

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER - August, nr. 7



**Equal
Rights**

Dear IAW members,

The preparation of WSSD in Johannesburg is in full swing and the events in Johannesburg will be followed with great interest by us all, in the daily news and on the internet. Will there be a reliable result afterwards? One of the bottlenecks up to now has been the attitude of the United States. We like to join the US NGOs in asking: What are we going to do about the United States? IAW members Mmabatho Ramogoshi, Amy Mokorosi and Ida Kurth will attend WSSD. In this newsletter also news about CEDAW, ICC, the new Commissioner for Human Rights and a short note about a wonderful and inspiring conference called Know How 2002 in Kampala, Uganda. And you will find more news about the planning of the 32nd IAW Congress in Sri Lanka next month.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

US NGOs ASK: "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THE UNITED STATES?"

Groups encouraged to sign NGO Statement for World Summit on Sustainable Development

NGOs, citizen and public interest groups are asking for your signature to a statement addressing critical priorities and concerns about the positions and actions of the U.S. government at the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. Originally produced and delivered at a press conference last month in Bali, Indonesia at the final preparatory meeting for the Summit, the statement responds to the question asked throughout the two weeks of the meeting: "What are we going to do about the United States?"

This question, repeating an informal comment by Chairman Emil Salim during the meeting, reflects the frustration of people seriously concerned with a decade of increasing environmental degradation, deepening poverty, and corporate irresponsibility not effectively being addressed by world leaders, especially the United States. At the same time, the US administration is presenting itself as a global leader in sustainability and good governance, bending the definition of sustainable development to fit its own agenda of deregulation, privatisation, voluntary approaches by corporations, and a refusal to ratify and support key international environmental agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and Biodiversity Convention.

Action: NGO Statement on WSSD Johannesburg

Therefore, US groups working for the public interest want to make it clear to the news media and the American people that they are seriously concerned about the lack of leadership by the US government on sustainable development, as seen in both its policies and its performance at the Summit. The signed statement will be sent to President Bush and Secretary of State Powell just before the Summit begins. To add your organisation or name to the NGO statement: "What Are We Going to Do About the United States? A Call for Leadership on Sustainability" go to <http://www.citnet.org/endorse> For more information about the statement and campaign, contact: Citizens Network for Sustainable Development at <info@citnet.org> For more information about the World Summit on Sustainable Development, go to <http://www.citnet.org/worldsummit> and also the official UN website for the WSSD at <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org>

More than 100 World Leaders Expected in Johannesburg for World Summit on Sustainable Development

New York, 29 July United Nations Press Release

Leaders of more than 100 countries have officially indicated that they will attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development that will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September.

The Summit will be an historic opportunity for world leaders, together with representatives of citizen groups and the private sector, to commit to decisive actions that will promote better standards of living in a better global environment. Among the world leaders that have expressed interest in attending are 58

Heads of State, 40 Heads of Government, 7 Vice-Presidents and one Crown Prince. The indication of interest comes from the drawing of lots for speaking times at the Summit, and is subject to change.

"The Summit is clearly a must for world leaders," according to Johannesburg Summit Secretary-General Nitin Desai. "It is evident that most leaders see the importance of attending the Summit to revitalise efforts to pursue sustainable development. They see this as a major chance to make something happen."

Plan of Implementation

Countries have already agreed on three-quarters of a draft. To expedite the negotiations, South Africa has invited delegations to come to Johannesburg two days early, to begin pre-Summit consultations on 24 August. In addition to the Plan of Implementation, the Summit will result in a political declaration adopted by the world leaders in attendance, and it is expected that a large number of partnership initiatives will be launched in Johannesburg as part of the Summit. The partnership initiatives, by and between governments, NGOs, and the private sector, are intended to bring additional resources to the table and deliver results on the ground.

PEACE TRAIN

The objective of the Peace Train is to pass on a strong message to the continent leaders, warmongers, armies, guerrillas, arms traders and dealers in the African continent that women want peace and stability for their children and future generations and call upon the ringleaders and perpetrators of these wars to end them forthwith. Women in Africa bear the brunt of the war burden and see the WSSD as a good opportunity to campaign for the end of these wars and would like to use the peace train to both pass on the message to people in the continent and in the rest of the world. The train is scheduled to start from Kampala, Uganda, through Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe to arrive in Johannesburg on time for the WSSD Conference.

