

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

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

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER February 2009, no. 2**



**Equal Rights**

*Dear members,*

*CSW is the top priority for IAW at the moment. We wish all the IAW members attending CSW constructive dialogues with the delegations of the UN member states and with other NGOs. Every CSW sees some (small) steps towards progress of the women's movement worldwide!*

*We at home will be waiting with interest for reports. For instance on the side event sponsored by IAW and the Global Gender and Climate Alliance. Also on the result of the Open Letter on girls education IAW President Rosy Weiss is taking with her to CSW.*

*In this newsletter lots of news from the UN. We ask you to give special attention to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. The situation is alarming! Alarming also is the future of reducing hunger, as figures on the Hunger Index shows.*

*As always, you will find news on conferences, events, reports etc. at the end*

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

**“The Climate Change Negotiations — an Action Agenda”**

***Side event at the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN CSW***

***Tuesday, March 3, 4:30 to 6:00 PM***

***Dag Hammarskjold Library (DHL) Auditorium, United Nations***

Sponsored by the International Alliance of Women and the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA- members include the UNDP, UNEP, IUCN, Women's Environment and Development Organization and more than 20 UN agencies and civil society organizations) and the Heinrich Boell Foundation.

*Sent to us by IAW representative Soon-Young Yoon*

All reports are available online on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women:

[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/equalsharing/egm\\_equalsharing.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/equalsharing/egm_equalsharing.htm)

Look also on: <http://www.unrisd.org/>

**IAW supports statement on Reproductive Health**

The US Center for Reproductive Rights, in a Statement of January 20, calls on the new administration to "take quick and decisive action to not only reverse the damaging reproductive health policies of the Bush administration but also to advance women's reproductive rights as basic human rights".

Based on two resolutions passed in 2007 the IAW fully supports this statement which can be found on <http://reproductiverights.org/en/press-room/a-new-era-for-reproductive-rights>

*Gudrun Haupter, Convenor of the IAW Health Commission*

**Taliban-style Sharia Law in Pakistan likely to curtail Human Rights for Women and Girls  
Sharia - Pakistan Agrees to Islamic Law in Tribal Area**

Islamabad, 16 February 2009- Authorities in Pakistan have agreed to introduce Islamic law in a restive northwestern region in a bid to stop a spreading Taliban insurgency. Pro-Taliban extremist groups have long fought for Islamic law, called Sharia, to replace Pakistan's secular laws in the northwestern Malakand region that includes the Swat District, which has become a militant stronghold.

The mountainous Pakistani region has seen intense fighting between Taliban insurgents and security forces since 2007.

The violence has forced thousands of residents to flee to safer areas and ***Taliban militants have destroyed nearly 200 mostly girls' schools in the scenic valley as part of efforts to enforce their strict version of Islam that prohibits female education.***

Provincial authorities said they have signed a peace deal with a leading outlawed pro-Taliban group in the region. The agreement, they said, will lead to enforcement of the Islamic Sharia law in the area including Swat, once a tourist paradise.

#### **The deal**

Provincial Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti said: "Whatever we are giving them, there is not even a single section or provision which is against the basic fundamental rights and the liberties or against the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This was the people's demand. There was a problem there, there was a vacuum there and hopefully this would definitely work," he said.

Mr. Hoti said that the federal government and President Asif Ali Zardari have approved the deal under which, as he put it, all un-Islamic provisions in the existing legal system stand outlawed as a first step. By Ayaz Gul. On: <http://islamination08.blogspot.com/2009/02/swat-pakistansharia-is-law.html>

#### **Threats against Girls' Education draw World Wide Attention.**

*Editor's note:*

*IAW Affiliates and Associates have been writing to the Pakistan Embassy of their country on this issue. After the latest news the situation is not clear. What will be the effects of strict Islamic Sharia law by these pro-Taliban extremist groups? What does **Not against basic fundamental rights** mean?*

*This agreement by the Pakistan Government to allow this kind of control over the Swat district appears likely to virtually deny basic human rights to girls and women. They will be confined to the home, girls will not be allowed to have any education and boys will be educated within the narrow scholastic confines of the madrasas.*

*Women will be subject to the narrow Taliban interpretation of the Koran, with strictures on marriage, dress code and certainly no opportunity for education or employment.*

*President Rosy Weiss will be taking the IAW Open Letter on this issue to CSW.*

### **UNITED NATIONS**

#### **March 8 - International Women's Day**

In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating 8 March as International Women's Day.

