

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

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

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER October 2007, no. 11**



**Equal Rights**

*Dear members,*

*We ask you to give special attention to the preparation of the program on combating sexual harassment, organised by IAW Affiliate the Greek League of Women's Rights, in June 2008. The gender pay gap across Europe remains almost as wide as a decade ago, in fact 15%, despite women outperforming men academically, as research by the European Commission shows. It is time to scrutinise what is happening in European workplaces!*

*The shocking figures on maternal mortality are getting worldwide attention. At last, with the Millennium Development Goal no.5, Improve maternal health. Millennium Development Goal No.4, To reduce child mortality will be helped by the approach to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015. 2008 will be International Year of Sanitation. And the Saudis are (maybe) rethinking the taboo on women behind the wheel!*

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

**IAW Congress**

The last preparations for Congress in New Delhi, India, starting on October 29 2007, are being made. The agenda, the draft Action Programme 2008-2010 and the minutes of Paris have been sent around by our diligent IAW secretary Alison Brown. There will be lots of interesting reports to read: from the Executive, the international and regional representatives, the commission convenors, the affiliates and associates, etc. etc. And all delegations will be looking forward to the seminar, organised by the All Indian Women's Conference! More in IWNews and in the November newsletter. In the meantime for all Congress members: have a good meeting!

**Program on Sexual Harassment**

The Greek League for Women's Rights will run during 2008 a program on the issue of combating sex discrimination in the labour market, including sexual harassment. Within the context of this program the League will organise a Conference on sexual harassment at the workplace and how to deal with it. This was announced by Joanna Manganara, IAW Regional Vice President for Europe, during our last meeting in Paris and IAW affiliates and associates are invited to send delegates at their own expense.

In particular the conference will be dealing with the following subjects.

- \* Description of sexual harassment on the basis of research results. (Incidence and frequency, profiles of harassers and harassed, types of occupations and organisations, responses to sexual harassment etc)
- \* Costs and consequences
- \* Explanations of sexual harassment
- \* Legal approach to sexual harassment
- \* Sexual harassment policies at the workplace
- \* Information activities
- \* Training of involved persons
- \* Dealing with complaints
- \* Effects of policies on the incidence of sexual harassment
- \* Good practices
- \* Recommendations for successful policies

The League is interested to learn from the experiences of other countries, especially European ones.

For that reason, Joanna Manganara, who is responsible for running this program, would like to organise this Conference with the help of affiliate and associate organisations in Europe. They are invited to recommend experts in the field in their own countries that the League could invite as speakers to the Conference. Organisations in other regions are also invited to do the same. If you know experts in your country who would like to participate in the Conference please advise Joanna Manganara, Regional IAW Vice President for Europe.  
FAX : 0030/2103616236, E-mail: [L.women-rights@egreta.gr](mailto:L.women-rights@egreta.gr)

### **Talking Point - a new IAW electronic publication**

Together with the renowned journal IWNEWS, the monthly electronic newsletter and the urgent-take-action FLASH, we introduced this month another electronic publication, called *Talking Point*. It's an IAW e-publication that will present articles on specific subjects. The subject of this first Talking Point is Environment and Sustainable Development, and in particular: the lack of gender in all Conferences up to now and the hope that gender will be included in the forthcoming Bali Conference.

It is to be found in PDF Format on: <http://www.womenalliance.org/talk.html> and it requires [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to open it, which you can download from the IAW website, thanks to our excellent IAW webmaster!

### **PDF Format or .doc?**

We like to use a bit of colour and also to insert a few pictures in *Talking Point*, but we are concerned that if we mail it around as an attachment it may be too big for some computer systems or some of our readers may incur expensive telephone costs while it downloads. The advantage, of course, of an attachment is that it can be forwarded to email readers or copied and sent by mail.

Anyway, .doc still needs a bit of experimenting, and .pdf is to be found on the IAW website <http://www.womenalliance.org> We would like to hear from you if can't open Talking Point in .doc!

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Maternal mortality rate in Africa 'shockingly high'**

Attaining Millennium Development Goal 4 (*MDG*) requires an annual decline of 5.5 per cent in maternal mortality ratios between 1990 and 2015. But the current annual decline is less than 1 per cent, according to figures released by the UN World Health Organization (*WHO*), the UN Children's Fund (*UNICEF*), the UN Population Fund (*UNFPA*) and the *World Bank*.

