

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

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

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER 2006, no. 8**



**Equal Rights**

*Dear IAW members,*

*The Annual General Assembly is for IAW and in particular for UN IAW representative Kay Fraleigh and her team the most important time of the year. We wish them wisdom, stamina and perseverance! In this newsletter some key issues of the GA agenda, like Darfur and immigration. We 'name' some qualified women, to show that there are women in this world available to become Secretary General. That time will come!*

*Also in this newsletter some interesting reports, that are being discussed in the European Union. You will find too a follow-up of two issues of the August newsletter: on the rape laws in Pakistan and on the so called Eve teasing in India.*

*Data of interesting conferences and reports are as usual at the end of this newsletter.*

## **UNITED NATIONS**

### **Opening annual UN debate, General Assembly President urges focus on action**

19 September 2006 – As national leaders from across the world gathered at the United Nations for its annual general debate, the newly appointed President of the General Assembly, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa of Bahrain urged them to focus on translating commitments into action that will make a tangible difference in the lives of the world's people.

She *opened* the annual session by calling attention to prevailing problems. “We live in a world afflicted by violent armed conflicts, hunger and disease; a world threatened by international terrorism, organized crime and the proliferation of all types of weapons; a world brought closer together by the forces of globalization, yet divided by ethnic strife, and a growing technological gap; a world where the enjoyment of human rights is still an unrealized dream for millions of people,” she said.

The international community, she stressed, has a “moral duty to reach collective solutions to resolve these mutual concerns”. More on: <http://www.un.org/news/>

### **UN General Assembly**

Key issues at the UN this year will be:

- \* International Compact for Iraq
- \* Keeping Peace around the World
- \* Diffusing the Middle East Crisis
- \* UN Action on Syria
- \* The UN's Role in Darfur
- \* Building Democracy
- \* Working to end Human Trafficking
- \* Providing Disaster relief
- \* Fighting Aids
- \* Working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Also: \*US funding to UN: US structural debt is likely to double this year, to about \$1.3 billion, and \*Selecting the next Secretary General.

On <http://www.betterworldcampaign.org/index.asp> - dedicated to a strong US - UN relationship.

*IAW Representative at the United Nations: Kay Fraleigh*

## **Next Secretary General – It's time for a women to be appointed**

The selection process -- cloaked in secrecy and devoid of formal procedure -- hardly serves any notion of transparency or democracy. To be successful a candidate must avoid a veto by any of the five permanent members of the Security Council: China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States.

### **Qualified Women**

Among women serving at the level of undersecretary general or at the highest level of national government are:

- \* UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour,
- \* Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand,
- \* President Tarja Halonen of Finland, and
- \* President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia (who has expressed interest in the post).
- \* After serving as prime minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland held the post of director general of the World Health Organization.
- \* Currently a judge on the International Criminal Court, Navanethem Pillay served previously for four years as president of the UN Rwanda Tribunal.

### **Asia's turn?**

It is understood that a secretary general should not be the national of any permanent member of the Security Council and that the post is subject to regional rotation. The general feeling is that it is now Asia's "turn," but some call for an Eastern European choice. Although no woman has ever held the post, the idea of a woman's "turn" has yet to take hold. There are many qualified Asian women, although none seems to be on the current list of candidates.

- \* Sadako Ogata, from Japan, served as UN high commissioner for many years.
- \* Nafis Sadik of Pakistan served as executive director of the UN Population Fund.
- \* Anson Chan served with distinction as head of Hong Kong's civil service.
- \* Leticia Shahani was president of the Philippine Senate, as well as a UN assistant secretary general.

**Clearly women qualify. The Security Council has only to look for them.**

*A selection from an article by Jessica Neuwirth, Women's Media Center.*

More on <http://www.alternet.org/story/41482/>

## **Annan selects Korean Diplomat as Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights**

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced today that he has chosen the Korean diplomat Kyung-wha Kang to serve as Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ms Kang, who has been appointed at the Assistant Secretary-General level, will succeed Pakistan's Mehr Khan Williams in the post at the end of this year.