Two years later, in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions.

For the United Nations, International Women's Day has been observed on 8 March since 1975.

The Day is traditionally marked with a message from the Secretary-General.

The theme for 2009 is: "**Women and men united to end violence against women and girls**".

On: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/>

### **TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS**

***A Global Report on Trafficking in Persons launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides new information on a crime that shames us all.***

Based on data gathered from 155 countries, it offers the first global assessment of the scope of human trafficking and what is being done to fight it. It includes: an overview of trafficking patterns; legal steps taken in response, and country-specific information on reported cases of trafficking in persons, victims, and prosecutions.

At the launch of the Report in New York, the Executive Director of UNODC, Antonio Maria Costa said that "many governments are still in denial. There is even neglect when it comes to either reporting on, or prosecuting cases of human trafficking". He pointed to the fact that while the number of convictions for human trafficking is increasing, two out of every five countries covered by the UNODC Report had not recorded a single conviction.

#### **Sexual Exploitation most common crime**

According to the Report, the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation. The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls. Surprisingly, in 30% of the countries which provided information on the gender of traffickers, women make up the largest proportion of traffickers. In some parts of the world, women trafficking is the norm.

The second most common form of human trafficking is forced labour (18%), although this may be a misrepresentation because forced labour is less frequently detected and reported than trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. However, in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region, children are the majority (up to 100% in parts of West Africa).

#### **Most exploitation close to home?**

Although trafficking seems to imply people moving across continents, most exploitation takes place close to home. Data show intra-regional and domestic trafficking are the major forms of trafficking in persons.

The UN Protocol against Trafficking in Persons - the foremost international agreement in this area - entered into force in 2003. The Report shows that in the past few years the number of Member States seriously implementing the Protocol has more than doubled (from 54 to 125 out of the 155 States covered). However, many countries still lack the necessary legal instruments or political will.

"This Report increases our understanding of modern slave markets, yet it also exposes our ignorance", said Mr. Costa. "We have a big picture, but it is impressionistic and lacks depth. We fear the problem is getting worse, but we can not prove it for lack of data, and *many governments are obstructing*", he admitted.

*No UNODC figures are available for the number of trafficking victims worldwide, but according to the UN International Labour Organization (ILO), two million people become enslaved annually.*

According to the report, only one victim out of every 100 trafficking cases is rescued, and at present there are 22,500 cases of people being recovered worldwide.

On: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29890&Cr=human+trafficking&Cr1=slavery>

#### **Goodwill Ambassador to combat human trafficking**

Academy Award-winning American actress Mira Sorvino was named as Goodwill Ambassador to combat human trafficking for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

#### **Slavery**

On the 200th anniversary of the birth of former United States President Abraham Lincoln who led the emancipation of slaves in his country, Ms. Sorvino stressed the need for human trafficking to be relabelled as slavery so that "people can't tune out the human suffering."

It was a case of life imitating art for the actress, who portrayed an American government agent seeking to curb sexual exploitation worldwide in a 2005 television miniseries. Not being called slavery "helps to keep us in denial" about the true nature of human trafficking, she said after her induction at UN Headquarters in New York.

#### **Human Rights Council - the UPR**

*What is Universal Periodic Review (UPR)?*

*UPR is a new mechanism, through which the Human Rights Council (HRC) will monitor the human rights situation in all member states of the United Nations (UN).*

#### **Starting with its own members**

It will regularly review the fulfilment of the human rights obligations of the states, starting with the members of the HRC itself. The main aims of UPR are to improve the human rights situation on the ground, assess developments and challenges in relation to a State's human rights obligations and to support cooperation in the protection and promotion of human rights.

The involvement of the country under review and the participation of all relevant stakeholders (for example, NGOs and NHRIs) are vital. The process aims to ensure universal coverage and the equal treatment of all countries.