Women's Action Tent

A 5-day programme will be organised in the Women's Action Tent, starting on at the Opening Ceremony on Sunday, August 25, on the following themes:

- * Globalisation and Impoverishment
- * Environmental Security and Health
- * Access to and Control of Resources: Water, Energy, Land
- * Governance
- * Peace and Human Rights

Organisers: WEDO, Ilitha Labantu, Malibongwe, HBS.

Asia's Water Biggest Killer of Children

Polluted water and poor sanitation kill two children each minute, according to environmental experts at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Most of the victims live in Asia and contaminated water is the single biggest killer of children. Worldwide, more children have died from the effects of severe diarrhoea, a product of polluted water and poor sanitation, than all the people killed through armed conflicts since World War II. Growing populations, urbanisation, and economic development are placing great pressures on the quantity and quality of Asia's freshwater supply. Inadequately enforced legislation in recent years as well as ineffective water resource planning, management, and co-ordination are to blame, according to "State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific, 2000", a joint publication of UN ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank.

A delegation from UN ESCAP, led by Mr. Kim Hak-Su, UN ESCAP's Executive Secretary, will call on international Government representatives gathering at Johannesburg for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to implement the necessary measures to tackle this crisis.

"UN ESCAP will do its part to ensure the outcome of Johannesburg 2002 is successfully implemented," Mr. Kim has pledged. Governments in the UN ESCAP region are aware of the problems. Last November, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, they formulated a regional plan of action to ensure sustainable development.

One of seven initiatives agreed to by Asian and Pacific members of UN ESCAP for follow-up actions to the WSSD aims to promote:

- a national focus on fostering the integrated management of freshwater resources and basins;
- improving and expanding the delivery of services, especially to the poor; fostering the conservation of water and increasing system efficiency;
- promoting regional co-operation and mutually beneficial use of shared water resources within and between countries.

Details of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform On Sustainable Development For Asia And The Pacific can be found on the UN ESCAP website at:

http://www.unescap.org/enrd/environment/Activities/hrm_wssd.htm

IAW Melbourne, Women, Water and Environmental Management

Topics vital for Australia, the world's driest continent, and which have broader international and UN implications brought women together from member-based NGOs, the environmental professions and governance bodies in Melbourne, Victoria on July 30.

Speakers on three major topics - The Metropolitan Water Strategy Review; Victorian Water Issues in the Global Context; Working with Women for Sustainable Development - set the stage for a series of workshops where young women were prominent, presenting information from their fields of work and action in water and the environment. One workshop facilitator said: "Women can drive a dramatic change in public policy response for better and sustainable strategies to respond to the water crisis. To ensure our activism is focused and effective we need to improve our technical knowledge and networks. To ensure we encourage inclusive decision-making we have to make special efforts to engage a broad and diverse range of stakeholders through participatory means that are appropriate to them. We believe in encouraging sophisticated debate about the complex areas of sustainable management and use of water."

Caroline Lambert, Women's Rights Action Network Australia (a regular Australian attendee at CSW), ran a stimulating workshop on Women and Leadership at the UN. IAW President Pat Giles issued a call to action for women to work together towards the next world conference of women and for the world-wide implementation of CEDAW and the Optional Protocol.

The Forum heard about many opportunities for engagement including a Waterwatch program for monitoring stream quality, the forthcoming Water Law Book, CleanWater week in October 2002 and The Year of Clean Water 2003.

Sheila Byard. <cassia@vicnet.net.au>

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN - 32nd CONGRESS

At the time of writing IAW members representing 25 countries are registered for Congress in Colombo next month. The Sri Lanka Women's Conference, has a long and proud history of involvement in women's issues. Nearly 50 years ago, the first IAW Asian Regional Conference and then the first IAW Congress held in Asia were hosted by the then All-Ceylon Women's Conference. Its President, Ezlynn Deraniyagala, who served on the IAW Board from 1949, was elected IAW President in 1958, a position she held until 1964.

Now, in 2002 the Alliance will start celebrating its conception in Washington 100 years ago, and will set down plans for what is hoped will be a worldwide celebration in 2004 of its inauguration in Berlin 1904.

