

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.com>

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWSLETTER - December, nr. 9



Equal Rights

*Dear IAW members,
In this last newsletter of 2003 you will meet some of our IAW organisations, standing firmly with their roots in history and branching out with new leaves in the world of today. Leadership, political involvement, new technologies and straight journalism are keywords in this newsletter, alongside with education, justice and healthcare. The Editorial Committee of the IAW newsletter thanks all of you who have been sending us news in 2003 and we look forward to hearing more from you in 2004.*

Meet IAW Associate “The Fawcett Society” in the United Kingdom

FAWCETT DEMANDS A FAIR DEAL FOR WOMEN

The Fawcett Society

Fawcett wants to see women and men equal partners at home, at work and in public life. We demand a fair deal for women. We believe every woman should have financial security, work-life balance, educational choice, representation, autonomy and equal treatment. Look us up at: <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/index.htm>

History

Fawcett has been promoting women's rights since 1866. In fact it was Millicent Fawcett and the suffragists who helped win the vote for women. All of Fawcett's archives are housed at the Women's Library: www.thewomenslibrary.ac.uk

ACTION - *Ask your MP to act on women's pensions*

In pensioner couples, for every £1 of income received by men, women receive just 32p. Please take action on this pension gap by asking your MP to question ministers on women and pensions. Find suggested questions on Fawcett's website. More:

http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Campaign_Pay.htm#pension

Find your MP: <http://www.locata.co.uk/commons/>

Tell the government your priorities

Make sure the government knows that gender equality is a priority for Britain. Tell them your priorities - such as universal childcare, equal pay, the pension gender gap or women's representation - in their consultation, 'The Big Conversation'. Web:

<http://www.bigconversation.org.uk>

NEWS

Commission finds that prison isn't working for women

A report from the Fawcett Society's Commission on Women and the Criminal Justice System, chaired by Vera Baird QC MP, shows that women offenders are shoe-horned into a system designed for men. Most women in prison have a history of abuse, substance abuse and mental health problems, which our system fails to tackle. More:

http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Campaign_Criminal.htm

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill

Today the government launches the first comprehensive legislation on domestic violence since 1976. The reforms include increased police powers to deal with domestic violence, extending the use of restraining orders, and an independent commissioner for victims.

Background: http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Campaign_Criminal.htm

More: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=704

75 years of equal votes

Fawcett and the Women's Library have collaborated to produce a website celebrating 75 years of equal votes for women. The site, supported by the Electoral Commission and BT, takes inspiration from the story of the struggle for the vote and connects it to contemporary issues to motivate girls aged 14 to 18 to use their vote and get involved in public life. More:

<http://www.votesforwomen.org.uk>

Equalities Coalition

Fawcett, with input from an advisory group of different equality organisations, is managing the Equalities Coalition, a network of organisations working on equality. It provides information, fosters debate, facilitates partnership and enables communication with government. Visit the site to find out more or to join. More: <http://www.equalities.org>

IN SUPPORT OF IAW's ACTION PROGRAMME (2002-2004)

Human Rights - Women's Rights - Globalisation.

Individual members of Central Italy attended the Second European Social Forum.

The IAW members of Central Italy continue to develop their programme and their video project...

"What's Global - a new movement".

In preparation for the Paris Social Forum the video "What's Global?" (24 minutes long) was translated into an additional five languages: French, German, Russian, Portuguese and Spanish to add to the English and Italian versions already available. The way in which our membership designed the video and set out the priorities has been very well received by the general public and by the participants of this Second Social Forum.

A Useful Breakdown

In our video design three main themes were identified by the Central Italy members:

- Standing for Justice...against economic and power inequalities, against destruction of the planet - against the military and industrial complex to have global control
- Standing for Peace...against structural violence...against the use of war to gain political control over other countries
- Standing for Communications...against corporate control...against disinformation, against manipulation of the media.

From all over Europe and elsewhere, 44,000 participants came to Paris. On the 12th of November...A Women's Rights Day was held. It rained all day. This was the day before the official opening of the Social Forum. There were four different sites, scattered across Paris; a lot of participants got lost or arrived late but nevertheless many women came and there were tables filled with literature, videos and promotional materials. In addition to this Women's Rights Day (what was in fact, a side event of the Social Forum), Denise Fuchs from the European Women's Lobby was a speaker at one of the other Plenaries that took place on the 14th. We were not able to attend but we hope that the European Women's Lobby will report back on this plenary.

