

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

Equal Rights - Droits Égaux - Responsibilités Égales

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

IAW Newsletter November 2012, no 9



Equal Rights

Dear members,

In this newsletter news of the UN General Assembly where some important issues were being discussed. On the Advancement of Women, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and in particular on the Rule of Law, an issue so important for women living in conflict areas.

We selected the following news around the world: an act of violence in Bukavu, Africa, where a doctor was doing good work for women who were raped in conflict areas; the Egyptian women's movement is worried about the new Egyptian Constitution; what went wrong for married women in Bengal, India; an analysis of the role of women in the elections of the USA; and in the EU a vague directive on a more equal representation for women and men on company boards can be blocked. News of events, conferences, reports and several links are as usual at the end.

And last, but not least: IAW had an inspiring International Meeting in Melbourne, Australia. Hereby a warm thank you note for our hostesses!

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Thank you, Melbourne!

IAW General Secretary Lene Pind writes:

The International Meeting was a success. Our Australian hostesses, headed by regional coordinator Sheila Byard had done an impressive job. The meeting took place in a beautiful old building, Queen Victoria Centre, in the middle of the city. The regional workshops were extremely interesting and were introduced by very good speakers.

WEL (Women's Electoral Lobby) celebrated its 40th anniversary by having a reception, with the main speaker Professor Marian Sawer, School of Politics and International Relations from the Australian National University. We also watched the documentary 'Utopia Girls - how women got the vote' - it was a very enjoyable evening!

This International Meeting is the first IAW Meeting to have made really good use of modern technology including a dynamic website, a blog, a facebook page and a twitter account. Sheila Byard and the planning committee had attracted a number of young women as interns and they had set up these things for us.

While we were in Melbourne, the PM of Australia, Julia Gillard, made a speech in Parliament, in which she attacked the leader of the opposition because of his 'sexist and misogynist' attitude.

This speech was quoted in the international press, and came to play a role in the national press and among people in general. The webcast was seen all over the world by at least by 3 million visitors.

See Julia Gillard on: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihd7ofrwQX0> and the [comment of Zoe Holman](#), clicking on Australia: the Prime Minister who redefined misogyny . See also Dr. Clare Wright on: <http://wel.org.au/index.php/2012/10/gender-and-power-in-australia-the-world-is-watching/>



Commission on the Status of Women

IAW Secretary General Lene Pind writes: 'Registration for CSW will be from now till January 13. After that date, registration is impossible. There is a limit of 20 delegates for each NGO.

Deadline for written statements was November 15. IAW has submitted a statement, prepared in Melbourne by Joanna Manganara, IAW Regional Vice President Europe, and Margunn Bjørnholt, Vice President of IAW Norway.

The statement has been uploaded to www.iawomen.ning.com where it can be found by members of iawomen.ning.com under Events> CSW57.

IAW is preparing for an oral statement and for side events'.

UNITED NATIONS

Some interesting discussions at the UN General Assembly

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) met on October 15th 2012 to begin its consideration of the advancement of women.

Pervasive, Continued Violence against Women - 'An Appalling Human Rights Violation'.

In her opening remarks, Lakshmi Puri (UN Women) described the incident last week in which gunmen shot 14-year-old Malala Yousufzai of Pakistan while she was on a school bus, because she spoke out on girls' rights to education and freedom from violence. That case shocked the world, but violence against women could be witnessed every day, she said.



“As many as 7 in 10 women around the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime,” she said, calling for creation of a “virtuous cycle” by changing mindsets and stereotypes at the root of violence, thus preventing the violence.

At the same time, she said, the Committee was also meeting at a time of great promise and opportunity for women and girls around the world, as more women were exercising leadership in politics and business than at any time in history.

Last year the Committee adopted a landmark resolution on women and political participation, and the number of countries reaching the 30 per cent mark of women in parliament had risen from 27 to 33. Many speakers participated in the discussion on CEDAW ([A/67/38](#)), Beijing ([A/67/185](#)), UN Women, ending obstetric fistula ([A/67/258](#)), trafficking ([A/67/261](#)), female genital mutilation ([A/C.3/67/L.2](#)) and many issues more.

On: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gashc4040.doc.htm>

Electing Non-Permanent Members of the Security Council

In two rounds of voting, the General Assembly today elected Argentina, *Australia*, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea and Rwanda to serve as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the next two years.

