

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWSLETTER - February 2000



*Pour l'an 5760 du calendrier juif,
pour l'an 2753 du calendrier romain,
pour l'an 1421 du calendrier islamique,
pour l'an prochain, je vous envoie 2000 voeux
de paix et de santé, de bonheur et d'égalité.*

Dear IAW members with an e-mail address,

Simone Chapuis-Bischof has sent us this charming opening message. Thank you, Simone! The year 2000 already had a good start with lightning fast news of the ECE regional preparatory meeting for Beijing +5, of 17-19 January. We do hope there will also be a good coverage of ECLAC in Lima, Peru, 8-10 February 2000, after ESCAP - ECA - ESCWA - ECE. There is also news of ESCAP by our IAW Affiliate, the Women's Rights Movement of the Philippines (WRMP). In this Newsletter more news about Beijing +5, about the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the role of NGOs. Underlying it all is the Resolution accepted by IAW Congress in August/September 1999. And our IAW e-mail list is still growing.

IAW Board Meeting

We just received news about the date of the IAW Board Meeting in Israel:
Sunday 29 October - Thursday 2 November 2000.

Hana Elroy has suggested 3 days for the Board Meeting, a one day seminar and one day to visit local projects.

Important events in the near future

7-11 February 2000, CEDAW Pre-Session Working Group. New York, USA

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

8-10 February 2000, ECLAC preparatory meeting Beijing +5, in Lima, Peru

<http://www.eclac.org/espanol/investigacion/series/mujer/conf8/confmujer.htm>

28 February - 17 March 2000, 44th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York, USA. Also called the **MarchPrepcom**, second Preparatory Committee for Beijing +5. The Committee NGOs for Women 2000 will discuss, review and finally adopt a NGO Global Alternative report.

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

6-15 March 2000, UN, Vienna. The forty-third session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs will be held at the Vienna International Center.

17-18 March 2000, Lille, France, meeting of the European Women's Lobby.

<http://www.womenlobby.org>

March 31-April 2 2000. There will be a Feminist Expo 2000 for Women's Empowerment in the Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

Produced and organized by a Feminist Majority Foundation it is co-sponsored by more than 280 domestic and 65 global organisations. They are looking for global delegations.

24 April-5 May 2000. The eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development will take place in New York.

3-4 June 2000, New York, USA

NGO Working Session on the Beijing +5 review process, to finalise and publicise a Global NGO Alternative Report.

5-9 June 2000, New York, USA

Women 2000: “Gender Equality, Development and Peace”, the UN Special Session Beijing +5 to review and assess progress, made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. NGOs will hold parallel activities during the Special Session, but there will not be a NGO Forum.

IAW e-mail list

We are very happy to be able to send this Newsletter to members in 45 countries: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cambodia, Croatia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Nepal (welcome), the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, USA, Yugoslavia.

ESCAP, the Philippines

The President of the Women’s Rights Movement of the Philippines (WRMP), Ms Villa Granada de Guia, headed a delegation of five members at the High Level Intergovernmental Meeting of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand 26-29 October 1999. Here is a selection from the report of the delegation of the Women’s Rights Movement of the Philippines (WMP).

In the first two days of the meeting countries that are members and associate members of ESCAP presented summaries of the best practices in each country as well as the gaps in meeting targets, the obstacles faced, and future action and plans for progress. Some encouraging stories were heard, along with cases of stalled progress and setbacks. Various governments reported that since the adoption of the Beijing Platform For Action rapid progress has been made in integrating women in economic and social development processes. (---) However, on hearing the summaries of many of the reports, the achievements cited to date are far from satisfactory. There is renewed fear that the present economic crisis in the region could push an increased number of women into **poverty** and despair.

Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as immigration both forced and voluntary, have reached major levels of concern.

Rising **unemployment** in some of the more severely affected countries is fostering a growing ‘feminisation of unemployment’ which could lead ultimately to ‘feminisation of poverty’.

Some of the worst forms of **violence** against women continue to pose a major problem in this region. Progress towards **political empowerment** of women has also been slow, with the representation of women in power and decision making processes still far below equitable levels. (---) Some countries have shared efforts towards developing quota systems and targeted training and lobbying which, they report, have greatly enlarged the access of women to political means of advancing their goals.

Members of the Philippine delegation participated actively in the NGO Working Group on Rights Bases Approach to Women’s Empowerment and in the workshop seminar ‘Trafficking’ in persons, especially women and children. They prepared recommendations for the section on: ‘the Girl Child’, on ‘Women and Armed Conflict’ and on ‘Human Rights of

Women'. More is to come, because the WRMP will send a delegation to the Beijing +5 meeting in June.

For us, members of the EC, it was a big surprise to see on one of the pictures of ESCAP on the net, a group of women waving a big banner with the word: ALLIANCE.

Thank you, oh thank you, delegation from the WRMP!