*IAW Secretary Lene Pind:*

*I invite you to read the UPR questions-document. It will give you all the information you need on what the UPR is and how to use the UPR-tool, and in the list you will be able to find out when your country is up for reviewing. The documents are to be found on the IAW website under the Commission on*

*Human Rights. On:* [http://www.womenalliance.org/pdf/UPR\\_AandA.pdf](http://www.womenalliance.org/pdf/UPR_AandA.pdf)  
*IAW Representative at the Human Rights Council: H el ene Sackstein, Geneva*

***CEDAW: 43rd Session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - Geneva, Switzerland, 19 January - 6 February 2009***

The Committee has examined country reports from the following States Parties: Armenia, Cameroon, Dominica, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Rwanda.

[Read More](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws43.htm) on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws43.htm>

**Traditional Medicine and the MDGs**

ECOSOC - 12 February 2009. Taking the floor first, Ms. Zhang (World Health Organisation - WHO) said that, to achieve the health-related Millennium Goals, several things were needed: universal coverage reforms, to improve health equally; service delivery reforms, to make health systems "people-centred"; leadership reforms, to make health authorities more reliable, and public policy reforms, to promote the health of the community.

**Some figures**

Traditional medicine was used by more than 50 per cent of the population in countries including Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, Myanmar, Mali and Ethiopia.

Total sales of herbal medicines in Europe in 2003 reached  3.7 billion.

In China, in 2005, sales revenue from traditional Chinese medicines totalled \$14 billion, a 23.8 per cent increase over the previous year.

*Meetings Coverage on this topic on:* <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/ecosoc6385.doc.htm>  
*Convenor of the IAW Commission on Health: Gudrun Haupter*

**UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL - ECOSOC**

***President predicts 'challenging' year ahead for UN ECOSOC***

11 February 2009 – President Sylvie Lucas, the head of the United Nations ([ECOSOC](#)) predicts a "challenging" year ahead for the 54-member body as it seeks to contribute to efforts to tackle the financial crisis and to further the global development agenda.

In this regard, the Council plans to use its annual spring high-level meeting with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund ([IME](#)), World Trade Organization ([WTO](#)) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) to mobilize the international community to strengthen macro-economic and financial policy coherence, coordination and cooperation.

**Preparing the General Assembly's Summit**

The discussions from the 27 April meeting can make a valuable contribution to the ongoing preparations for the General Assembly's summit on the financial crisis and its impact on development, slated to be held in early June, she noted.

In addition to tackling issues related to the crisis, the Council also plans to continue carrying out the new responsibilities entrusted to by the Assembly in 2005, such as the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR).

This year's AMR will focus on *global public health* and aims to review progress made towards the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) – the eight globally agreed anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

**ECOSOC - a handy calendar of Meetings and Events**

On: <http://esango.un.org/event/ecosoc.html?page=calendarList&year=2009>

**NEWS WORLDWIDE**

**Saudi King Appoints First Woman to Council of Ministers**

Saudi King Abdullah has appointed a woman to the council of ministers for the first time as part of a Cabinet reshuffle. The King appointed Noor Al-Fayez to the Saudi Council of Ministers. She will serve in a new position as deputy minister for women's education.

"I'm very proud to be nominated and selected for such a prestigious position," Al-Faiz told CNN on Saturday. "I hope that other ladies, females, will follow in the future."

"People are very excited about this," said Khaled Al-Maena, editor-in-chief of Arab News. "This sends a clear signal that the King means business. Instead of appointing some bureaucrat, he appointed a woman."

King Abdullah announced also a new supreme court chief, minister of health, justice minister and information minister as part of the reshuffling.

On <http://us.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/02/14/saudi.arabia.woman.minister/index.html>

### **UNESCO - Women Journalists – Experiences of Building Peace Communication in Post Conflict Countries** - Moscow, Russian Federation, 2 - 3 February 2009

The seminar aimed to collect and analyze international experiences of women journalists working in post conflict zones and to design an international strategy of peace communication, based on cooperation between media professionals and human rights NGOs.