The five non-permanent members were to be elected according to the following pattern: two from African and Asia-Pacific States — with the understanding that one will come from Africa and one from Asia-Pacific — one from Latin America and the Caribbean and two from Western European and other States.

The three new members from Argentina, Australia and Rwanda were elected in the first round of voting.

Note: (The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, having requested to speak on a point of order before the initial vote, said that as the Council was responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, its members should be peace-loving and loving of justice. Rwanda “was an oasis for criminals” operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and on those grounds, she objected to Rwanda as a non-permanent member).

On: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/ga11303.doc.htm> and on:

http://www.unrol.org/files/Statement_UNHCHR.pdf

UN Rule of Law

The High-level Meeting of the 67th Session of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 September 2012.

This was a unique occasion for all Member States, non-governmental organisations and civil society represented at the highest level, to discuss and agree a forward looking agenda on strengthening the rule of law. Many statements, for example by Navi Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights and extensive discussion by many heads of state and foreign ministers.

See for the discussion: http://www.unrol.org/article.aspx?article_id=168

and see the results of the discussion on <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/ga11290.doc.htm>

Human Rights Council

Electing in Single Secret Ballot, The General Assembly elected 18 States on November 12 to serve on the Human Rights Council, the United Nations key forum for tackling entrenched human rights concerns around the world.

Those elected were Argentina, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, Ethiopia, Gabon, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Montenegro, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and Venezuela. These States are the first round of Council members whose terms of office would begin on 1 January.

Picture: Navi Pillay, High Commissioner of the Council of Human Rights.



Of those elected, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, Ethiopia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Montenegro, Sierra Leone, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela will be sitting on the Geneva-based panel for the first time. Re-elected for an additional term was the United States, while Argentina, Brazil, Gabon, Germany, Japan, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea had served previous non-consecutive terms. All above elected States will serve three-year terms, beginning on 1 January 2013.

Information on: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2012/ga11310.doc.htm>

See the Gender Gap at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2012.pdf

IAW Representative to the Human Rights Council: Hélène Sackstein

Editor's comment: The vote of the General Assembly does not reflect the figures of the Global Gender Gap. For example, there are 5 states chosen which are at the end of the list of 135 countries of the Gender Gap: Japan (101), the United Arab Emirates (107), Ethiopia (118), Côte d'Ivoire (130) and down at the end, Pakistan (134).

United Nations Environmental Development Commission

"The United Nations Environmental Development Commission (UNEDC) is a commission promoting social environmental development across the world. The Commission is working to develop cross-sectoral approaches that link development activities in a holistic manner, and works in close cooperation with United Nations regional commissions, funds, Programs and specialized agencies. The UNEDC presently require the services of resourceful, experienced and dynamic candidates for the following positions listed at http://nepadcouncil.org/Jobs/UNECD_Opportunities_November2012.pdf We encourage members of IAW affiliates and associates with the proper qualifications to apply according to the instructions at the end of the list.

Mailed to us by: Alison Brown, IAW Regional Coordinator North America

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Support the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflicts and the people of Bukavu (DRC)

Brussels, 06 November 2012. Dr. Denis Mukwege is the Director of Panzi Hospital, which has treated over 40,000 survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. "For the past 16 years at the Panzi Hospital [...] my staff and I have been treating women who have been victimised by

sexual violence, which has been systematically used as a weapon of war in the armed conflict that has ravaged our country”, Dr. Mukwege says.

On 25 October, armed men shot at Dr. Mukwege at his home. He survived but his long-time guard Joseph Bizimana died in the attack. The people of Bukavu are facing greater threats to their safety after this attack.

Silent protest

They decided to carry out a silent protest, a “ville morte” - literally, a “dead city”: people stayed home from work and school to protest the high levels of insecurity in their city. At the same time they called for a full and complete investigation into the attempted murder of Dr. Mukwege and the murder of Joseph Bizimana.

The International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict is joining others around the world in supporting the people of Bukavu. Join their call for an end to the impunity for daily crimes.

More information on: <http://www.stoprapeinconflict.org/s...> and on <http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/20...>

Mailed to us by IAW President Lyda Verstegen

Teach a Woman to Farm... And She Creates Jobs

Give a woman a hand-out and you feed her for a day. But teach her to farm, and how to add value to her product, and you feed her and her family for a lifetime.

And if she happens to be Nigerian smallholder farmer Susan Godwin, she in turn will also provide jobs for her community and become a national food hero.