Currently Director-General of International Organization at the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ms Kang has previously worked at her country's mission to the UN, where she chaired the Commission on the Status of Women last year. She also worked as a journalist and lecturer before joining the Korean foreign service.

## **High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development**

Conceived and scheduled more than two years ago by the General Assembly, the 14-15 September High-level Dialogue follows a period of intense public attention to the cross-border movement of people, and a quickening pace of multilateral talks on migration.

### **Also smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons**

In addition to the plenary debate, the Dialogue on International Migration and Development brings ministers and delegates together in informal round table discussions on themes such as remittances (i.e. monies sent home by workers abroad); smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons; and partnerships at the bilateral and regional levels.

More on <http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/>.

## **Darfur - Security Council**

22 September 2006 – Expressing “grave concern” over the worsening humanitarian situation in Darfur, the Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) until 8 October, while also expressing its intention to renew it further.

The 15-member body voted unanimously on the move, which comes just two days after the African Union (AU) extended its mission in the strife-torn region until the end of this year. It also follows a

recent warning from Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Darfur is heading towards disaster unless UN peacekeepers are allowed in.

On <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=19982&Cr=sudan&Cr1=>

*IAW Convenor for Peace: Heide Schutz, Germany*

### **UNICEF on Darfur**

About 1.9 million people have been displaced and nearly three million people depend on international aid for food, shelter and basic health. Violence has made it extremely difficult for humanitarian workers to continue to effectively respond with needed relief. Acute malnutrition has reached 27 per cent in some parts of Darfur and health care systems are failing.

*Sexual violence against women and children is widespread and people yearn for a place where they can feel safe.*

More on: [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_35922.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_35922.html)

### **Women's Commission for Refugees Women and Children**

*Editor's comment: As it happens, the above Commission has just conducted a study, in November 2005 and August 2006, to determine the INEE standard of minimum education, with study cases in Darfur!*

On <http://www.womenscommission.org/>

## **AROUND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

### **EU Directive to qualify for refugee status**

The EU Directive relating to criteria to qualify for refugee status in the European Union (see: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33176.htm>) has to be transposed into national law by 10 October.

This directive is of particular interest to women asylum seekers as it does make specific reference to women. It refers to breaches of equality between women and men, sexual violence and all discriminatory acts directed against a person for reasons of their sex.

The Directive recognises that non-state agents can be the perpetrators of persecution. This is crucial with regards to claims processed by women as very often the forms of persecution that women experience stem from traditional practices and customary laws in which close family members and/or communities (i.e. non-state agents) are the prime perpetrators.

#### **Action that You, the reader, can take**

It is believed that most Member States are advancing on the transposition and to make sure that the deadline is met, a model lobbying letter is available for you to send as it is or to adapt. You will also receive a Fact Sheet, which provides background information on asylum issues, and the Directive in question.

Contact Maria Collins at [Collins@womenlobby.org](mailto:Collins@womenlobby.org) should you require any further information.

### **Protecting Children, Council of Europe**

Booklet by the Council of Europe: "*7 good reasons to build a Europe for and with children*", information booklet on the programme, including tangram puzzles for adults and children (en pdf).

Reports of the conducted studies are:

- \* 23 August 2006: Report of the independent expert for the UN study on violence against children
- \* 4 July 2006: Communication from the Commission - An EU strategy on the rights of the child
- \* Monaco, 2-3 April 2006: Children's and young people's preparation seminar report
- \* Ljubljana, 8-9 July 2005: Report on the Yokohama Review for Europe and Central Asia on combating sexual abuse of children.

On:

<http://www.coe.int/t/transversalprojects/children/reportsWorkingdocuments/Booklet%20GB%20avec%20couv.pdf>

The Rights of the Child are on: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/study/SGSVAC.pdf>

### **Sweden's drug control policies model for other States – UN official**

7 September 2006 – The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UN ODC) said today that Sweden’s successful drug control policies were a model which other countries could emulate.

