

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

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

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



**IAW NEWSLETTER August 2011, no. 8**

**Equal Rights**

*Dear members,*

*In the month of July an important UN meeting took place, the ECOSOC Substantive Session. If you have time to look at the reports, the content will give you a 'helicopter' view of the problems the UN is trying to cope with. For women in politics there can be eye-openers for future decisions. There is one important question to ask: "Where are the women?"*

*Education and the 'Improvement of the situation of (poor) women in rural areas' (CSW) will be items on the agenda of the Board Meeting in Iceland. Land ownership and inheritance for women have been an issue of IAW for years. Even a prosaic item like 'To build a better toilet', and general healthy solutions for sanitation can save thousands of lives, mostly of children. Another item in this newsletter is the Arms Trade Treaty. Maybe it seems a lost cause for women against the enormous sums of money of the weapons industry but we should always keep on entering the discussion, continuously and persistently asking: "Where are the women?"*

*Future events, publications, links etc. are, as always, at the end of the newsletter.*

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

**IAW Board Meeting in Iceland**

Among the items on the agenda of the Board Meeting in Iceland: will be discussion about the IAW position on the 5th World Conference; how to improve our communications strategy both external and internal, and we'll prepare for CSW 2012. Last but not least, we are going to swim in the Blue Lagoon!

*Lene Pind, IAW Secretary General*

**A letter from India**

Many NGOs are making a very sincere effort to get the bill for 33% reservation for women passed by our Parliament. The Session of the Parliament is commencing on the first of August.

We have been working with a leading NGO here which is doing outstanding work for the welfare of widows and children. We have been visiting and contributing to the home for some 200 widows at Vrindavan, an old abode of Lord Krishna. The widows' home is called Ma Dham, meaning mothers' home.

Another initiative is making and distributing sanitary napkins at very low cost and giving them to the poor 'for free' or just one Rupee, for those who can afford it. That is approximately 50 cents.

With deep regards and good wishes for all

*Snigdha Narain*

### **New on the IAW website**

IAW President Lyda Versteegen has attended, with IAW member Jocelynn Scutt, meetings on the issue of '*Sex object culture*' in Cambridge, United Kingdom. You can find an article describing her experiences on the home page of the IAW website.

It is also worth while to visiting both the websites she mentions - WWAFE (Women Worldwide Advancing Freedom & Equality) and OBJECT.

Another page on the IAW website that calls for attention is a letter in response to the statement of Cephas Lumina, UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt and Human Rights. IAW President Lyda Versteegen and IAW Regional Vice-President Johanna Manganara of the Greek League for Women's Rights drew up a message to encourage him to acknowledge the special strain women suffer in times of officially mandated "belt-tightening" in future statements on this issue.

In the yellow rectangle or on: <http://www.womenalliance.org/issues.html>

## **UNITED NATIONS**

### **Famine in Somalia**

UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet addresses the famine in Somalia.

UN Women urgently calls on donor countries and political and military factions in Somalia to ensure that special attention be given to the critical needs of women and children and ensure that this assistance reaches those most acutely in need.

### **Somali women fleeing famine preyed on by rapists**

Dadaab, Kenya (AP) — Refugee Barwago Mohamud huddles silently beneath a few blankets stretched over sticks at night, fearing for her life after a neighbour was raped, and a naked woman who had been kidnapped and gang-raped for three days in front of her terrified children was delivered to the medical tent next door.

Only a few hundred feet away stands a newly built camp with a police station, toilet blocks and schools. Neat thorn bush fences in the camp separate residential areas for families to move into. But all the facilities are empty. The Kenyan government is refusing to open the new Ifo 2 facility as part of the world's biggest refugee camp, Dadaab, saying the desperate Somali refugees flowing into the country are a security risk.

#### **Deserters from Somali forces, Kenyan bandits**

For the women and children who fled war and famine and are now forced to build their shelters farther and farther away from the centre of the camps, the extension would be a refuge from the armed men who prowl the bush at night. Some may be deserters from Somali forces across the border; others are Kenyan bandits who rob and gang-rape the stream of refugees fleeing the famine in Somalia.

#### **Regional politics - empty facilities**

The contrast between the squalid, insecure outskirts of the sprawling camp and the empty, silent facilities shows how regional politics can interfere with aid efforts, causing millions of dollars to be wasted and leaving women and children vulnerable to attack.