The Congress in Colombo will commence with the traditional Inaugural Ceremony. A diverse and interesting programme organised by our affiliate includes speakers of international standing, a seminar that will discuss and take decisions on strategies for Mechanisms for Shared Gender Leadership and some

wonderful entertainment. Some of the business issues for Congress include a proposed new Constitution, the admission of new Affiliate and Associate member organisations, editorial changes

for International Women's News and the election of a new Board. We will receive reports from our IAW representatives at UN and Regional level and IAW Affiliates and Associates will inform us of their national and local activities.

There are also some proposals coming in for the Action Programme. You will find on the Dutch website on <http://www.vrouwenbelangen.nl> and linking from there, a collection of articles and notes to be used in a IAW discussion on: "Religion and Secular Law". The articles are in English, French and Dutch and copied mostly from the Internet. The big question at Congress is: "What is or will be the position of Women?" The major work of Congress will be to workshop and determine the Action Programme for the coming triennium.

To anyone still interested in attending - please send your registration NOW to the Congress

**Coordinator, Manel Abeysekera at her new email address :
COLOMBO PLAN <ppad@sltnet.lk>.**

**To delegates - please read the Communiqués and note that unless you send all necessary information to the Congress Coordinator, especially your arrival and departure flight particulars,
your accommodation may be cancelled.**

BUSH ADMINISTRATION ATTEMPTS TO SIDELINE WOMEN'S RIGHTS

CEDAW sent to US Senate

Washington Post, July 31, 2002

Senate Democrats sent a UN treaty on women's rights drafted 23 years ago and already approved by 170 countries to the full Senate for ratification yesterday, rejecting appeals from the Bush administration that the treaty needed more reviews. With two Republicans joining Democrats, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 12 to 7 to advance the treaty - the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - for a full Senate vote. Republican Gordon Smith of Oregon and Lincoln D. Chafee of Rhode Island joined the panel's 10 Democrats. The Bush administration wanted to delay ratification, saying that while it supported the general goals of the convention, it was still reviewing it. But the committee's chairman, Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.), said if the panel did not act now on the treaty, there would be little hope of getting the full Senate to ratify it before Congress ends this year.

The treaty urges nations to remove barriers to equality for women in education, employment, marriage and divorce, health care, and other areas. Signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1980, the treaty has been sidelined by conservatives who said it could be used to promote abortion and to undermine concepts of traditional families. The United States is the only industrialised nation among the 21 countries that have not ratified the treaty, including Iran, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Monaco and the United Arab Emirates

US Cuts of \$34 million to UN Agency Draws Anger

Diplomats and officials were appalled at the Bush administration's decision to cut support for the UN Population Fund, saying the move was motivated by domestic politics at the expense of women and children's health. But experts say the fallout will be minimal, noting that Washington and its allies have survived bigger crises in the last year and a half.

Europe, Canada, Japan and the United Nations have been frustrated and disappointed with this administration's decisions to opt out of the Kyoto protocol on climate change and talks on biological weapons. Most recently, the United States nearly backed out of its participation in the international criminal court. The battles have been contentious and left bruises between America and its allies at a time when Washington needs them most in the war on terrorism.

The latest row over funding for the UN agency that runs family planning programs in 141 poor nations baffled many inside UN headquarters on Monday. In a victory for social conservatives at home, the administration said it would withhold \$34 million that had been earmarked for the agency. Instead, the money - which makes up 12 percent of the UNFPA budget - will go to international child survival and health programs run by the U.S. Agency for International Development, officials said Monday.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the decision was made after the administration concluded "that the UN Population Fund moneys go to Chinese agencies that carry out coercive programs that involve abortion". But a US government fact-finding team recently concluded the opposite. "We find no evidence that UNFPA has knowingly supported or participated in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilisation in the People's Republic of China," the team wrote in its report.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he was disappointed at the news. "I think UNFPA does very essential work and we have made it clear that it does not go around encouraging abortions. It gives good advice to women on reproductive health and does good work around the world, including in China." Last year, UNFPA spent \$3.5 million in China from its budget of \$274 million. Annan told CNN that the United Nations would "try and see if other donors will step up and make up the difference because the work we are doing is absolutely essential and **we do not want women, particularly poor women, to suffer.**" For the Summary of State Department fact-finding team's report go to: <http://www.house.gov/maloney/issues/UNFPA/unfpausreport.pdf>
United Nations Population Fund: <http://www.unfpa.org>
To view this article, go to: <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-UN-Bush.html>