Launching a UNODC report entitled Sweden’s *Successful Drug Policy: A Review of the Evidence*, Antonio Maria Costa, *said* drug use in Sweden was just a third of the European average while spending on drug control was three times the EU average.

“Societies have the drug problem that they deserve,” Mr. Costa said. “In Sweden’s case, the commitment to prevention, law enforcement, demand reduction and treatment over the past thirty years has made a significant difference.”

#### **Long term planning**

The report shows that amphetamine use in Sweden was high in the 1950s when those stimulants were readily available. Overall drug use rose in the second half of the 1960s during a period of relatively liberal drug policies but declined strongly in the 1970s and 1980s due to progressively tightening drug control.

Drug use rose again in the 1990s due to budget cuts, unemployment and growing drug supplies but has followed a clear downward trend since 2001 as a result of a National Action Plan, the establishment of a National Drug Coordinator and improved funding, according to the report.

More on: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html>

#### **Working with the Media on Gender and Education, UK**

There is an excellent new resource "*Working with the Media on Gender and Education: A Guide for Training and Planning*", prepared by Beyond Access in England. While the material specifically targets education and gender campaigners and coalitions, many of the materials apply to developing media advocacy strategies in all fields. Throughout the guide suggestions of activities to help groups generate discussion and explore the issues addressed in more depth are given and the guide is accompanied by a set of worksheets that correspond to these activities.

Beyond Access is a joint initiative set up in 2003 by Oxfam, Great Britain, the Institute of Education of the University of London, and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK government. On:

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/issues/education/genderequality\\_education.htm#guidemedia](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/education/genderequality_education.htm#guidemedia)  
[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/issues/education/downloads/education\\_media.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/education/downloads/education_media.pdf)

*Sent to us by IAW member Helen Self.*

#### **Gender for Journalists Toolkit**

The Commonwealth Press Union has put together a toolkit on Gender for Journalists. This is an interesting toolkit for those organisations who collect human rights news and disseminate the same as well as for those who prepare annual reports compilations, from news sources. This toolkit is designed to help journalists in the newsroom to understand the term ‘gender’ and to adopt the best practice when writing about gender issues.

For more information, see [www.cpu.org.uk/cpu-toolkits/gender\\_reporting/index.html](http://www.cpu.org.uk/cpu-toolkits/gender_reporting/index.html)

### **AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **Two Women Judges in the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, Sudan**

The Executive Council of the African Union meeting in Khartoum, Sudan, elected 11 Judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights on 21 January 2006. Two of the judges are women: Ms Sophia Akuffo (Ghana) and Mrs. Kelello Justina Masafu-Guni (Lesotho). Africa now has a Court with the jurisdiction to hear cases of human rights violations.

More on FEMNET <http://www.femnet.or.ke/viewnews.asp?ID=1>

#### **Women muftis breach male bastion**

Hyderabad, Aug. 30: Amina Batool (17 years old) is one of several young women practising as “muftias” — women muftis — in the city, delivering the Friday sermon in all-women mosques, resolving family and marital disputes, confirming divorces and issuing fatwas on current issues such as terrorism.

Amina and nine other women graduated last week from the city’s Jamiat-ul-Mominath, a deemed university of Islamic theology that has been training women as muftias skilled in interpreting the

Shariat for men and women in their personal matters.

### **A real change**

The real change came when many of the 100-odd women's mosques in Hyderabad opened their doors to muftias about a year ago. Jamiat director Mufti Mohammed Mastan Ali insists that the muftias — the face of a changing Muslim society — are not rebels. "They don't revolt against established religious practices and beliefs. We just felt that sermons from women muftis would attract more women, and a fatwa from a muftia on a women's issue would find greater compliance."

