

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Equal Rights—Equal Opportunities
Droits égaux—responsabilités égales

www.womenalliance.org



Newsletter April 2016

no. 2

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Dear members and subscribers

First of all—note the information below about Congress in Zimbabwe and what to do to attend. Note that you get the cheapest rate by registering and booking your room before April 29.

We have reports from CSW 60, where Agreed Conclusions were adopted and where IAW had a very successful parallel event, organized by Torild Skard, Norway.

Lyda Versteegen reports from events in Geneva, and Rosy comments on women's participation in the Syrian peace talks.

Deadline for contributions to the next Newsletter is May 15.

Enjoy the Newsletter!

News from IAW

37th IAW Congress

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, November 8—16 2016.

Congress in Zimbabwe:

Registration and payment

NB! NB! NB! NB! NB! NB!

Please, note the following important information:

To get the cheapest rate at the venue: Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, you must do two things:

1. Complete a **registration document**
2. **Book a room** —individually and on time i.e. before April 29 - at the hotel. A description of how to do that is in the document: Second Call to Congress.

You will find both **the registration form** and **Second Call to Congress** [by clicking this link](#)

It is possible to register and book a room after May 1. Accommodation will be more expensive, but still reduced.

If you have questions, send an email to Lene Pind at lenepind@gmail.com

Message from Cameroon



Georgette Taku

On the occasion of the Second Call for Congress, we have received this message from Georgette Taku, RENATA, in Cameroon:

The IAW impacted my life in a wonderful way in 2010. I gathered a lot of strength and inspiration from all the strong women and since then my leadership changed.

One great thing I admire in the IAW is the opportunity for intergenerational dialogue. It is so inspiring to have elderly women and younger women together. The space that they create for the younger generation and also for believing in them. I came in just like an observer but I was given the opportunity to present in the plenary, that I can never forget. I can just go on and on... Thank you IAW for inspiring me in such a wonderful way, keep impacting lives and with your help, we will make the world a better place for women and girls.

There was a lot of energy in the songs the women sang during the 2010 Congress in South Africa. I learnt this very powerful song which was sung almost every day and I carried it with me to our two years program on African Women Leadership and Mentoring Initiative offered by the Coady Institute in Canada, sponsored by Urgent Action Fund Africa. I taught this song to the participants who came from five different countries, and it was sung throughout the two years program. It was adopted as the Anthem for the women. The song goes like this "Elelizwe ela makhosikazi, asoze, asoze a phele mandla. Asoze a phele mandla, asoze, asoze a phele mandla. It means this world belongs to women and they will never lose hope and will persevere" I got the lyrics and meaning from Mmabatho Ramagoshi. I feel so proud about IAW and I feel so honoured to be a member. Keep inspiring lives!!!

*Warmest regards from Cameroon
Georgette Taku*

CSW 60



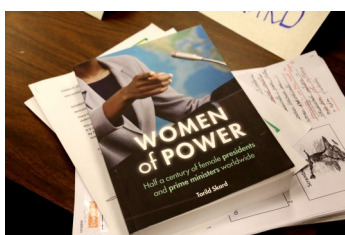
Agreed Conclusions

The Agreed Conclusions were adopted on the last day of the session of the Commission on the Status of Women. This is what the UK newspaper [The Guardian](#) writes about the negotiations at the end of the Session

[Find the Agreed Conclusions here](#)

How to get more women top leaders

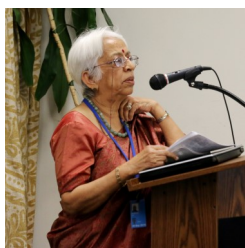
- Two reports from IAW parallel event at CSW60



1. Political parties prevent progress (Torild Skard)

Studying the 73 women presidents and prime ministers from the Second World War to 2010 Torild Skard in her book “Women of Power” notes that women must not only be exceptionally well qualified to rise to the top. The country must have a democratic political system and an active women’s movement demanding gender parity in the political leadership.

