

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES
Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWSLETTER - April 1999

Dear IAW members,

March 1999 was an important UN month. In this Newsletter there is wonderful news: the adoption of the Optional Protocol! At last, after four long years of negotiating at international level. Also news about HEALTH and INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN and of course, about the IAW.

IAW 1999 CONGRESS

August 30 - September 3 1999

VENUE: United Nations Church Centre, 777 United Nations Plaza (First Avenue),
New York NY 10017 USA.

THEME: "International Agenda - Challenges and Choices"

Seminar: "Priorities for the 21st Century" Saturday, August 28 1- 4 pm

Board Meetings: Sunday, August 29 3.00 pm
Saturday, Sept. 4

9.30 am

The Registration Desk will be open on Saturday & Sunday, August 28-29, 10 am - 4 pm.

Our President, Patricia Giles, sends her appreciation to all IAW members who receive this Newsletter for their co-operation in spreading news of the change of dates of the IAW Congress. [Inadvertently the IWN edition you have just received has the wrong dates so please continue to inform as many IAW members as possible of the new dates.] The earlier dates were necessary in order to ensure there would be sufficient rooms available and at the best price. By mid-September UN delegates are filling the hotels and room prices increase by at least US\$60 per day.

REGISTRATION FEE: US \$250.00

The fee includes translation/interpreters; Congress kit; light breakfasts at Congress Centre, lunches and Congress dinner.

Registration Forms will be enclosed in the next edition of IWN which will reach you in May. Also information about the programme for the Congress will be available then. Meanwhile it would be wise to book your hotel rooms as soon as you can.

HOTELS:

New York Helmsley Hotel 212 East 42nd Street. New York NY 10017
Tel: +1 212 490 8900 FAX +1 212 986 7756
Rates: US\$165.00 Single or Double Room
US\$195.00 Triple

of women who suffer human rights violations. Quotation: Despite the flaws, the Optional Protocol is an important tool and Amnesty International will work together with other NGOs to promote a clear and grassroots understanding of how it can be used to protect women's human rights.

The Optional Protocol contains two procedures: a communications procedure allowing individual women, or groups of women, to submit claims of violations of rights to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and an enquiry procedure enabling the Committee to initiate enquiries into situations of grave or systematic violations of women's rights. In either case, states must be party to the Protocol. The Optional Protocol will be submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations for adoption later this year, and should be open for signature, ratification and accession in 2000.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

The UN working group on institutional mechanisms during the 43rd CSW gave interesting examples of how women tried to tackle the implementation of equality for women in sometimes very complicated situations. Here are, for example, a few quotations of the fascinating report from the Gender Program Officer in Suva, Fiji.

Our office has a regional geographical coverage of 10 countries. Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Federal State of Micronesia, Palau, Marshall Islands and Nauru are culturally, historically, politically, economically and socially different and we have a country program covering each of them. [This is followed by a summary of the programs per country.] The social fabric of each of these countries is extremely diversified. Melanesia is strongly patrilineal with some spots of matrilineality in some islands: Polynesia is matrilineal; Micronesia is matrilineal but with different patterns. In matrilineal areas women can own land and in some countries they fight against losing their rights. In other countries they not only do not own land but there are ethnic differences. National machineries are therefore called upon to juggle with these differences and this makes some issues difficult to be raised in the same way in different countries. Gender equality goals may be shadowed in some countries in favour of advancement of women, while others prefer gender equity and empowerment of women as a global goal.

Another interesting report came from The International Association of Women Judges Foundation, which has developed an innovative training program:

Women, Judges and Human Rights Law (JEP), which prepares judges to resolve cases alleging discrimination and/or violence against women in accordance with international human rights norms. They are working with JEP in five South American nations and are now taking steps to bring JEP to Central America and to South Eastern nations in Africa. A small group of woman judges from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa has already met.

The Parliamentarians for Global Action is an association of 1300 parliamentarians from 100 countries who join the network to work on global challenges such as the promotion of democracy, conflict prevention and resolution, women's political participation, international criminal justice, economic revitalisation, and population.

There are also reports of good practices in Bangladesh, Chile, the

Philippines, Japan, Israel, Northern Ireland, d Canada etc. The conclusions of the 43rd CSW are to be found on HYPERLINK:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/>

IAW Commission Convenor: Lene Pind

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The virtual discussion on the Inter-agency Global Videoconference: A World Free of Violence Against Women, will be continued and will also explore new ways of virtual communication! In the first place, Unifem has decided, by popular demand, to extend the virtual discussion. During the coming two months four objectives will be explored. The working group will:

- 1) expand networking;
- 2) build a database of resources;
- 3) provide an events calendar and most interesting;
- 4) Unifem will create an EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

That fourth objective is a very interesting one. The working group will help to identify outstanding strategies being used to combat violence against women. The Unifem Task Force will review all of the strategies and select some that can make a powerful contribution to addressing needs of organisations in other countries. Unifem will then facilitate face-to-face exchange visits between two groups that can advance the efforts of both groups. The visit, and resources that emerge from the joint exchange, will be reported back to the working group. Unifem will also arrange presentations of effective strategies to international agencies and foundations. In this way we can help to build the capacity of local groups to provide technical assistance to others, as well as facilitate their access to the international community.