Media Presentations

Because of my professional interest, I attended all the media sessions. The major Plenary on "The Media" was dominated by male academics, male journalists. Most of their presentations told us what we already know about "The Media" without giving us any solutions. In addition to the Women's Rights day being a separate event...the Alternate Media also held meetings outside of the official forum sites. Quite impossible to cover both. I went on (to another Social Forum site in the afternoon) to the second media presentation, where I had to wait for quite a long time outside the room (a tent) because it could only accommodate 100 persons. I leave you to imagine the frustration of 2,500 Italians who wished to hear one of their Italian leaders speak at the Social Forum, only to be told that they could not enter! But, in spite of the numbers and the difficulties involved in organising these Forums, these meetings do what no other conventions or conferences can do. They enable young and old activists working for - Peace, Justice, full participation and

exchange of information - Communications - to feel the strength and purpose of this anti-globalisation and pro-democracy movement. It was a very rewarding experience. The next Social Forum - February 2004 - will be held in India.

Include Women in Social and Economic Development!

In conclusion, in our view, giving Women a special day... before the official opening...and then organising that day only around rights...falls into the male trap of going ONLY in the "rights" way rather than the "social and economic needs" way. For male organisers, if you separate "The Women" you do not need to integrate them into the whole. As IAW members at this Social Forum, particularly as we approach the setting up of a Constitution for Europe, which may well act as a model for other regions, we were not happy with this separation of our concerns at this Paris Social Forum. We discussed this amongst ourselves and we came to the conclusion that women need rights ... yes ... indeed this is what we have been struggling for...but we must also have and be included in all the discussions, decisions and legislation regarding social and economic development. Identity restricted apolitical approaches will not move us very far forward. For the careers of professional privileged women maybe... but for poor women, the rights approach without the social and economic development (needs) approach will not bring a better way of living for most women in Europe or anywhere else in the world.

IAW women of Central Italy would very much like to work and develop these thoughts with others in Europe. Some joint thrusts, themes and programmes perhaps?

From IAW Board member, Bettina Corke, Paris – 13-16 November 2003,

<decademedi@mclink.it>

Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Australian Women to Vote

The federal election of December 16, 1903 was the first opportunity for Australian women to vote alongside men after the passage of the 1902 Act. Vida Goldstein was a candidate for the Senate in Victoria. She was the first woman in the British Empire to stand for a national parliament. It took another 60 years for Aboriginal and Islander people to get the vote.

A special Celebration has been organised in Melbourne on Tuesday December 16, 2003.

Contact the League of Women Voters at lwvoters@vicnet.net.au or Mobile 0439 365 688. The League is a long standing member of the International Alliance of Women.

2003 Women in Politics Survey - contact the Women in Politics team at Victorian Women's Trust. Phone (613) 9642 0422 Fax (613) 9642 0016 or email women@vwt.org.au

From IAW member Sheila Byard

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

UN vacancy announcements

In our efforts to disseminate UN vacancy announcements to reach as many qualified professional women as possible, please have a look at the latest list of vacancies at the senior levels. I would be grateful if you could distribute this to your network so that we can reach as many women candidates as possible. (Please see attached file). For requirements, eligibility and application deadlines, please visit the United Nations website at UN Human Resources 'Galaxy' e-Staffing System at: <https://jobs.un.org/release1/vacancy/vacancy.asp>

The system provides instructions on application procedures. Please follow them. Kindly be aware that online applications are strongly encouraged to enable the UN to place your resume into a permanent database. It is most important that you observe the deadlines for applications. The website also provides information on vacant posts in the UN common system.

You will also find useful links to other UN agencies such as IOM, ILO, IMD, etc. at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw In addition, to find more information on vacancies in the UN common system, please visit the following websites for instructions on how to apply:

* www.un.org/osagi * www.wfp.org * www.undp.org * www.unicef.org
* www.unfpa.org * www.who.org * www.fao.org

For external applicants who do not have access to Internet facilities, you can either complete a UN Personal History Form (P.11) available at UN offices and/or forward a detailed summary that should contain: date of birth - nationality - educational qualifications - a summary of professional skills and/or expertise - a summary of relevant work experience - publications written, and

languages spoken. The summary should be forwarded to the Staffing Support Section, Office of the Human Resources Management, Room S-2475, United Nations, New York, 10017. Fax no. 212-963 3134, email address: staffing@un.org. Please indicate the vacancy announcement number on the envelope or the fax, and on the application. Should you require additional information, kindly contact OHRM directly.

With regard to peacekeeping mission assignments, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations is committed to increasing the number of women working in these areas, particularly at the senior and managerial levels. Striving to redress the current imbalance, the Department is looking at expanding its recruitment sources and at developing its gender network. All vacancies are advertised on the Galaxy system. It would be much appreciated if you could disseminate this information within your organization. Thank you.

Dr. Ingrid Laxu, Acting Focal Point for Women in the UN Secretariat

Scholarships for North African and Asian Women Journalists

Internews has launched a major information technology (IT) training program for African and Asian women working in the media and other communication sectors. The program, which provides 430 scholarships, is intended for women in the African countries of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, and the Asian countries of Bangladesh, Mongolia, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The scholarships are reserved for "exceptional" women from low-income communities who already use IT for public benefit, who can demonstrate entrepreneurship, and who have the potential to become local role models for girls in their societies.