It will also seek to create a network of women journalists covering conflict and post conflict regions.

[Read More](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/calendar/) on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/calendar/>

Editor's comment: *This seems to have been a questionable choice of venue given the shooting of prominent and outspoken Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, in 2006, and now the current acquittal of three men on trial for her murder, which has sparked calls by human rights activists for greater protection for journalists in Russia.*

### **The Hunger Index : State-wide Analysis in India**

In every one of India's major states, less food is available for growing populations. The first India States Hunger Index shows alarming falls in per capita availability of cereals. Industrialised Gujarat ranks lower than Haiti on the Global Hunger Index, and Madhya Pradesh beats Ethiopia by only 0.07 points.

In October 2008, the India States Hunger Index was released by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and its partner organisations in the Global Hunger Index 2008 project. For the first time, India's states had been disaggregated from the national index.

The States Hunger Index shows us how hunger persists as a widespread and serious issue in India, and shows us also that economic strength, urbanisation and industrial development have not helped remove or even alleviate hunger in states that are financially powerful.

*This analysis shows how the states named and ranked in the Hunger Index have been unable to better the per capita foodgrain availability of the early-1980s, and points to some of the reasons why this has occurred in India's major states.*

### ***This important article concludes -***

With 2008 behind us, the high growth path and economic trajectory are imperilled by the global financial crisis and worldwide economic slowdown. Until now, in industrialising Asia, factors such as demand rising because of (urban) incomes rising, and expanding biofuel production, have exerted upward pressure on prices.

The FAO report points to "decades of depressed commodity prices" that have led many governments in developing countries to neglect investments in agricultural productivity, and "higher petroleum prices may signal a long-term shift in the cost of agricultural production, making it more costly for farmers to intensify production". For now, the continuing relevance of many of these factors must be questioned before we learn the causes of hunger despite growth, and its solution.

*Rahul Goswami is a writer and researcher based in Goa, India.*

*See [http://infochangeindia.org/20090109\\_7562/Agriculture/Analysis/The-hunger-index.html](http://infochangeindia.org/20090109_7562/Agriculture/Analysis/The-hunger-index.html) for Figures and Tables.*

*Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu - IAW representative at the FAO: Bettina Clarke*

## **CONFERENCES - EVENTS - DECADES - REPORTS**

Committee for **Development Policy**, 11th session 09 - 13 March, 2009, New York

30 March - 03 April 2009 - Session of the Commission on **Population and Development**, New York

United Nations Forum on **Forests**, 8th Session 20 April - 01 May, 2009, New York

Committee on **Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, 42nd session 04 - 22 May, 2009, Geneva

A Report that refers to a "**comprehensive Study on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Status of Women from the Viewpoint of Religion and Traditions...**"

Direct Link to Original Study UN Report in French: [http://www.wunrn.com/un\\_study/french.pdf](http://www.wunrn.com/un_study/french.pdf)

Direct Link to Study Summary (unofficial) in English: [http://www.wunrn.com/un\\_study/english.pdf](http://www.wunrn.com/un_study/english.pdf)

**WIDE Annual Conference 2009 'Care Economy and Care Crisis'**

18-20 June 2009, Basel, Switzerland, on: <http://www.wide-network.org/index.jsp?id=424>

**62<sup>nd</sup> Annual DPI/NGO Conference** - Mexico City, 9-11 September 2009.

*Sent to us by IAW President Rosy Weiss*

**WACC Photographic Competition 2009 - Portraying Gender**

Photos that challenge conventional understandings of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. Photos that portray women or men in ways that offer new perceptions about their roles and responsibilities. Photos that break the mould of the male-female 'divide'. The competition closes on May 1st .

*Please read the conditions carefully. On: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/wacc2008/> ICPD 2009*

**International Conference on Population and Development**

Paris, France - June 24-26, 2009

On: <http://www.waset.org/wcset09/paris/icpd/index.html>

**Special Observances and Meetings worldwide**

International Decade for a Culture of Peace and non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)

Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (2001-2010)

Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010)

United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All (2003-2012)

Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014)

United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)

International Decade for Action: Water for Life (2005-2015)

Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

**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.

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