

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

CENTENARY 1904-2004

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

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWSLETTER - February 2004, nr. 2



Equal Rights

Dear IAW members,

In this newsletter our Centenary Celebrations are highlighted. We focus on tools and mechanisms to speed up gender-balance: Laws for equal rights, like the All India Women's Conference has put in motion in the past; Special measures in a yearly continuing process by CEDAW today; Quotas, as a tool for gender-balance in politics and laws again and networking; The banning of inhuman practices like female genital mutilation.

To be informed is also a tool, so we have put in, as usual, a mixture of news from around the world, to try to meet the many interests of IAW members.

IAW CENTENARY 1904-2004

www.iaw-congress-2004.org

Centenary Conference September 12 – 14 in Berlin
Jubilee Congress September 15 – 18 2004 in Freiburg

All IAW members, friends and colleagues are invited to be in Berlin to celebrate the Centenary of the Alliance in Berlin and Freiburg.

Why two venues? The Alliance had its inaugural meeting in Berlin in 1904 so we are going there first for a birthday party. an International Conference and time for sightseeing. Accommodation with breakfast is available at a very reasonable cost. Then we travel by train to Freiburg (at a reduced price) where our German affiliate, Deutscher Frauenring, will host several days of meetings, a seminar and more celebrations.

IAW President Patricia Giles, Vice President Rosy Weiss and Eva Schneider-Borgmann, President of Deutsche Frauenring extend a warm invitation to you to come to Germany in September this year for a once in a lifetime event. Check the website for more details and registration forms.

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

One major outcome of the 30th session of the CEDAW Committee held in January 2004 was the adoption of a general recommendation that States Parties to the Convention use “temporary special measures” to accelerate equal treatment of women and men. Special measures means the use of quota systems in politics, support programmes, preferential treatment, and targeted recruitment, to mention just a few examples. The choice of measure will of course depend on the specific goal a country / government wants to achieve.

Germany and Kuwait were among the countries whose reports were examined during this session. The IAW has affiliates in these countries, and the IAW CEDAW Commission strongly recommends our affiliates to publicise the recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee. They can be found here:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw30/GermanyCC.PDF>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw30/KuwaitCC.PDF>

The CEDAW Committee will meet again for its 31st session from 6 to 23 July 2004. Among the country reports that are expected to be up for examination are the reports of [Bangladesh](#) and [The Dominican Republic](#). Click the links and you will find the reports already submitted to the

Committee by the Governments of the two countries. If as an NGO you have not yet worked out a shadow report, there is still time to do so. If you need help, contact Lene Pind, IAW Commission on CEDAW – lene.pind@galnet.dk

Commission on CEDAW

The Commission on CEDAW would very much like to help the affiliates of the IAW work with CEDAW as an instrument in the efforts of NGO's to promote women's issues. In cooperation with the Danish Women's Society we therefore offer to organise seminars on

SKILLS for using the CEDAW Convention as an NGO

Rationale

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are grassroots organizations which are often based on volunteer work and dependent on securing outside funding. While non-professional by definition, they are increasingly compelled to act professionally vis á vis donors/funders, the mass media and authorities – and often in English for international work.

Danish Women's Society (DWS) has a long history as a non-governmental women's organization which has worked internationally and worked to promote knowledge and use of the CEDAW Convention. We are interested in sharing our experience with other women's organizations wishing to upgrade their organizational and planning skills.

Objective

The objective of the proposed training is to upgrade the organizational skills of women's organizations in communications, fund-raising and strategic planning in general and for working with the CEDAW Convention in particular.

Content

The following training modules can be implemented individually or in combination, shortened or lengthened dependent on the amount of practice time desired. Training on what the CEDAW Convention is, how it works and how it can be used can also be provided.

A. Communication skills and professional English language

- Meetings and negotiations (1-2 days)
- Writing minutes of meetings (_ day)
- Letter writing (1_ days)
- Report writing (3 days)
- Writing terms of reference (1 day)

B. Logical Framework Approach (LFA) (3 days)

This planning method is used by all major donor agencies and they often require that project proposals are developed and submitted in an LFA form, for example a project to promote the CEDAW Convention in your country/region.

C. Team report writing (3 days) – a useful method for writing a shadow report to your government's periodic report to CEDAW.