The initiative forms part of Internews' DOT-GOV program, funded by USAID, and managed by the International Institute for Education (IIE). Successful applicants will join CISCO's Networking Academies, which are already located in the North African countries. Training will include advanced courses in writing, problem solving, Web design, and a series of other technical IT subjects.

Anyone interested in participating learning more should contact Sarah Tisch at Internews at Tel.: (202) 833-5740, ext. 203, or via e-mail: stisch@internews.org.

The Internews Web site is <http://www.internews.org>.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

UNIFEM: ACTION REQUIRED!

UNIFEM funds are threatened as Dutch propose "gender mainstreaming" to replace Women's Programs in the UN or at the National Level. The Dutch government has taken the decision to eliminate their funding for UNIFEM next year. Currently the Dutch funding represents 20% of the UNIFEM's core budget.

What does this mean for UNIFEM? According to Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer, the loss of these funds could lead to cutbacks in all regions and programs, and up to a 50% cut of UNIFEM funding in the African region alone. It appears that the Dutch government decided to prioritise support for "gender mainstreaming" over support for women-specific programs, on the basis that women's agencies have not been successful in mainstreaming gender equality. This also marks a dangerous trend for women's NGOs who depend on donor dollars.

Editorial comment: Resulting from a stream of international protests Minister Agnes van Ardenne promised to reconsider the cutback, after first looking at the process of gender mainstreaming in other UN organisations. Your action is still required!

Please send letters to: Minister Anna Maria Agnes van Ardenne-van der Hoeven

Minister for Development Co-operation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Postbus 20061, 2500 EB Den Haag, The Netherlands. Fax: 31 70 - 3 48 4848, -email rs@minbuza.nl

SHADOW OF BURQAS: Give us Education, Justice and Healthcare

When Prof Maliha Zulfacar returned to teach for a year in Kabul University after a 20-year exile in the US, she was in a state of shock. She remembered Kabul as a stately capital. Now it was mostly rubble. Despair overwhelmed her when she visited a village school. The ramshackle school was mostly in ruins. Bombs had blown off roofs. Bullets pockmarked the crumbling walls.

Schoolgirls sat on the dirt-stained floor. The school teacher did not even have chalk and blackboard. Yet she taught. And the children listened. Maliha's heart broke. Life was far more backward, poverty-stricken and battle-scarred now than it was when she was a child. She offered her condolences to the teacher. She could offer no words of hope. But at least she could commiserate, comfort, express support.

But Maliha was in for her second shock. The teacher told her that she was thrilled with life—clearly Maliha had no idea how much progress had been achieved in the last two years. She pointed out she could teach again and girls could attend school. That is progress, because both were prohibited during the Taliban regime. Far from complaining about the inadequacies, difficulties and lack of resources, the teacher was, in fact, thanking her stars.

For Afghan women, freedom is costlier than the \$68 million spent on the Constitution

People in conflict zones see life and reality through an entirely different prism. And this is precisely why international aid often fails to help. Aid workers come coloured by their perspectives and perception of reality engendered by their world of peace, stability, progress and economic development. They assume what they want is what the women of Afghanistan, Iraq, Kurdistan or Kosovo want. For a western woman, to be unable to drive a car means a life of dependency, immobility and claustrophobia. But how many Afghan families own a car in Kabul, let alone in the countryside? It benefits a few, but alienates not only the poor who have a different set of urgent needs, but also the powerful mullahs and patriarchs who see this as nothing but the propagation of elite western values. So they start blocking, rejecting, opposing everything that is western.

The 'values' that need to be propagated to benefit Afghan women—indeed to benefit all poor women of the world—are **education, justice and healthcare**. All that the global community should do is to gently create an enabling environment for women to fight their own battles. We have to help them help themselves. So far, \$68 million has been spent on formulating the Afghan constitution. But if societies don't change, the constitution will remain on paper. Who'll enforce it? How will women reach a level where they can insist on rights guaranteed by this new constitution? It would have been far better if money was spent on long-term projects like education, healthcare, the justice system.

Change can be accelerated, but this too must come from within. No Afghan will be impressed or inspired by a westernised Afghan woman who speaks English with an American accent, works openly or walks around without a burqa. But a local woman, respected and known, can take the lead.

A Ministry for Women's Affairs ?

One of the priorities of international aid workers and indeed - even the UN - is to set up a ministry for women's affairs in conflict zones. As Maliha points out, it doesn't help. It just becomes a dumping ground for unimportant issues. Change, progress, rebuilding of a society can take place not by separating women from the mainstream, but by including them in every facet.