[Read the whole story](#)



Asha Gambhir

2. Village Adoption – A Case Study (Asha Gambhir)

In 2006 AIWC adopted a village in Haryana, a neighbouring state to the capital city – New Delhi. The village was chosen because it had a woman as the Head of the Panchayat (A Village council traditionally of 5 elders in the village). In an effort to bring women to take up leadership roles the Government of India had allocated a certain percentage of seats for them in the Panchayat. But unfortunately, though led by a woman, the Panchayat was dominated by men. Additionally, caste was also a predominant issue with the upper caste discriminating against the lower caste.

[Read the whole success story](#)

News from IAW International
Representatives

New York

International representatives

Soon-Young Yoon, New York, was a discussant at the UN Women Stakeholders' Forum on January 21. Here she spoke on one of her favourite issues:

["Cities and Leadership for Women's Human Rights"](#) - Cities for CEDAW

[Cities for CEDAW Toolkit is available](#)

Geneva

Lyda Vestegen reports from Geneva

The Man who Mends Women



Lyda Vestegen

On International Women's day in Geneva I saw a screening of a film that until recently was forbidden in Congo: *The Man who Mends Women*.

It is about Dr Denis Mukwege, a pediatrician who studied gynaecology after he discovered the horrible results of the warlike conditions in East Congo (DRC).

Fistula is the condition which, after rape, makes women leak urine and faeces. The women are shunned by their family and community. Dr Mukwege mends them.

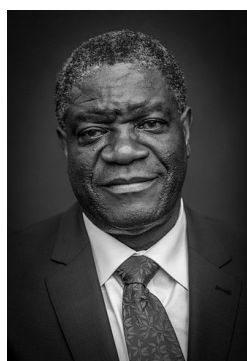
Dr Mukwege was threatened in 2012 and fled to Europe. The rural women wanted him to come back, so they sold their crops of pineapples to pay for a ticket for him to come back to his hospital in Bukavu.

The film shows women at work in the hills of Eastern Congo, it shows the troops of soldiers threatening them, forcing whole villages to pack up and flee, and then taking their land, after having raped the women, sometimes children, even babies. There is a superstition that raping young children will cure AIDS.

The war started when, after the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda, the Hutus escaped to Congo. They continued with the same practices they had used at home. The Congolese army, trying to stop them, was not much better.

This violence against women and children in a conflict situation must be prosecuted. The impunity of these crimes is scandalous. In the film Dr Mukwege pleads for that, both when he received the Sacharov prize in the European Parliament, and when he spoke to the UN General Assembly.

'What role for the International Community?' was the title of the event in



Dr. Denis Mukwege

Geneva, hosted by the Belgian Mission, in the presence of Dr Mukwege and Ms Dubravka Simonovic', special rapporteur on violence against women.

The film, directed by Thierry Michel and Colette Braeckman, is a tribute to the resilient women, who underwent such horrors. It was forbidden in DRC because it showed the crimes of the Congolese Army.

It is to be hoped that these crime against humanity will eventually get punished!

Lyda Versteegen reports further:

On March 8 2016, the Centre on Gender and Global Change of the Graduate's Institute in Geneva hosted a very joyful event: a debate on a motion saying:

'This house believes betting on gender parity as the game changer is a risky gamble.'

[Read more](#)

Arina Angerman

represents IAW on the Board of the European Women's Lobby and lives in Amsterdam. She reports:

Step it Up for Gender Equality in EU

In the first six months of 2016, The Netherlands is President of the European Union ([EU2016NL](#)).



In the draft EU Statement at the 60th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, minister (and feminist) Jet Bussemaker says, *"The EU welcomes the commitments to gender equality, empowerment of all women and girls and the full realization of their human rights taken with the 2030 Agenda, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda ... We also applaud the inclusion of violence against women and girls in the 2030 agenda ... The elimination of violence against women is a prerequisite for sustainable development ... It is now time to implement what we promised ... We need to fully implement SDG 5. We need to fully implement a gender equality perspective into all goals. Targets and indicators across the Agenda ... For the EU, it's of paramount importance to strengthen civil society organizations' role as advocates for gender equality and women's empowerment in the 2030 Agenda..."*

Combating violence against women: prevention

Violence against women (VAW) is the most widespread violation of women's human rights: one out of three women is a victim of sexual and/or physical violence in the EU. VAW is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. The most unsafe place for women and girls is at home. Small arms like knives (which are classified as small arms), pistols and rifles are easy to buy and conceal. They give a sense of power to a partner, ex-partner, family member or acquaintance and are great threats to the safety of women and girls. Preventive measure save states and civil society a great deal of money!