Mohamud and eight other women and girls share their rickety shelter on the outskirts of Dadaab, a camp designed for 90,000 people which now houses around 440,000 refugees. Almost all are from war-ravaged Somalia.

Some have been here for more than 20 years, when the country first collapsed into anarchy. But now more than 1,000 are arriving daily, fleeing fighting or hunger.

#### **US and EU spent 16 million building 2 extensions**

The U.N. said this month that at least two regions in Somalia are suffering from famine and 11.3 million people in the Horn of Africa need aid. To help ease the overcrowding, international donors including the U.S. and European Union spent \$16 million building the Ifo 2 extension, which could house 40,000 people.

But it is still unclear when or if the Kenyan government will open it.

By Katharine Houreld, Associated Press – July 31, 2011, on:  
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gQxwFDVwRkh3bspsuXdH-gHQIS5g?docId=ca57c4b253c34aa7a9db2f3d04f8ce45>

### **ECOSOC Substantive Session - Geneva 2011, 4-28 July**

From the statement of H.E. Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe:

"This substantive session was held under the name of: Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education.

In this regard, we addressed issues of access on education, particularly of the girl child: the quality of education, the partnerships and financing needed; the need to ensure that education equips our youth with skills needed by our economies and the job markets; and we shared best practices and experiences. These and other important messages are contained in the Ministerial Declaration we adopted during the High Level Segment of this session".

□ [ECOSOC takes action on texts on South Sudan, NGOs, Cartography, Indigenous Issues and organizational matters](#)

29 July 2011 - The Economic and Social Council this morning took action on texts concerning support for South Sudan, the special consultative status of the non-governmental organization Movement against Atrocities and Repression, the dates for the nineteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference, the report of the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and organizational matters.

□ [ECOSOC adopts texts on social and human rights questions and on coordination issues](#)

28 July 2011 - The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) today adopted a series of resolutions and decisions under its agenda items on social and human rights questions and coordination, programme and other questions. These included a decision by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti after holding a discussion on long-term aid for Haiti.

□ [ECOSOC establishes a committee of experts on global geospatial information management](#)

27 July 2011 - The Economic and Social Council today discussed economic and environmental questions, including sustainable development, statistics, human settlements, environment, population and development, public administration and development, etc...

**Other ECOSOC news, on <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/news/>**

#### **Economic Development**

- [Humanity's noisy impact on marine animals to be focus of UN-backed meeting](#)
- [UN-backed meeting seeks to clamp down on poaching of elephants, rhinos](#)
- [UN study finds overall drop in funding for AIDS response in 2010](#)

#### **Humanitarian Aid, Refugees**

- [Aid efforts in the Horn of Africa need to be scaled up further, says UN relief chief](#)
- [Egyptian trauma surgeon on Somali front line epitomizes UN humanitarian role](#)
- [Libya: UN to use previously frozen funds to procure medical supplies](#)

#### **Women, Children, Population**

- [On International Youth Day, UN celebrating young people's role in ousting dictators](#)

- [UN official voices concern over reports of rape of Somali women fleeing famine](#)
- [Results of Tanzanian survey on violence against children spur call to action by UN](#)

#### **Health, Poverty, Food Security**

- [UN study finds overall drop in funding for AIDS response in 2010](#)
- [Angola: UN expert team sent to help probe outbreak of unknown illness](#)
- [High food prices exacerbate crisis in drought-affected Horn of Africa – UN](#)

#### **CEDAW - Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women**

50th session (3 to 21 October 2011) and Pre-session for the 52nd session (24 to 28 October 2011), Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XVI

##### **I. Consideration of Reports by State Parties**

The Committee will examine the reports of the following eight States parties during its 50th session: Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritius, Montenegro, Oman and Paraguay, with respect to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

## **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

#### **Commission on the Status of Women 2012**

UN Women in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and World Food Programme (WFP) will convene an [expert group meeting \(EGM\)](#) on 'Enabling rural women's economic empowerment: institutions, opportunities and participation' from 20 to 23 September, 2011 in Accra, Ghana.

#### **ECOSOC - Advancement of Women**

The Third Committee discussed on July the 25th 2011 the following document:

**'Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas - Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/181)'**.