USAID

Anne Peterson, assistant administrator for the Bureau of Global Health at USAID, said the agency would put the money in countries that had the greatest need. She said it also would add two countries -- Afghanistan and Angola -- to the list of those where it provides family-planning services. "I'm sorry that there's all of this controversy, but we're really pleased to get the money," Peterson said. "We will use it for family planning, and we will use it well."
To view the whole article, go to: <http://www.realcities.com/mld/krawashington/3714193.htm>

Thoraya A. Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) did not support or promote abortion anywhere in the world, the Fund's Executive Director, Thoraya A. Obaid, told correspondents at a Headquarters briefing yesterday. On the contrary, the services UNFPA promoted reduced the incidence of abortion, and figures showed that abortion rates were actually declining in the 32 counties in China where the Fund operated. The United States, she said, provided about 12.5 per cent of UNFPA's \$274 million annual budget.

"It is disturbing that the United States Administration has chosen to disregard the findings and recommendations of its own fact-finding mission, and also the will of the United States Congress that had approved \$34 million in funding for UNFPA for 2002," she said.

In the past, the United States Administration had chosen to fund UNFPA with the provision that no United States funds were spent in China and the Fund had honoured that stipulation by putting United States money in a separate account.

Ms. Obaid said that UNFPA was working with the Chinese Government in 32 counties to move its policies and practices away from coercion and towards a voluntary approach that respected human rights and dignity and was in line with international agreements. Its reproductive health programme of assistance was requested by the Chinese Government and approved by the 36-Member-State United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNFPA Executive Board, of which the United States was an active member.

Women

Ms Obaid acknowledged that the loss of \$34 million would be devastating for women and families in the poorest countries. Women around the world counted on UNFPA for ensuring health services during pregnancy and birth, for voluntary family planning and for services to protect them from HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, she pointed out. In concrete terms, it was estimated that \$34 million for reproductive health and family planning would be enough to prevent 2 million unwanted pregnancies, nearly 800,000 induced abortions, 4,700 maternal deaths, nearly 60,000 cases of serious maternal illness and over 77,000 infant and child deaths.

UNFPA Press Briefing, 23 July 2002 ; The Washington Post; July 24, 2002; Pg. A18

HUMAN RIGHTS

UN Appoints New High Commissioner for Human Rights

Sergio Vieira de Mello will be the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) for four years beginning September 12, 2002. He is replacing outgoing High Commissioner Mary Robinson.

The UN General Assembly confirmed Vieira de Mello's new post on July 23, 2002 after he was nominated by UN Secretary General Kofi Anan. Vieira de Mello is a 53-year-old Brazilian whose career with the UN includes the posts of head of the UN missions in East Timor and Kosovo, head of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI) welcomed Vieira de Mello's appointment. AI Secretary General Irene Khan expressed confidence in him as someone who "will bring great vigor and vision to [the] post."

HRW Executive Director Kenneth Roth recognised Vieira de Mello's "impressive diplomatic and UN background" but did point out that he "lacks hands-on human rights experience." Roth added that Vieira de Mello should be able to prove "that he will stand up to governments and be an unwavering voice on behalf of the victims of human rights abuse."

Romania and the International Criminal Court

Romania signed an agreement on August 1 with the United States promising not to surrender US citizens to the newly operational International Criminal Court, becoming the first country to do so. The State Department has said it would seek similar agreements with other countries to prevent them from turning US citizens over to the jurisdiction of the UN-sponsored court, created by a 1998 treaty. "While we respect the decision of those countries who have chosen to join the ICC, we hope that other countries will respect the decision of the United States not to join," the embassy statement said. In Washington, State Department spokesman Philip Reeker said that "by signing this bilateral agreement with the United States, Romania has shown that it understands our position, and the fact that we are not seeking to weaken the ICC or to undermine the integrity of international peacekeeping operations. We expect to conclude similar agreements with a large number of countries."

Romania is seeking good relations with the United States ahead of a NATO summit later this year, where it hopes for an invitation to join the US-dominated military alliance.

