that has to be achieved by 2015 as part of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”

M. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Arab News. See for the article

<http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1§ion=0&article=70901&d=30&m=9&y=2005&pix=kingdom.jpg&category=Kingdom>

National laws increase the risks of trafficking, UN meeting told in Beijing

Beijing/New Delhi: The Asian Centre for Human Rights in its report, “Beyond Gender: Illegal Laws, Ethnicity, Armed Conflicts and Trafficking” (<http://www.achrweb.org/theme/trafficking0105.htm>) released today for the Inter-governmental meeting of the Framework on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region being held in Beijing from 29 August to 2 September 2005 stated that national laws of many countries including Thailand and China increase the risk of trafficking and hill tribes/ ethnic minorities have been disproportionate victims of trafficking.

Between 8,00,000 and 9,00,000 are trafficked every year and one third of them are trafficked within and from Southeast Asia. Around 30% of commercial sex workers in Southeast Asia are under 18 years of age. In **India** alone, reportedly an estimated 2.3 million are engaged in prostitution, a quarter of whom are minors.

“While many governments have been adopting anti-trafficking laws, some governments like Thailand and China have so far failed to address the laws which increase the risks of trafficking” – stated Mr Suhas Chakma, Director of Asian Centre for Human Rights.

The children of refugees, migrants and hill-tribes in **Thailand** are not allowed birth registration and they remain most vulnerable to trafficking. In addition, about 3,77,677 hill tribes whose citizenship applications have not been processed as yet, are not allowed to move freely depending on the colour of identity cards issued to them. Thailand is an “Open Jail” for them as they can be sent to jail for moving out of their villages or sub-divisions.

“Women belonging to these hill tribes cannot register births or marriages, cannot have access to education or jobs or public health care services. Traffickers and unscrupulous employers exploit their statelessness and they remain at the mercy of the employers and traffickers,” stated Mr Chakma. There are about 130 million internal migrants presently in **China** and millions of them are illegal under the hukou system as provided under the Provision of the People's Republic of China on Household Registration of 1958. Under this provision, citizens do not have the right to selecting the place of their residence.

Those who migrate without seeking permission are “illegal” and can be subjected to detention and various punishments, in addition to denial of economic and social rights. In 2000, there were reportedly 3.2 million instances of detention under Custody and Repatriation. The “vast majority” of detainees were internal migrants from rural areas.

Asian Centre for Human Rights. Read more on: <http://www.achrweb.org/press/2005/UN-02.htm>

Fistulas – an obstetric nightmare

By Sharon Lafraniere, 28 September 2005. In Nigeria it is Dr. Waaldijk who is helping girls on the obstetric nightmare of fistulas. In Addis Ababa it is Dr. Catherine Hamlin, the Australian gynaecologist, who for more than 40 years has worked in Ethiopia helping women overcome obstetric fistulas. (See also the article on Dr Catherine Hamlin in IWNews April 2005).

Mostly teenagers who tried to deliver their first child at home, the girls failed at labor. Their babies were lodged in their narrow birth canals, and the resulting pressure cut off blood to vital tissues and ripped holes in their bowels or urethras, or both.

With their insides wrecked, they became utterly incontinent. Many has become outcasts in their own communities - rejected by their husbands, shunned by neighbors, too ashamed even to step out of their huts.

Until this decade, outside nations that might be able to help effectively, ignored the problem. The last global study, in which the World Health Organization estimated that more than two million women were living with obstetric fistulas, was conducted 16 years ago. Nor has a recent spate of international attention set off an outpouring of aid.

Two years of global fundraising by the United Nations Population Fund, an agency devoted in part to improving women's health, has netted only \$11 million for the problem. The number of new cases is far outpacing repairs - also in other sub-Saharan nations like Kenya, Malawi and Uganda. More on: http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/28/international/africa/28africa.html?incamp=article_popular&page_wanted=print

Sent to us by IAW Member Anajana Basu

EVENTS - CONFERENCES - INTERNATIONAL DAYS

Preparation WTO - 9 September 2005, Geneva - Hearing

Hearing with Civil Society, 29 September 2005, Geneva

In accordance with paragraph 117 of the São Paulo Consensus, the Trade and Development Board has held a half-day informal hearing with non-state actors to allow them to express their views on the issues before the Board.