The report gives an overview of activities being done by the UN and governments.

(See for example chapter D. **Landownership and Inheritance**. IAW and its Affiliates and Associates have been following this issue for years.) A quotation from the report:

48. UN Women, with the help of local land specialists, local authorities and representatives of legal justice systems, has assisted more than 1,800 rural women and their families in Kyrgyzstan in better understanding the land registration process, providing titles and certifying land share documents.

In Tajikistan, UN Women partnered with FAO in supporting 16 legal assistance centres to monitor the distribution of agricultural land to secure land tenure for rural women.

El Salvadore has set up consultative councils and social oversight bodies to support women's claim to land rights and demand for government accountability.

49. It is equally important to build the capacity of the legal system to uphold women's right to own land and other property.

To this end, in Mozambique FAO trained over 90 women and men as paralegals on land law and women's access to land. A majority of the trainees, a quarter of whom were women, represented non-governmental organisations.

An evaluation found that the paralegals were able to successfully support communities in a member of conflicts.

More on: [http://daccess-dds-](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/429/61/PDF/N1142961.pdf?OpenElement)

[ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/429/61/PDF/N1142961.pdf?Open Element](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/429/61/PDF/N1142961.pdf?OpenElement)

Editor's comment: *This report is interesting to read, in particular for IAW members who are preparing the Commission on the Status of Women, 27 February - 9 March 2012.*

*The **empowerment of rural women** is the priority theme of CSW 2012.*

## ALL AROUND THE WORLD

### Arms Trade Treaty

The third United Nations Preparatory Committee meeting (PrepCom) on the creation of a legally binding international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) took place at UN headquarters in New York from 11-15 July 2011.

With no legally binding agreement on the transfer of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in place, the international community is labouring to find a solution to the issue of these weapons as they are moved easily across the world, often finding their way into regions of conflict.

Civil society representatives were also present in the discussions. Their positions, however, differed greatly from one to another.

#### **NGOs - ATT should be a robust system**

Many NGOs, such as Control Arms, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and Parliamentarians for Global Action, were clear on their wishes for the ATT to be a robust system, in the hopes of stopping the illicit trade of arms which, they argue, fuel and sustain conflict, devastate lives and hinder development efforts.

#### **NGOs - We have the right to bear arms**

On the other hand, NGOs such as the US National Rifle Association (NRA) and the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities, were keen on expressing their opinions on the right to bear arms and that civilian and sporting firearms should not be included in the treaty.

They also emphasized the difficulties and near impossibility of marking and tracing of ammunition, "warning" that any attempts to do so would make it impossible for the ATT to be ratified in the US Senate.

During the third PrepCom, the issue of gender was brought up by many Member States as well as NGOs such as International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), IANSA and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Yet many participants expressed the view that *women and gender are being largely ignored* in the process towards the ATT.

Civil society has repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that women are not only victims of conventional armed violence, they are also survivors.

#### **Women are calling on Member States to:**

- a) adopt an ATT with the highest possible legally binding standard for the international transfer of conventional arms, covering both small arms and ammunition as well;
- b) not authorize the transfer of arms if there is substantial risk that they will be used to perpetuate or facilitate high levels of gender based violence;
- c) not authorize transfer of arms firearms related to homicides or serious injury.

More on: <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?article3532>

### **Lebanon removes 'honour crime' killings article from its penal code**

After decades of advocacy by the Lebanese women's movement to abolish the provision of the so-called 'honour killing' from the Lebanese law, the Lebanese Parliament voted, on the 4th of August 2011, for the removal of Article 562 from its penal code.

Article 562 allowed for a person to benefit from mitigating excuses in the event that this person surprises his/her spouse, sister, or any relative in the act of adultery or unlawful copulation and proceeds to kill or injure one or both of the participants without prior intent. While this is a step forward in the acknowledgement that such crimes are not to be accepted, much remains to be done on the societal level to change the patriarchal mentality that still puts women under the guardianship of the male family members.

More on: <http://globalroomforwomen.com/>

### **To Build a Better Toilet**

In a new competition, the Gates Foundation is challenging researchers to create inexpensive toilets for use in areas without access to traditional water systems. It rewarded \$3 million to researchers at eight universities, challenging them to use recent technology to create models that needn't be connected to sewers, or to water and electricity lines, and that cost less than pennies per person a day to use.