And worse: "Countries with the highest initial levels of mortality have made virtually no progress over the past 15 years," the agencies said in a joint press release.

### **535,000 women died of maternal causes in 2005, 99% from developing countries**

Of the more than 535,000 women who died annually of maternal causes in 2005, 99 per cent of them were in developing countries. In addition, slightly more than half of the maternal deaths – some 270,000 – occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by South Asia with 188,000. Together, these two regions accounted for 86 per cent of the world's maternal deaths in 2005.

Meanwhile, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, who addressed the challenges facing Africa in a speech delivered in Oslo on October 15th, described the current maternal mortality rates as "shockingly high."

### **A woman in Africa has a one in 16 chance of dying in childbirth or from complications of pregnancy, compared with a likelihood of one in 3,800 in the developed world.**

*UN News Centre*: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=24282&Cr=health&Cr1=>

### **International Year of Sanitation 2008**

Proper sanitation: It's a seemingly mundane thing that most people in the developed world take for granted. But at least 2.6 billion people – some 41 percent of the global population - do not have access to latrines or any sort of basic sanitation facilities. As a result millions suffer from a wide range of preventable illnesses, such as diarrhoea, which claim thousands of lives each day, primarily young children.

To put the spotlight on this issue the UN General Assembly declared the year 2008 the International Year of Sanitation. The goal is to raise awareness and to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015.

Global launch on 21 November 2007, with the logo and a UN publication on sanitation.

More on: [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_39569.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_39569.html)  
Sanitation India: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=39669>

### **Human Rights Council on Hunger**

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler, issued the following statement on the occasion of this year's World Food Day on 16 October.

Today I am unable to report a reduction in the number of persons suffering from violations of the right to food. On the contrary, despite real advances realised in different countries, the number of people suffering from hunger has increased every year since 1996.

This number has now reached an estimated 854 million people, despite Government commitments at the 2002 World Food Summit and at the 2000 Millennium Summit to eradicate hunger. Every five seconds, a child below ten dies from hunger and malnutrition-related diseases.

*Yet hunger and famine are not inevitable. According to the FAO, the world already produces enough food to feed every child, woman and man and could feed 12 billion people, double the current world population. Our world is richer than ever before, so how can we accept that 6 million children under five are killed every year by malnutrition and related illnesses?*

### **Inconsistency**

State policies that relate to the right to food also show similar patterns of inconsistency.

While all States have recognised the right to food in the World Food Summit Declarations, more than 150 States are parties to the ICESCR, and 192 have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the same time they engage in trade policies which have harmful negative consequences for the enjoyment of human rights in other countries.

For example, the new EU Economic Partnership Agreements with the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries have the potential to have an enormous negative impact on peasant farmers, given unfair competition with highly subsidized EU production.

In these countries, where up to 80 per cent of the population can be involved in peasant agriculture, unfair competition may push millions of African, Caribbean and Pacific peoples out of agriculture, when there are few other employment options.

#### **Converting food into fuel**

The sudden, ill-conceived rush to convert food, such as maize, wheat, sugar and palm oil, into fuels is a recipe for disaster.

In this rush, there are serious risks of creating competition between food and fuel that will leave the poor and hungry in developing countries at the mercy of rapidly rising prices for food, land and water. *For the whole statement, click on the link on <http://www.ohchr.org/english/>*

### **A few WTO basics**

There are a number of ways of looking at the WTO. It's an organisation for liberalising trade. It's a forum for governments to negotiate trade agreements. It's a place for them to settle trade disputes. It operates a system of trade rules. Above all, it's a negotiating forum ... a place where member governments (151) go, to try to sort out the trade problems they face with each other.

#### **The first step is to talk.**

The WTO was born out of negotiations, and everything the WTO does is the result of negotiations. The bulk of the WTO's current work comes from the 1986-94 negotiations called the Uruguay Round and earlier negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The WTO is currently the host to new negotiations, under the "Doha Development Agenda" launched in 2001.

#### **A set of rules**

At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations. These documents provide the legal ground rules for international commerce.