### **First sermon**

The 10 new graduates gave their first sermon with a packed all-woman mosque at Asifnagar listening to Amina in rapt attention.

The muftias have come out with edicts against terrorists after the Mumbai train blasts; they have ruled that short dresses are unbecoming of a Muslim woman. As they go on practising, the muftias are expected to continue with their theological studies for another 12 years. "They must live like ascetics in mosques and also travel around, preaching.

They need at least five years to understand and recite the Quran. They must also learn Arabic literature," Mastan Ali said. After completing the course, the muftias can marry.

### **Teaching at 30**

By the age of 30, the women would be in a position to teach at national institutes and head all-women mosques, the mufti said. However, they cannot practise at male congregations. Other than women's mosques, they can preach at all-women congregations, held at specified times in general mosques. Not a single verse in the Quran, nor a single Hadith (sayings of the Prophet) forbids women from becoming muftis. Aisha, the Prophet's favourite wife, became a religious authority after his death and served the community.

By G.S. Radhakrishna on: [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1060831/asp/nation/story\\_6680649.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1060831/asp/nation/story_6680649.asp)

*Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu*

### **Rape Law Rankles some Pakistan Lawmakers - a follow-up from the August newsletter**

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) -- Lawmakers from a coalition of six Islamic groups threatened on Tuesday to vacate their parliamentary seats if Pakistan's government changes a rape law criticized by human rights activists.

A walkout by the 68 lawmakers could destabilize the government of President General Pervez Musharraf, criticized by Islamic parties since his ruling party last month presented a bill to amend the law in a bid to protect women's rights.

Pakistan's National Assembly has 344 members. A walkout could force by-elections.

### **Four witnesses**

Under the current law, approved by a former military dictator in 1979, prosecuting a rape case requires testimony from four witnesses, making punishment almost impossible because such attacks are rarely public. A woman who claims she was raped but fails to prove her case can be convicted of adultery, punishable by death.

Maulana Fazalur Rahman, a leader of the Islamic coalition, said Tuesday that lawmakers in his group would vacate their seats in the National Assembly if the government tries to get the assembly's approval to change the law. "We will render every sacrifice for the protection of the Shariah (traditional Islamic) laws," he said at a news conference.

### **Amending the law and the witness requirement**

However, the ruling Pakistan Muslim Party - which has a majority in the assembly - has praised Musharraf for taking steps to amend the law and end the four-witness requirement.

*More on: [http://www.wunrn.com/news/09\\_11\\_06/091706\\_pakistan\\_parliament.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/09_11_06/091706_pakistan_parliament.htm)*

### **Stop calling it 'Eve Teasing', it is SEXUAL HARASSMENT!**

On the article in the August newsletter about Eve teasing in India, IAW members mailed us some useful comments.

In the first place, give this annoying behaviour its proper name. It is plain sexual harassment, or even sexual molestation of women by men. This kind of sexual harassment can range in severity from sexually coloured remarks to outright groping. It's a sneaky act of brutality, on the sly. Don't use a euphemism like Eve teasing. Be clear!

Look for more information about this nuisance at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eve\\_teasing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eve_teasing)

In the second place, don't be victimised! Don't be too ladylike or too modest. You can always call out loud in public: Stop that! Or: Shame on you! Or: Stay away from me! And stay with a group of friends, so you will have support.

There is still hope. Years ago my sister got 'pinched' in an elevator in London, so she turned around and gave the offender a good whack on his ear. It was many years ago and at that time 'pinching' seemed to be a kind of sport in the UK. It is over now!

As for my sister, behind her stood a couple with a son of 16 or so. She whacked the son, but it was the father who pinched her. Lots of commotion, but also lots of effect!

#### **Law and Court system**

There is a serious side on the twisting of words, members wrote us. On the issue, in which the law has distorted crimes of sexual violence against women by denying women as credible operators in the law and the court system, read; *The Incredible Woman - Power and Sexual Politics*, 2 vols, 1997, Artemis, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, by IAW member Dr Jocelyne A. Scutt.