D. Fundraising (_ day)

E. Writing project proposals (_ day)

Requirements

DWS can provide *trainers* and give *guidance on applications for funding*, but it is usually easier for developing and Eastern European countries to get funding.

Therefore, **partner countries** would have to seek funding for and arrange:

- Trainers' transport, room and board, fees
- Venue, access to equipment, etc.
- Participants' expenses (wholly or partially)
- PR
- Reporting if desired/required

Contact us

If any of our member organisations are interested, please contact us: lene.pind@galnet.dk

CEDAW – Women and Tobacco

At the 30th session of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, held in New York 12 to 30 January this year, the IAW distributed a shadow report on women and tobacco. Countries reporting were Belarus, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Germany, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, and Nepal. It is noteworthy that none of the official reports (and few NGOs) included tobacco in their reports. Committee members welcomed additional information regarding women to health and tobacco. A briefing lunch was held to update several CEDAW members concerning the progress of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. They were informed that as of January 2004, 85 countries had signed and 5 ratified the treaty. At the Committee's next session in July 2004, the tentative list of countries to report include Equatorial Guinea, Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Spain and Argentina. NGOs should submit information regarding women and tobacco to governments and NGOs preparing country shadow reports. Governments also need to be urged to quickly ratify the FCTC. *For more information, contact IAW member: Soon-Young Yoon, SYNGOI@aol.com.*"

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND BEYOND-INDIA

Dr. Aparna Basu, Ph.D. (Cambridge)

The Political Status of women can be defined as the degree of quality and freedom by women in the shaping and sharing of power and in the value given by society to this role.

The Indian Constitution guarantees equality through the institution of adult franchise and Article 15, which prohibits discrimination inter-alia on grounds of sex. It should be kept in mind that this recognition of political equality of women was a radical departure not only from the socio-cultural norms prevailing in traditional India but also in the context of the political evolution of even the most advanced countries at that date. The United States and the United Kingdom granted franchise to women only after World War I, after decades of struggle by their women. Most other countries, Eastern or Western, conceded it only after World War II. Japan granted franchise to women in 1946, China in 1949. The exceptions were Thailand and Philippines, which granted a limited franchise, similar to the Indian case in 1932 and 1933 respectively. France granted franchise to women in 1945, Switzerland as late as 1971.

Gandhi

In the case of India, the two major forces which acted as a catalyst in the achievement of political equality of women were the social reform movements and national movement under the leadership of Gandhi who declared himself to be "uncompromising in the matter of women's rights". He said:

"Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the problem does not end there.

It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation".

The struggle for the emancipation of Indian women unlike Western countries is not a product of actions and initiatives of women alone. Interest in the women's questions and women's issues in India began in the nineteenth century and grew out of the socio-religious reform movements initiated by male intelligentsia to eliminate obscurantist customs, beliefs and superstitions.

The first man to publicly speak out against the injustices perpetrated on women in the name of religion was **Ram Mohan Roy** who condemned sati, kulin polygamy and spoke in favour of women's property rights. Roy held the condition of women as one of the factors responsible for the degraded state of Indian society. Following Ram Mohan, improving the position of women became the first tenet of the Indian social reform movement. Women's inferior status, enforced seclusion, early marriage, and lack of education were facts documented by reformers throughout the country. Reformers felt that removing these disabilities would improve the status of women and will also help in strengthening the family. Education was regarded as a means of making women better and more efficient wives and mothers.

Women's Organisations

By the end of the nineteenth century, a few women emerged from within the reform movement who formed their own organisations. **Swarnakumari Devi** of the Tagore family in Calcutta

started a Ladies society; she discarded purdah and together with her husband, edited a Bengali journal, Bharati having thus earned the distinction of being the first Indian woman editor. In the same year, **Pandit Ramabai Saraswati** formed the Arya Mahila Samaj in Poona. Women in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and even in small towns like Poona and Ahmedabad formed associations whose members were drawn from among a small participated in socio-reform. These associations aimed at bringing women out of their homes and encourage them to take interest in public affairs outside their own families.

Women's Indian Association (WIA)

These early women's organisations had been confined to a locality or a city. The first all Indian association was the Women's Indian Association (WIA) established in 1917 by **Dorothy Jinarajadasa** together with **Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins**, the former two being ex-suffragettes.

Thank you, IAW vice-president Aparna Basu!

The fascinating story of how women obtained the vote will be continued in the March newsletter.