They are essentially contracts, binding governments to keep their trade policies within agreed limits. Although negotiated and signed by governments, the goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters, and importers conduct their business, while allowing governments to meet social and environmental objectives. The WTO website is on <http://www.wto.org/>

*Sent to us by IAW member Jessica Kehl.*

## **World Trade Organisation - WTO - Public Forum 2007: Audio Files, Presentations and e-Forum now available**

*The audio files for each session of the recent WTO Public Forum are now available on the WTO website. Further documentation will be included as and when it is available. You can access the page for each session by clicking on the link for the session in the programme.*

\* Programme: [http://www.wto.org/english/forums\\_e/public\\_forum2007\\_e/programme\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum2007_e/programme_e.htm)

\* Animation played at the plenary opening session:

[http://www.wto.org/images/img\\_forum07/forum2007\\_high.html](http://www.wto.org/images/img_forum07/forum2007_high.html)

\* Public forum photo gallery:

[http://www.wto.org/english/forums\\_e/public\\_forum2007\\_e/photo\\_gallery\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum2007_e/photo_gallery_e.htm)

### **Saudis Rethink Taboo on Women Behind the Wheel**

On a Saudi TV series, a woman in disguise drives a cab. “Where have you been?” the father asks. “The kids were bored, so I took them to the movies,” she replies, matter-of-factly, as she gets out of the driver’s seat.

The scene may appear mundane, but in Saudi Arabia, where women are forbidden to drive — and, by the way, where there are no movie theatres, either — the skit portends something of a revolution. From a taboo about which there could be no open discussion, a woman’s right to drive is becoming a topic of growing and lively debate in Saudi Arabia.

Coming after other recent changes — women may now travel abroad without male accompaniment (though male permission is still required), seek divorce and own their own companies — the driving discussion is noteworthy.

#### **A petition drive**

A group of Saudi women have led a petition drive asking the king to repeal the ban on driving by women, placing the issue at the heart of a discussion about modernity and Saudi Arabia’s place in the world. And the government, which was hostile toward the last such petition in 1990, now seems mildly receptive.

Still, few expect any change to come soon. The group had so far received no reply from the palace to the petition. Even women’s rights advocates said lifting ban would mean much preparation and public education, for women and men.

By Rasheed Abou-Alsamh, reporting from Jidda, Saudi Arabia (an extract). More on:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/28/world/middleeast/28drive.html?em&ex=1191211200&en=7b43f132f6369dd2&ei=5087%0A>

*Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu*

## **BOOKS - PUBLICATIONS - CONFERENCES**

### **THE CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT - 25 years of CEDAW**

Twenty-five years of the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the most important human rights treaty for women ever created. The United States is the only industrialised country that has yet to ratify it.

The book, with Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling as editor and Cees Flinterman as associate editor, will be on the market in December 2007. A member of the CEDAW Committee since 1989, Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling is currently a lecturer and consultant on Women, Youth and Human Rights in Europe and Asia. Cees Flinterman, a member of the CEDAW Committee since 2003, is a professor of international law at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. The Feminist Press at CUNY, paperback \$ 24,95 ISBN 978-1-55861-564-9. Special advance price \$ 20 till December 1 2007

### **Challenging Fundamentalism**

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is preparing a survey and on-going research in the coming months on Challenging Fundamentalisms. Information on <http://www.awid.org> and <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=24282&Cr=health&Cr1=AWID> - we remind you of the excellent Second Fundher Report: Financial Sustainability for Women's Movements Worldwide. See the IAW September Newsletter 2007.

### **Global Forum for Health Research - 29 October - 2 November 2007 - Beijing**

The Director-General of WHO, Dr Margaret Chan, will join Dr Chen Zhu, Minister of Health of the People's Republic of China, in opening the 11th annual meeting of the Global Forum for Health Research in Beijing.

Some 800 researchers, policymakers, representatives from development agencies, nongovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector will debate equitable access to health systems for developing countries. The programme agenda also includes research on new demographics, gender issues in health, patient safety, and maternal death.

[http://www.globalforumhealth.org/Site/004\\_\\_Annual%20meeting/001\\_\\_Forum%2011/001\\_\\_Home.php](http://www.globalforumhealth.org/Site/004__Annual%20meeting/001__Forum%2011/001__Home.php)

### **The eight MDGs are:**

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

(<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>)

### **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	<iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>
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