Final Reports and Documents of the UNESCAP Meeting are available at

<http://www.unescap.org/wid/meeting/mto5do.htm>

IAW Regional IAW coordinators: of Central Asia Meena Pimpalpure and of South East Asia & Pacific Sachiko Okumura.

ECE at Geneva

Never before was a UN Meeting recorded so fast and extensively on Internet as the ECE Geneva Meeting of 17-18 and 19-21 January 2000. This was the work of the European Women Action 2000, an information and communication network which advocates women's rights in Europe, North America, Canada and Israel. It was a pleasure to follow in Daily News the ECE process of the review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action on the Internet. Our compliments!

Government delegates, experts, representatives of international organisations and NGOs discussed four main themes: 1) women and economy; 2) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; 3) women in power and decision-making and 4) violence against women. The NGOs held a two day working session with 650 participants from 51 countries, preceding the three day Regional Preparatory meeting of Beijing +5. All the information, papers, speeches, even pictures of delegates, are to be found on <http://www.unece.org/> and/or <http://www.iav.nl/European-WomenAction-2000/> and/or www.un.org/womenwatch

You will find also on those websites the ECE Agreed Conclusions. The European Women's Lobby immediately wrote a 13-page long Comment on those ECE Conclusions, regretting that the ECE decided to treat only four of the twelve critical areas of the PFA. They also complained that the ECE document, although it contains several important issues and measures in the four critical areas, still remains too vague and is not binding enough.

The comments of the European Women's Lobby are to be found on <http://www.womenlobby.org>

IAW Regional co-ordinators for Europe: Siri Hangeland, Helen Self, Jaqueline Nonon, Marieluise Weber.

Twelve critical areas of concern

Women and poverty – education and training of women – women and health - violence against women – women and the economy – women in power and decision-making – institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women – human rights of women – women and the media – women in war and war conflicts – women and the environment

--- and a selection of a handful issues from the net ---

Poverty, children

UNICEF has reported that 50 million more children are now living in poverty than a decade ago. Armed conflicts and the spread of Aids is threatening to reverse improvements in the quality of life of young people. At the arrival of the year 2000, more than 600 million children live on less than \$1 per day - 50 million more than in 1990. Most destructive of all causes is the HIV virus. At the end of 1999, 13 million children, mostly in Africa, had lost one or both parents to Aids. In the 1990s, war killed more than 2 million children, seriously injured more than 6 million and forced many more million to become refugees.

Source: 'The State of the World's Children 2000', Unicef Report, Dec.'99.

Education, Africa

A girl, born in Mozambique or in Burkina Faso can expect to receive fewer than 3 years of poor quality primary education. In the World Conference Education for All in 1989, 155 governments pledged to provide primary education for all by 2000. In 1994, at the UN Social Development Summit, governments postponed their commitment to universal primary education to 2015. And even that will not be accomplished, nowhere more so than in sub-Saharan Africa. At current rates there will be 51 million African children out of school by that date. Conflict and corruption have contributed to the crisis – governments in the region spend more on armaments than on primary education. The interaction of slow economic growth and rapid population expansion has reduced real public spending per head by a third since the 1970s. Under-investment by governments has led to privatisation, states have transferred the financial burden of education to households in the form of school fees that many parents are unable to pay. Because girls' education is less valued, they are on the losing end. The human costs of the education crisis are incalculable. Educational deprivation is a passport to low income, unemployment, poverty and a short life expectancy.

Source: BBC World Service, 27.11.99

Women in power and decision-making, parity

The president of the European Women's Lobby said the following at the ECE Conference in January 2000.

'The European Union should follow the example of France and introduce gender parity. In the EU, the first step in this direction is a European Council of Ministers on gender equality supported by a Directorate on gender equality within the European Commission and the introduction of an entire coherent chapter on equality between women and men in the upcoming revision of the Treaties'.

What is France proposing? The French government wants to impose a fine on political parties if there is no gender parity on their lists of candidates.

Forced parity is an interesting point of discussion. Many political parties are getting subsidies from their government. Should there be a demand, a quota of 50/50 political women and men and a fine if the political party does not comply? Or should parity of women and men be imbedded in national law or in (overall) European or UN Treaties?

As far as the Editor knows, the Affiliates of the IAW all are in favour of aiming for 50/50. But on forced parity? The opinions on this within the IAW are pro and contra!

Women and Economy, ESCAP

Prior to July 1977 Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia were growing at a fast clip and Korea was recording unprecedented growth. Even the Philippines, which was the slowest-growing among the members of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), was expanding at a respectable 5% per year. But the crash of the Thai baht and other Asian currencies in mid-1997 revealed the shaky foundations of these Asian economies, writes Jeanne Frances I. Illo of the Manila University in a paper for ESCAP. What began as a currency and financial crisis has turned into an economic crisis, with disastrous impacts on individuals, households, businesses and governments.