Quotas - a Mechanism to speed up Gender-balance in Politics

Two interesting websites for women in politics and about the use of quotas are to be found on the joint project of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and Stockholm University www.idea.int/quota/ and www.quotaproject.org

These websites reveal that the use of electoral quotas for women is much more widespread than is commonly held. An increasing number of countries are currently introducing various types of gender quotas for public elections. In South East Asia people even speak about a "quota fever". Today women constitute 15 per cent of the members of parliaments around the world. The top rank is held by women in the parliament of Sweden with 45.3% seats, while some legislatures have no women at all, like in Bahrain.

Given the slow speed by which the number of women in politics is growing, there are increased calls for more efficient methods reach a gender balance in political institutions. Quotas present one such mechanism. The introduction of quota systems for women represents a qualitative jump into a policy of exact goals and means. Because of its relative efficiency, the hope for a dramatic increase in women's representation by using this system is strong.

At the same time quotas raise serious questions and, in some cases, strong resistance. What are quotas and in what way can quotas contribute to the political empowerment of women?

See www.quotaproject.org

AROUND THE WORLD

WIDE on 'Globalising Women's Rights

WIDE will held its annual conference entitled 'Globalising women's rights: Confronting unequal development between the UN rights frameworks and WTO-trade agreements' to be held on 20, 21 and 22 May in Bonn, Germany.

World Environmental Journalists, Sri Lanka

World Environmental journalists e-group promoting education, understanding and awareness of the environment through the honest and accurate reporting of local, regional and international environmental and development issues. It is administered by Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF), a professional media NGO interested in the environment and development. It was established in January 1987, with support from the Sri Lanka Government and the UN-ESCAP. SLEJF now has a membership of more than 700 individual journalists, media and environmental organisations and a secretariat with 13 full-time staff, five consultants and 38 part-time volunteers.

Moderator: Dharman Wickremaratne, Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum(SLEJF)

Read more on <http://www.environmentaljournalists.lk>

First International Zero Tolerance to FGM Day

As the world observes the first International Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Day, Amnesty International is appealing to all governments to ensure effective protection of girls from female genital mutilation (FGM). During its last meeting in February 2003, the Inter-African

Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) adopted a "Declaration of Zero Tolerance to FGM on the African Continent".

The Declaration stresses that the "zero tolerance forum will be an initiative which will bring all [our] efforts to celebrate, reflect and deliberate on FGM and to renew [our] commitment to protect African women from cultural and traditional belief systems that are inimical to the sexual and reproductive rights of women in the continent".

Laws

So far, only 14 African countries have adopted laws banning the practice. Despite the fact that enforcement of the laws is made difficult by social pressure to undergo the ritual, Amnesty International believes that legislation is an important tool in creating a protective environment for girls and women affected by this practice and asks African governments to accompany legislative efforts with measures that will promote the status of women with regards to their internationally protected human rights, especially, the right to life and physical integrity and the right to health. Today, the number of girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilation is estimated at between 100 and 140 million. It is estimated that each year, a further 2 million girls are at risk of undergoing FGM.

Past and current Amnesty news services can be found at <http://www.amnesty.org/news/>

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu (thank you, Anjana!)

UNESCO - Endangered Languages

Language is no doubt the greatest creation of the human mind and each individual language testifies in a unique way to the linguistic faculty of mankind. Languages are not only extremely adequate tools of communication, they also reflect a view of the world: they are vehicles of value systems and of cultural expressions and they constitute a determining factor in the identity of groups and individuals.. Some languages are in the danger zone:

- * over 50% of the world's 6000 languages are endangered
- * 96% of the world's 6000 languages are spoken by 4% of the world's population
- * 90% of the world's languages are not represented on the Internet
- * 1 language disappears on average every two weeks
- * 80 percent of African languages have no orthography
- * half of all languages occur in only eight countries: Papua New Guinea (832), Indonesia (731), Nigeria (515), India (400), Mexico (295), Cameroon (286), Australia (268) and Brazil (234)
- * research shows that mother-tongue instruction combined with the majority language, gives the best results at school and fosters children's cognitive development and learning ability
- * both children and adults can learn a new language without it being at the expense of another language. More on <http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/>

FEBRUARY NEWS FROM THE UN - on <http://www.un.org/News/>

CSW, WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY: Report of Expert Group Meeting

February 23. At its forty-eighth session, March 1-12, 2004, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), will review the thematic issue of "women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building". The UN Division for the

Advancement of Women organised, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Department of Political Affairs, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on "Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women _ A framework of model provisions," in Ottawa, Canada from 10 -13 November 2003. A major background document was Security Council resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security.