[Read also the IAW emergency motion adopted at EWL General Assembly 2015.05.31](#)

The European Commission has proposed for the European Union to ratify the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention to fight violence against women.

[Read press-release](#)

“On 8 March 2016 12 Member States (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden) had already ratified the Convention. “

EWL welcomes the European Commission proposal for the EU to access the Istanbul Convention 2016.03.08 [More information](#)

Nice to know too: the European Commission wants to dedicate the year 2017 to ending violence against women. Note 3 Banning of small arms must be part of this European Year on Combating Violence Against Women too.

[Read also the IAW emergency motion adopted at EWL General Assembly 2015.05.31](#)

[Read more](#)

Commission Conveners

Health



Commission Conveners

Mitigating Climate Change

Gudrun Haupter, convener of the IAW Commission on Health, gives her personal view on the intricacies of concentrating all efforts to mitigate climate change on consumption.

Excessive consumption does harm sustainable development and is a major cause of Climate Change—only a fool could deny that.

However, if the fight against over consumption was won and ever more people understood the issue, tax revenue would decrease substantially, with negative impact on health and pension benefits. If you make the rich pay to compensate shrinking tax income levels, this source will quickly dry up.

To understand the links between reliable tax income and good standards of health services and medicines [click here](#)

We read: “Out-of-pocket spending is the most frequent way to pay for health services around the world. However, as a share of the total value of global health spending, it is eclipsed by social insurance, private insurance and general taxation. In fact, government revenues are the predominant source for health care expenditures in 106 out of 191 WHO member countries.”

Does that mean in more than half of all countries all inhabitants benefit from government revenues to have their health needs looked after? For a variety of reasons the answer is negative. This is not only due to accountability gaps it is also a consequence of a large informal sector and the scarcity of formal employment.

My examples are from Ghana in Sub-Sahara Africa ,ranked as a country with lower middle-class income, and from Togo, its neighbour to the East. [My Wage/ Ghana](#) details the conditions under which government and private sector employees are entitled to receive Social security benefits in Ghana.

National health insurance exists since 2003 and was considered to be a milestone until the 10-year check revealed that only 65 % of the population had health co-

verage. This is a bad score for a country that aims at achieving Universal health coverage. It means almost two thirds of the population still pays out-of-pocket in the burdensome and inequitable “cash and carry” system.

[Read more](#)

As to francophone Togo go to <file:///C:/Users/Gudrun/Downloads/120302302.pdf> to get an English resume.

Annual population growth rates from 2014 are 2.4 % in Ghana, and 2.66 % in Togo.

[Info on more countries](#) - **Attention:** Besides the number of live births per woman the growth rate takes other factors into account too.

What needs to be done to keep the numbers that hide behind the 65 % of people without health coverage from growing rapidly? Step up NOW the provision of sustainable family planning services as well as information allowing people, in particular poor and young women, to make informed and responsible decisions and avoid untimely and high-risk pregnancies.

No miracle can be expected but, like Helen Self, I endorse David Attenborough’s argument that there is not a problem which would not be made easier by population reduction.

Have a look at [Population Awareness](#) and [Population Matters and International Women’s Day](#)

I do hope many of my readers go along with David: “Efforts to develop scientific solutions to persuade people to consume less and waste less are certainly welcome, but only go so far. Increasing the proportion of people opting for smaller families and for a decrease of the number of unintended pregnancies, is the easiest, cheapest and safest approach to limiting our ecological footprint on the planet”.

Peace and Security



Rosy Weiss, convener of Commission on Peace and Security

Women’s inclusion in Syria peace talks.