The outcome of the informal hearings will be summarized by the secretariat for submission as an input into the discussions of the [Trade and Development Board](#) (3-14 October 2005).

In preparation for the above-mentioned NGO/CSO hearing, the UNCTAD Civil Society Outreach team has been organising an informal meeting in the Palais des Nations Geneva on 2 September 2005.

Intergovernmental Meetings Trade and Development Board

Fifty-second session, 3–14 October 2005, Geneva

Director-General Pascal Lamy, on 14 September 2005, opened his first Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) meeting by expressing the hope that it marks a new and more productive phase for the TNC.

The interesting introduction of Pascal Lamy can be found on:

http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news05_e/tnc_stat_lamy_14sep05_e.htm

World Trade Organisation - Hong Kong Ministerial Conference

The Hong Kong Ministerial Conference scheduled to be held from 13 to 18 December 2005, is the highest authority in the World Trade Organization (WTO) structure and takes decisions on all matters under multilateral trade agreements. Since its inception in 1995, the WTO has held five Ministerial Conferences - 1996 in Singapore, 1998 in Geneva, 1999 in Seattle, 2001 in Doha and 2003 in Cancun, in 2005 in Hong Kong. China is a founding member of the WTO and is honoured to be the host of the sixth Ministerial Conference, the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference.

More on <http://www.wtmc6.gov.hk/eng/home/welcome.html>

Oak Human Rights Fellowship

"This is a call for nominations for the 2006 Oak Human Rights Fellowship, sponsored by the Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, 2006. The focus will be on Human Rights and the Environment.

The Fellowship is a one-semester appointment as a scholar-in-residence at the College.

Responsibilities include participation in a lecture series or symposium in the Fellow's area of expertise and regular interaction with Colby students. The College provides a stipend of \$32,000 plus transportation, housing, health care coverage, and other fringe benefits. Nominations to be submitted until January 13, 2006, deadline. For further information: Director Kenneth A. Rodman, oakhr@colby.edu."

World Social Forums in 2006 and 2007

The polycentric World Social Forum (WSF) 2006 will be held in Bamako, in Mali, in Africa, from 24 to 29 January 2006, simultaneously to the other two polycentric events: the one in Caracas (Venezuela) and the one in Karachi (Pakistan). The World Social Forum 2007 will take place in Kenya, in Africa. More information at: ESF: http://www.fse-esf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=17
http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/quadro_frc.php?cd_forum=9

The next European Social Forum (ESF) will take place in Athens in April 2006. According to the ESF website, "it is an open space where civil society groups and movements opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism, but engaged in building a society centered on the human person, come together". More information on the ESF: http://www.fse-esf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=17

The trade unions' role in tackling global poverty, Geneva, 17 October 2005

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty will kick off in Geneva on 17 October 2005 with an international colloquium on the role of trade unions in a globalised economy and in tackling poverty. Around 60 trade union leaders from all five continents will assess, among other things, the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and, above all, the challenges that still need to be overcome if those goals are to be reached.

Access the working paper summing up global changes, which will serve as the basis for debate: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actrav/genact/poverty/sym05/backdoc.pdf>

The latest issue of the **ONLINE WOMEN BULLETIN** highlights Asia-Pacific women's involvement in politics, governance, decision-making and transformative leadership. Please have a look at www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org

United Nations Special Observances and Events

International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (12 October)

UNESCAP Committee on Managing Globalization (12-14 October)

World Food Day (16 October)

UNESCAP/LCI Conference on Disability: A Global Perspective on Rights to Education and Livelihoods (17-18 October)

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October)

United Nations Day (24 October)

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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