#### **Dalit Women**

International conference on the human rights of Dalit women, on 21 November 2006 in The Hague, The Netherlands. Speakers will include Dalit women, United Nations Special Rapporteur Professor Chung, AWID executive director Ms Joanna Kerr, and the Mayor of The Hague, Mr Deetman.

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#### *Note*

In India and other countries in South Asia, over 200 million people are Dalits, also known as untouchables or outcasts. They experience violence, discrimination, and social exclusion on a daily basis.

The situation of Dalit women needs special attention. They are one of the largest socially segregated groups anywhere in the world, and make up more than two per cent of the world's total population. Dalit women are discriminated against three times over: they are poor, they are women, and they are Dalits. Many atrocities against Dalit women occur when untouchability practices are challenged or not adhered to. Violence and impunity are used as a means to preserve the existing caste and gender disparities.

#### **EDUCATION: 10 Billion Dollars Could Buy Universal Schooling**

More than 43 million children living in conflict-affected countries are not able to attend school, according to a new report released Tuesday by the International Save the Children Alliance, which called on donor countries and multilateral agencies to commit 5.8 billion dollars a year to address the problem.

The 48-page report, which was released in India and in 39 other countries worldwide, said only 30 percent of total foreign aid earmarked for education in the world's 63 poorest countries -- the vast majority in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia -- went to the 30 countries affected by or emerging from regional or internal conflicts.

Among the countries with the highest percentages of non-enrolment are Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sudan, and Uganda, according to the report, entitled "Rewrite the Future".

#### **Some 115 million children are still not enrolled**

It also comes amid growing concern that the goal set by world leaders at the 2000 Millennium Summit of ensuring that primary education is universally available by 2015 is unlikely to be met.

Some 115 million children -- or almost 20 percent of the world's primary school-aged children -- are still not enrolled, according to Britain's foreign aid agency which estimates that donors will have to increase their spending on primary education from the current two billion dollars a year to some 12 billion dollars a year in order to close the gap.

A selection from an article by Jim Lobe.

Read more on: <http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/index.html>

*IAW Convenor for Education: Meena Pimpalpure, India*

#### **EVENTS - CONFERENCES - WEBSITES - SPECIAL DAYS - REPORTS**

**The Main website of the UN General Assembly is on:** <http://www.un.org/ga/61/>

This is a wonderful website to bring the UN into your home.

Click for example on: News (very informative) and then on [Latest News](#) - [Press Releases](#) - [Radio](#) - [Webcast](#) - [Journal of the UN](#) - [Photos](#) The last one shows pictures of the speakers by country - women speaking for Spain, UK, Dominican Republic, Ireland, Costa Rica, Uruguay, US, Estonia, Zambia, Finland, Tonga, Venezuela etc. There are not many women, but they are there.

The Agenda of the UN General Assembly is on: <http://www.un.org/ga/61/issues/admin.shtml>

**Report: "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society"**, Council of Europe, on: [http://www.coe.int/t/e/Integrated\\_Projects/violence/09\\_Final\\_Report/](http://www.coe.int/t/e/Integrated_Projects/violence/09_Final_Report/)

**Publication: Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. A Revised Edition.**

Direct Link: [http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/upload/WiP\\_inlay.pdf](http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/upload/WiP_inlay.pdf)

25 September- 6 October 2006: **UNCTAD, Trade and Development**, Geneva

2-6 october 2006: Committee on the **Rights of the Child**, pre-sessional working group, Geneva

9-18 October 2006: **Transnational Crimes and its Protocols**, Vienna

October the 17th - **World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty**

8 December 2006 in Geneva. Sixth Review Conference of States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of **Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction** On <http://www.unog.ch/>

#### **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@womenalliance.org>
International Women's News :	Priscilla Todd (English)	<iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org
		: Cécile Ouédraogo (French)
	<aifndi@womenalliance.org>	
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