3 women out of 15 members of both negotiating teams and women advisors to the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) and the HNC delegation. The UN mediator, Staffan de Misura, counselled by a board of 12 Syrian women and 1 international gender advisor. This is the big difference to the unsuccessful first Syrian peace talks in 2014. As Hibaaq Osman (from el-Karama, to the successful side event at the margins of CSW59) said: “The voices of the women openly protesting together with men against Bashar-as-Assad, March 2011, have been silenced by gunmen”.

The basis for women’s participations in Geneva has been laid down in resolution 2254 of the UN Security Council past December, calling for “the meaningful participation of women in the UN facilitated political process for Syria”. February 2016 Staffan de Misura called the Syrian Women’s Advisory Board to life. The Board is composed of 12 representatives of civil society of different social and ideological backgrounds chosen from Syrian women’s organisations.

However, numbers aren’t enough. Women must also have meaningful access and influence. It is now up to women, supported by de Misura, to get their voices heard and become accepted in these up to now male dominated negotiations. According to rumours these women have been instructed

by UN officers not to show too much of emotions, to try “to outwit the men, to remain more or less neutral and to keep to only two or three main messages”.

What do you think: Is it good will of the UN boys or still the old patriarchal system looming behind their encouraging hints? Knowing Hibaaq and her sisters, I am pretty much sure that they do not need any good advice to make them heard and carry out meaningful influence.

Around the World

News from the World

Helen Self, individual member in the UK, has sent this article from the Guardian:

[Rise in use of contraception offers hope for containing global population](#)

According to the article, the number of women using contraceptives in developing countries has soared to record levels in recent years, such that projections for global population growth could be cut by as much as 1 billion over the next 15 years.

“Arguments and figures give hope” says Gudrun Haupter, Convener of the IAW Commission on Women’s Health, but.....

“Take the case of Nigeria with 18 % contraceptive prevalence (and extremely fast population growth):

To achieve a one percent increase means for many years serving a growing cohort of young women. The “newcomers” contraceptive needs have to be satisfied, too, there must not be interruption of stocks and services, and of course, no political upheavals or warlike conflicts.

To reduce the number of newcomers, paternalism and child marriages have to decrease fast and steadily.

Most campaigns seem to focus on child marriage, whereas USAID issued a Resource guide on Child, Early and Forced Marriage.

The latter is an issue in Germany which has a large Turkish community and has a law to punish those involved in forced marriage. Understandably the women do not dare to denounce the perpetrators, and that hints NGOs engaged to help the women get to know are only the tip of the iceberg.

I know I am the devil’s advocate.”

Right to sexual and reproductive health indivisible from other human rights - UN experts in new legal commentary:

The right to sexual and reproductive health is not only an integral part of the general right to health but fundamentally linked to the enjoyment of many other human rights, including the rights to education, work and equality, as well as the rights to life, privacy and freedom from torture, and individual autonomy, UN experts have said in an authoritative new legal commentary.

Yet, the experts from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) note, “the full enjoyment of the right to sexual and reproductive health remains a distant goal for millions of people, especially for

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

women and girls, throughout the world.”

[See more](#) and read the [whole commentary](#) (click English file to open)

IPU

[Inter-Parliamentary Union](#) reports that despite an increase in the number of women Speakers of Parliament, the number of female parliamentarians across the world rose by only 0.5 percentage points in 2015, dashing hopes that gender parity in parliament could be achieved within a generation.

In its annual report, *Women in Parliament 2015: the Year in Review*, the IPU stated that women now account for 22.6 per cent of the world's Members of Parliament.

“Although this figure is an all-time high and represents the continued upward trend for women in parliament, the rate of progress in 2015 was another setback from the 1.5 percentage points witnessed in 2013,” the IPU said.

The overall growth in the past decade has been 6.4 points, and with the “snail-pace” growth rate in 2015, the IPU said the trend does little to inspire confidence the situation will change any time soon.

This is particularly disappointing given the push to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030, as part of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

[Read more](#) and find the statistics of your own country.



Female politicians at a meeting of women lawmakers from Arab States and members of the European Parliament in November 2014 in Brussels, Belgium. Photo: UN Women/Emad Karim

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