VIDEO

A copy of the Global Videoconference video as it was broadcast on March 8 - Nairobi, New Delhi, Mexico City and Strasbourg - can be ordered now. It is currently in English and may be translated. The price of the video [2 tapes duration 140 minutes] is US \$39.95 plus US\$3.00 for postage and handling. For requests coming from the United States and Canada, a VHS- NTSC formatted version of the videoconference will be sent; for Europe, a PAL formatted version will be sent unless specified otherwise. If you would like to receive the video, please mail a cheque for \$42.95 (US dollars drawn on a US bank) or money order in US dollars payable to UNIFEM to the following address: Mailing Address: UNIFEM (Attn. S. Kapoor), 304 East 45th Street New York, NY 10017.

The discussion about VIOLENCE is circling at the moment around the sub-theme: When and How to contact the Media. For example, how can an organisation maintain a balance between sensationalism and the implementation of good practices? A very interesting discussion. E-mail networks can be wonderful!

HEALTH

The revised draft of the 43rd CSW with agreed conclusions on Women and Health is to be found on HYPERLINK:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/healthagree.htm>

For the next Newsletter we will ask IAW Commission Convenor Gudrun Haupter to comment on the result of the 43rd CSW and to look forward with us to Beijing +5 on Health.

WOMEN! RAISE YOUR HAND FOR PEACE!

Women all over the world are deeply concerned by the atrocities of civil wars in Afghanistan, in some parts of Africa and now in Kosovo. Our heart goes out to women and children, who are suffering most. We are also sending our best wishes to our courageous IAW members, who are doing everything they can to help. From May 11 to 15, 1999, thousands of people will gather at the Hague Appeal for Peace to create an Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century.

IWTC writes: However, most of us cannot participate in the meetings in The Hague. So we are inviting you to send us a short message, in your own language, that we can place on a cut-out of a hand and stand in a prominent part of the conference building. Please keep the message limited to two or three lines only.

Sent an e-mail to HYPERLINK: iwtc@igc.apc.org iwtc@igc.apc.org or mail by post to: IWTC, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Deadline April 15, 1999.

WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN - 2000

Marching with women against poverty and violence in the year 2000 is a Canadian initiative. The European continent was sadly under-represented in October 1998 in Montreal. To popularise the March, women groups from European countries are invited to Paris on April 17 and 18 1999 - Maison de l'Europe, 35 rue des Francs Bourgeois, 75004 Paris. More news will follow.

IAW Commission Convenor on Poverty: Anje Wiersinga

DIRECT NEWS FROM IAW MEMBERS :

AUDITS AND AWARDS

Marieluise Weber writes us that the University of the Bundeswehr in Hamburg Germany is doing research work about all audits and awards which exist in the different countries. Of particular interest will be the outcome on SOCIAL audits, for example on Equal Opportunities and Gender Aspects. A conference is planned in April and there is a questionnaire in German language that can be translated upon request. More information will follow. On e-mail networks this kind of topic is also being discussed. There is the excellent action of our IAW Affiliate the Lucy Stone Foundation with HUNDRED HEROINES, to draw attention to the differences between the kind of awards women and men receive. And, in another way, by women in Australia, where the Olympic Games are to be held - who will be the torchbearers?

NEWS FROM CADEF in MALI

The president of CADEF in Mali, Ms Hadja Assa Dallo Saumare, writes that she was in Paris for the celebration of the 50th anniversary. During the festivities she took the floor to speak about African women and their rights of democracy, and the importance of the globalisation of world economy. In Paris she also participated in the struggle for equality for women in politics, a cause supported by Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of France.

On March 8, International Women's day, CADEF organised a meeting with women pioneers to discuss the Beijing Platform, human rights for women and children and reproductive rights. Now CADEF is preparing a campaign to support women for the next elections at regional level and

local community level in MALI. CADEF is also organising several meetings with young people about the reproductive rights of women.

DATA, FIGURES FROM ROSY WEISS

We received an interesting article by Rosy Weiss, IAW Commission Convenor of All Forms of Violence/Trafficking in Women and member of the Executive Board of the IAW. In this Newsletter we cannot give the article the necessary space, but we would like to draw your special attention to the next IWNNews.

MELISSA AND OTHER VIRUSES, ATTACHMENTS

Until we know more about all those viruses we will send you NO attachments for the moment, but we can send all our news by e-mail. If you would like, for instance, more specified news for your national bulletin about the IAW, please do not hesitate to write us. We can always TRY to help you.

For example, maybe an IAW Affiliate of Fiji, Japan or another country would like to know what report was written during the virtual discussion of institutional mechanisms. We can always send information by e-mail.

Thanks to you all who have helped preparing the Newsletter! Next time, as promised, more about the Prepcom and the Year of the Elderly.

With best wishes
from the Editorial Committee IAW on Internet (EC),
Joke Sebus

NB

We invite you to redistribute this Newsletter to IAW members without an e-mail address. Also, please advise us if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address, and in that case: please be so kind to contact Pat Richardson.

International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

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