The Netherlands, the country that hosts the court, declined to sign a similar agreement Tuesday, arguing

that exemptions would undermine court authority. Associated Press, August 2 2002.

Note: In the meantime the European Union has condemned the Romanian decision.

WOMEN HAVE KNOW HOW - KEEP TRYING TO GET THAT MESSAGE ACROSS

KNOW HOW 2002

More than 200 women from 46 countries participated in the Know How Conference 2002 held July 22 to 27, 2002 at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. Isha Dyfan, Anne S. Walker and Yasna Uberoi of

IWTC/Women, Ink. traveled to Uganda to be part of a very exciting and stimulating event.

The conference, "A Safari into the Cross-Cultural World of Women's Knowledge Exchange," gathered together specialists in women's information and communications to share strategies and strengthen networks and linkages. Hosted by Isis-WICCE (Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange) in Kampala, in collaboration with Isis International in Manila and IIAV (International Information Center and Archives for the Women's Movement) in Amsterdam, the conference was held in conjunction with the 8th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, also known as the "Women's Worlds Congress 2002." Women's Worlds was held from July 21 to 26, and was hosted by the Department of Women and Gender Studies.

The Know How Conference was aimed at increasing and improving the visibility of African women's issues, and discussing concerns and progress made in information centers, archives and services. It also served as a venue for the sharing of best practices and for the development of a plan of action for generating and sharing information by and with rural women activists.

In preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in December 2003, a session, co-ordinated by IWTC, was held in which presenters from Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America and

N. America and Europe discussed gender and ICT policy and issues in their respective regions.

Recommendations from this workshop will be sent to the WSIS organisers in Geneva.

By Anne S. Walker, August 16, 2002. See also <http://www.isiswomen.org>

INTERESTING WEBSITES

* The UNESCO Chair of "Women, Science and Technology in Latin America" invites you to visit its website, allí encontrara información útil para quienes se interesan en este tema y podrá contactarnos, <http://www.catunescomujer.org>

* OMCT is today the largest international coalition of NGOs fighting against torture, summary executions, forced disappearances and all other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in order to preserve Human Rights. It has at its disposal a network, SOS Torture, consisting of some 240 non-governmental organisations which act as sources of information. Its urgent interventions reach daily more than 90,000 governmental and intergovernmental institutions, non-governmental associations, pressure and interest groups. See <http://www.omct.org>

* Women in Afghanistan, see <http://www.afghanwomenrib.nl>

* The Network of East-West Women-Polska has developed a "gender-sensitive" analysis of the opinion polls run by Eurobarometer and by the OBOP (Public Opinion Research Center in Poland). This report presents the results from the ten candidate countries from the region of Central Europe and is focused on women. The ten candidate countries are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. For the whole report, please click on <http://www.neww.org.pl>

EVENTS

* 26 August- 4 September 2002, World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg.

The Johannesburg Summit will bring together governments, social and environmental NGOs, industry and other stakeholders to debate an action plan for sustainable development. More information on <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/> On the NGO FORUM please consult the following website: <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/default.htm>

* 3-6 October 2002, Re-inventing Globalisation, Guadalajara, Mexico, organised by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). Website: <http://www.awid.org>

* 15-17 October 2002, International Conference on Gender, Citizenship and Governance, Cochin, Kerala, India. Information at www.kit.nl/gcg or contact Sofia Karnehed : <s.karnehed@kit.nl>

* 24-25 October 2002, First European Social Economy Conference in the Central and Eastern Europe, Prague. This event is organised under the patronage of the Czech Government, the French, Belgian and Swedish Ministers of Social Economy, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions.

Information: <paha@cecop.org> and website: <http://www.cecop.org/praha2002>

* 15-17 November 2002, 6th Symposium on Gender Research: Gender from costs to benefit, Kiel, Germany Christian Albrecht University. Contact: <gottburgsen@zif.uni.kiel.de>

2003

* March 2003, Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan

* 10-12 December 2003, World Summit on the Information Society, Geneva and Tunis 2005.

Further information for NGOs and civil society is available at: <http://www.geneva2003.org/> The first PrepCom will take place on July 1-5 2003 in Geneva. See also <http://www.unictaskforce.org> and <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>

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 6.0/95. 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.

NB: We invite you to redistribute this Newsletter to IAW members without an e-mail address. Also, please advise Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address.

International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

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