From an article written by Anita Prata, sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu. More on:

<http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname=20031208&fname=Column+Anita+Pratap+%28F%29&sid=1&pn=2>

FIGHTING AIDS

SONSONATE, El Salvador called on bishops to accept condoms as a way to fight AIDS. The irony is that no organisation does more to help AIDS victims and their orphans than the Catholic Church. Some 25 percent of AIDS care worldwide is provided by church-related groups. Yet the Vatican blindly opposes condoms, even within a marriage when a husband or wife is infected with H.I.V.." Let's hope the Vatican will learn from its priests and nuns on the ground, who do so much heroic work fighting the disease. In Coatepeque. I spoke with Father Mario Adolfo Dominguez, who sighed as I grilled him on the theology of condoms. "We don't recommend the use of condoms, but we're not opposed to their use because we know they prevent AIDS," he said, looking nervous as I wrote down his words. "There is no contradiction between Christianity and a piece of rubber."

By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF, 26 November 2003 in the New York Times.

More on www.nytimes.com/2003/11/26/opinion/26KRIS.html

CONFERENCES - REPORTS - EVENTS

World Summit on the Information Society, WSIS

The World Summit on the Information Society will be held in two phases. Under the auspices of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the first phase will take place in Geneva hosted by the Government of Switzerland from 10 to 12 December 2003. The second phase will take place in Tunis hosted by the Government of Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005. For NGO participation in Geneva visit main website: www.itu.int/wsis civil society: www.wsis-cs.org

With the first phase of the World Summit just around the corner, debate on the WSIS agenda is beginning to be heard more loudly in the world's media. Read the article of the UN Under Secretary General for Communications and Information, Shashi Tharoor, which appeared in the International Herald Tribune on Friday October 17, 2003 on <http://www.iht.com/articles/114041.html>

Fifty-six Heads of State or Governments have so far committed to participate in the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (10-12 December 2003) with more than 6000 delegates from government, intergovernmental organisations, civil society, the private sector and the media. To see the list of countries whose Heads of State or Government will participate in WSIS, go to:

http://www.itu.int/wsis/newsroom/press_releases/itu/2003/leaders.html

Important Gender Equality Progress made at WSIS resumed session in Geneva

November 22, 2003 - More than 800 delegates from UN Member States, intergovernmental organisations, civil society and the private sector gathered at PrepCom3 Resumed Session in Geneva from 10 to 14 November to continue with the working documents for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Included amongst the delegates were gender activists from the WSIS Gender Caucus, the WSIS NGO Gender Strategies Working Group and the Geneva Committee on the Status of Women who, together with some supportive government delegates, were successful in finally getting an important paragraph included in the WSIS Declaration of Principles.

Paragraph 10 of the WSIS Declaration now reads:

"We affirm that development of ICTs provides enormous promise for women, who should be an integral part of and key actors, in the Information Society.

We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis on equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes.

We should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end."

Civil Society Essential Benchmarks

Many of the concerns of NGO delegates, including gender activists who have been active within the WSIS Civil Society Plenary, are outlined in this document which can be found on the WSIS Civil Society website at: http://www.geneva2003.org/wsis/info_c01_1_01.htm

For more information on the WSIS Civil Society Contents Group and the Civil Society Essential Benchmarks document, please contact Sally Burch at: sburch@alainet.org

Negotiations are still ongoing on the two official WSIS documents-the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action-, and will be until the Summit itself. The new versions of the two documents are available at:

http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_multi.asp?lang=en&id=1104|1106

UN-Habitat

Global Report on Human Settlements 2003, main website on <http://www.unhabitat.org/>

- 10-12 Dec 03 WSIS: The World Summit on the Information Society - first phase: GENEVA
 15-19 Dec 03 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations - 2003 resumed session - New York
- 04-13 Feb 04 Commission for Social Development - forty-first session - New York.
 Improving public sector effectiveness.
- 1-12 Mar 04 Commission on the Status of Women - forty-eighth session - New York
 (i) The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality;
 (ii) *Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace building.*
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/48sess.htm>
- 14-16 Apr 04 Preparatory meeting for Barbados +10 - New York

Request from the Editorial Committee of the IAW Newsletter

Sometimes newsletters are bouncing back. There are several reasons: quotas are exceeded, inboxes are too full, e-mail address has been changed or members are on vacation. Please write us if your email address has been changed. After three consecutive newsletters we stop sending you the newsletter.

By the way: all newsletters are also to be found at the IAW website: www.womenalliance.com

Note: to avoid misunderstanding, we always send the IAW Newsletter:

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. Also, please advise Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address.

Contacts

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Archives Officer:	Marijke Peters	<nelliema@xs4all.nl>

NOTE: New email addresses for Priscilla and Marijke