Because of the length of the report, it will be presented as a summary in two parts on www.iwtc.org

Note from Priscilla Todd: Our Editor, Joke Sebus, will be attending CSW next month.

UN agency issues new guidelines on HIV counselling and testing

17 February 2004 – Aiming to strengthen the global response to AIDS, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) today announced new guidelines on voluntary HIV testing and counselling. "Linking HIV prevention and reproductive health provides an opportunity to reach the millions, especially women, who are vulnerable to infection," said UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid. Read more on <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=9785&Cr=hiv&Cr1=aids>

International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the barrier in Israel

The case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the barrier Israel is constructing in the West Bank is being championed by Palestinian supporters, condemned by Israel and treated with scepticism by more than 30 other countries including the United States and those in the European Union. Public hearings open on 23 February. Forty-four governments have sent in written opinions, most of them opposing ICJ intervention. Israel has also sent a submission but it is boycotting the oral hearings on the grounds that it is all a propaganda exercise.

The ICJ is the court of the United Nations and is based in The Hague. It has two functions: To make rulings in disputes, although its effectiveness depends on countries accepting its jurisdiction, which is not that often. To give non-binding advisory opinions when asked to do so by relevant UN organisations.

In this case, the ICJ was asked to give its advisory opinion by a vote in the UN General Assembly last December. The resolution was proposed by a bloc of mainly Arab and Muslim countries. Out of the Assembly's 191 members, 90 supported it, eight opposed it (Australia, Ethiopia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States) and 74 abstained. A number of countries did not turn up for the vote.

Annan will name Special Adviser on Haiti

20 February – Secretary-General Kofi Annan intends to name a Special Adviser for Haiti to establish high-level contacts with the mediating regional organizations during the Caribbean country's political crisis and to advise him on possible future United Nations work there, a senior UN official said today.

Justice Louise Arbour

20 February – Louise Arbour, a Canadian Supreme Court Justice and ex-prosecutor of United Nations war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, will be named the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights - succeeding Sergio Vieira de Mello, who was killed in a terrorist attack in Baghdad last August.

The full story is to be found on <http://www.un.org/News/>

UN agency set to open up new safety corridor for Sudanese refugees in Chad

20 February – Efforts to relocate thousands of refugees fleeing the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan are set to move into higher gear tomorrow with the opening of a third transfer route away from the volatile border area to safer camps further inside Chad, the United Nations announced today.

Western Sahara: UN prepares first refugee family visits in nearly 30 years

20 February – Western Saharan families divided for nearly three decades since the outbreak of war on Spain's withdrawal from the area will be able to embrace and talk to each other again under a United Nations-sponsored family visit air shuttle programme scheduled to start in the coming weeks.

UN CONFERENCES FOR NGOs on <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>

1-12 Mar › 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.

17-18 Mar › Preparatory meeting for the ECOSOC High Level Segment - New York

- One and a half day ECOSOC multi-stakeholder dialogue as exemplified by LDCs based on their national experiences with the participation of high-level policy makers.
- 18 Mar › NGO/Civil Society Forum preceding the High Level Segment - New York
Organized by our office DESA NGO Section in cooperation with the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and the Conference of NGOs (CONGO), the Forum will discuss the NGO perspective related to the High Level Segment theme based on the findings of the questionnaire sent to NGOs in consultative status beginning of January 2004 and their work and innovative initiatives in this field.
- 14-16 Apr › Preparatory meeting for Barbados +10 - New York
Preparatory meeting of the International Meeting to Review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados +10).
- 19-30 Apr › Commission on Sustainable Development - twelfth session - New York
The CSD-12 Review Session will serve to evaluate progress made in implementing goals of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and in identifying obstacles and constraints to implementation, within the thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlements.
- 26 Apr - 7 May › NPT - Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons - New York
- 28 June - 23 July › Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - Substantive 2004 session - New York
- 26-30 Aug › Barbados +10: International Meeting to Review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States - Mauritius - tentatively scheduled for 26-30 August 2004

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.

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