In her paper Jeanne Frances looks into the immediate and likely long-term impacts of the crisis on women and girls. We made a selection from her report: child labour and trafficking in children.

Child labour, ESCAP

The problems of **child labour** and trafficking in women and children have long predated the current economic crisis. The International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the ILO identifies poverty as the most compelling reason why children work, but cautions that there are other factors as well.

IPEC estimates that there are 250 million child workers throughout the world. Asia (excluding Japan) accounts for 61% of this, with the majority found in South Asia. (---) Girls are found mostly in domestic service, factories, and at home doing piece-rate work; some are victims of child prostitution. In contrast, boys work in mines, ports and markets. Girls and boys both work in rice and sugarcane farms, under some gender division of labour. Child labour in Thailand however, primarily concern is children who have been sold or lured into prostitution, while in Indonesia children are mostly found in fishing and agriculture. (---)

Trafficking, ESCAP

Children, particularly girls, have been trafficked into prostitution even before the crisis. Thai and Filipino women are trafficked to Europe, Japan and other countries, while women from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos and even China are trafficked through the borders to Bangkok and other places in Thailand. The internal traffic of Thai females consists mostly of 12-16 year olds from hill tribes of the North and Northeast. (---)

In mid-1997 the number of prostituted children in Thailand range was estimated from at least 40.000 (Thai government).

See also the website of the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW)

<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/catw/>

Women and media

A women and media working group, a collaboration of Womenwatch and WomenAction 2000, organised at the end of 1999 an e-mail discussion on several aspects of women and media. They gathered: *“a wealth of information reflections and ideas, that paint a panorama of the situation of women in relation to media and communication, as well as outlining innovative experiences, identifying obstacles and exploring possible solutions”*.

The discussion was clustered around key themes. For instance: portrayal of women in the media – innovative campaigns to promote change - working with media – working with the owners (private and state) – gender mainstreaming in the media by governments – etc.

The results of this working group discussion will be summarised in a report and submitted to the UN for the Beijing +5 Review process.



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities

Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

Resolution adopted at the XXXI Triennial Congress

3 September 1999 in New York

This is the vision of the International Alliance of Women in the spirit with which it approaches BEIJING + 5

The International Alliance of Women, founded in 1904, reflects globalisation before the event. Since that beginning the Affiliates and Associates have worked together on the global problem of gender discrimination, even though it appears with different faces in different regions. The subject has been taken up seriously in world fora since the first UN Conference on women in 1975 (followed by Copenhagen, 1980, Nairobi, 1985, and Beijing, 1995).

It is clear that much work still needs to be done to improve the status of women in many countries where it has hardly changed.

As our tools for empowerment we have the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which, if fully implemented, gives women their legal rights, and the Beijing Platform for Action as a practical programme.

Since 1995 two phenomena have taken place: a) the growth of information technology, which makes globalisation possible and b) an increasing awareness of cultural, religious and tribal traditions related to the position of women. Both, globalisation and traditions have their good and bad effects.

Information technology enables a growing network of NGOs to work together on the implementation of the Platform for Action, thus trying to narrow the gap between rich and poor, men and women.

By the same global facilities however, the progress made can be undone overnight by financial speculations and the monopolisation of resources, hindering social progress in developing countries and depriving people, particularly women, of traditional knowledge. We will have to enhance the good effects and form global mechanisms against the bad effects. The same principle applies to cultural, religious and tribal traditions. On the one hand, they are being used as excuses for violence against women and girls. On the other hand, some traditions are used to give people a sense of social cohesion and respect for women. Those traditions should not be forgotten in our struggle against the harmful ones.

Progress on equality, development and peace depends on the power balance to be struck between women and men, between political and economic powers and NGOs.

Women's NGOs act as the conscience for human development. They help protect humanity from the harmful effects of some traditional practices and of globalisation.

Interesting sites

IAW Vice-President Rosy Weiss has sent us the following information.

See http://www.ngo99korea.org/kocngo/eng/frame_summary.htm

or the Agenda for Peace, Security and Development in the 21st Century of the Seoul International Conference of NGOs.

Have a look at the following sites:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/> (UN High Commission on Human Rights, Geneva),

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu5/d/vienna.htm> (UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna 1993),

<http://www.ngos.net/humanrights.html> (50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights),

<http://www.hri.ca/urgent/globcamp-1112.shtml> or

<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cwgl/humanrights/gc/gcibdex.htm> (Center for Women's Global Leadership, New Jersey),

<http://www.roks.se> (ROKS- The Battered Women's Shelter Network),

<http://free.ngo.pl/temida> (Women's Right Center, Poland)

Guidelines on Developing a Luggage Tag against Child Sex Tourism (experience from Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands) can be obtained by contacting Rosy Weiss by phone, fax or e-mail (thank you, Rosy).

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 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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