Later prizes will include financing for one or more winning prototypes to be tested and produced commercially.

#### **Several models were invented**

Examples include: a compact chamber that runs on solar power from a roof panel and uses built-in electrochemical technology to process waste; a toilet where chemical engineering might provide the route to inventing many future toilets. Rather than composting waste for six months, as many waterless composting toilets do, the new versions could heat the waste quickly, killing pathogens; a No Mix model. Each has a built-in urinal at the front that drains into storage. The back compartment works like a conventional toilet as waste is flushed into the sewer.

#### **It should be inexpensive and be used by two billion poor people**

Peter P. Rogers, a professor of environmental engineering at Harvard who has long researched water and energy resources, applauded the efforts of the foundation but said the problems that the competition is addressing are monumental. "You need toilets that are inexpensive and can be used by more than two billion poor people," he said. "But it is worthwhile to pursue solutions. Life would be so much better for a lot of people."

A summary of an article by Anne Eissenberg. On:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/14/business/toilet-technology-rethought-in-a-gates-foundation-contest.html?\\_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha25#h\[\]](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/14/business/toilet-technology-rethought-in-a-gates-foundation-contest.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha25#h[])

*Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu*

## **EVENTS - CONFERENCES - LINKS - PUBLICATIONS**

### **Rio + 20 1-2 September 2011**

UNEP Global Consultation with Major Groups and Stakeholders on Rio+20

On 1 September UNEP will organize a global consultation on Rio+20 in Bonn, Germany which will focus on the theme "Engaging with Major Groups and Stakeholders on Rio+20: the Role of Civil Society in Shaping the Sustainable Development Agenda for the 21st century!" In addition, on 2 September, UNEP will hold its Regional Consultation for Europe (RCM) in preparation for UNEP's 12th Special Session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

<http://www.unep.org/civil-society/MeetingsandEvents/UpcomingMeetingsandEvents/UNEPGlobalConsultationwithMajorGroups/tabid/54255/Default.aspx>

### **Price volatility and food security**

A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, on:

<http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?article3528>

### **In the Name of the Family - a film**

Canada 2010, honour killings in Muslim immigrant families. Schoolgirl Aqsa Parvez, sisters Amina and Sarah Said, and college student Fauzia Muhammad were all North American teenagers—and victims of premeditated, murderous attacks by male family members. Only Muhammad survived. Emmy® winner Shelley Saywell examines each case in depth in this riveting investigation of "honour killings" of girls in Muslim immigrant families.

Not sanctioned by Islam, the brutalization and violence against young women for defying male authority derives from ancient tribal notions of honour and family shame.

On: [http://www.hotdocs.ca/film/title/in\\_the\\_name\\_of\\_the\\_family](http://www.hotdocs.ca/film/title/in_the_name_of_the_family)

### **“Sustainable Societies; Responsible Citizens”**

This 64th Annual United Nations DPI/NGO Conference, will be held on 3-5 September 2011 in Bonn, Germany. With a focus on the Rio+20 Conference and the tenth anniversary for the Year of Voluntarism, the Conference will discuss issues such as sustainable consumption and production; a green economy and poverty eradication; climate justice, the role of civil society in a fast changing world; and sustainable development governance issues, including the role of citizen participation.

On : <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconference/pid/16700>

### **UNAIDS: Securing the Future Today**

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS <http://www.unaids.org/en/>) recently released “Secure the Future Today – Synthesis of Strategic Information on HIV and Young People,” which emphasizes that HIV prevention and treatment efforts must be tailored to the specific needs of young people in order to reduce new HIV infections among young people and to achieve global commitments to reverse the AIDS epidemic.

On: <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?article3537>

### **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	<a href="mailto:iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net">&lt;iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net&gt;</a>
International Women’s News :	Priscilla Todd (English)	<a href="mailto:iaw.iwnews@womenallince.org">&lt;iaw.iwnews@womenallince.org&gt;</a>
	Mathilde Duval (French)	<a href="mailto:mathilde.duval@yahoo.fr">&lt;mathilde.duval@yahoo.fr&gt;</a>
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