Egypt

The current draft of the new Egyptian Constitution could severely restrict and undermine women’s and girl’s rights if adopted as proposed by the Constitutional Committee. Women’s and human rights organizations are particularly concerned about the inclusion of articles stipulating that equality of women with men, in all spheres of life, civil, political, cultural, economic and social, cannot violate Islamic law.

For example, because of varying interpretations of Sharia or Islamic law, Articles like these could result in the lowering the minimum age of marriage for girls to less than 18 as Islamic law allows for girls to be married off before puberty.

Looking for support

In support of the Alliance for Arab Women and CEWLA in Egypt, Equality Now has issued an Urgent Alert calling on the Egyptian Constitutional Committee to ensure that all provisions of the Constitution clearly protect and promote the equal rights of all Egyptians—both to reflect the spirit of the revolution and in conformity with Egypt’s international obligations.

Please click on the following links for further information:

http://www.equalitynow.org/take_action/discrimination_in_law_action_11

http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/6208/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=12144

Married women in Bengal have no say at home

Kolkata: [Chief minister Mamata Banerjee](#) may call the shots in Bengal, but the average married woman in the state has no say in family decisions, not even on matters concerning her health.

The 2011 Census and the National Family Health Survey 2005-06 have demolished the myth of women empowerment in Bengal.

In a state that got its first woman chief minister nearly six and a half decades after Independence, less than one in four married women has a say in purchase of household goods or visiting family and relatives, or even her own well-being - marginally better than feudal Rajasthan.

What happened?

Out of 35 states and UTs, Bengal ranks 13th in human development index despite being the sixth largest contributor to GDP. "The average homemaker in Bengal spends two hours daily fetching water and six hours a week collecting firewood”, population and development analyst [Devendra Kothari](#) said at a workshop on the Census and NFHS reports in the city on Tuesday.

The data has come as a shock because Bengal was always considered one of the forerunners in gender emancipation. It was the Bengal Renaissance that ended the horrific tradition of Sati two centuries ago. Revolutionaries [Kalpana Datta](#) and Pritilata Waddadar became household names across the country after the 1930 Chittagong Armoury raid.

But the long list of Bengali women leaders, thinkers, writers and artistes is apparently not a true reflection of Bengal's society. More on: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/Married-women-in-Bengal-have-no-say-at-home/articleshow/16551661.cms>

Mailed to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

USA - Women Mark Historic Gains in 2012 Election

Women were about 54 percent of the American electorate, according to [CNN](#) exit polls, and showed a historic preference for Democrats, the party carrying the banner for reproductive rights and a strong social safety net.

Democratic challenger Elizabeth Warren became Massachusetts' [first woman](#) elected to the Senate by unseating Senator Scott Brown with help from an 8-point lead among women, [Forbes](#) reported.

Wisconsin's Tammy Baldwin became the [first openly gay](#) politician and the first Wisconsin woman elected to the U.S. Senate by beating Tommy Thompson with a 14-point lead among women.

Amy Klobuchar, an incumbent senator from Minnesota, [beat](#) Kurt Bills with an impressive 44-point lead among women.

First all-female delegation in New Hampshire

New Hampshire became the first state with an all-female delegation after electing [Maggie Hassan](#) as governor and Carol Shea-Porter and Ann McLane Kuster to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Hassan will be the [only female Democratic governor](#) in 2013 as well as the country's [first pro-choice](#) governor.

Conservative Democrat Jim Matheson defeated Mia Love, a Utah Tea Party candidate for the House of Representatives. She would have been the [first African American female](#) Republican in Congress if she had won.

Sexual politics

In races for the U.S. House of Representatives, sexual politics played a decisive role as six GOP men with strong positions against reproductive rights lost.

Missouri's [Claire McCaskill](#) defeated Republican challenger Rep. Todd Akin who stirred national controversy by saying that in cases of "legitimate rape," women's bodies can prevent pregnancy and "shut the whole thing down."

Richard Mourdock, another controversial GOP candidate, was defeated in the Indiana Senate race by Joe Donnelly. Mourdock stirred controversy a few weeks ago over his [comments on life](#) being a gift from god, even if it stems from rape.

Pro-choice supporters also won a huge victory in Florida where voters [rejected an amendment](#) that would have restricted state funding for abortion, limited private insurance coverage of abortion care and stripped privacy rights from female teens seeking to terminate a pregnancy.

Same-sex marriage

[Marriage equality saw huge wins](#) in all four states voting on the issue. Same-sex marriage was legalized in Maine, Maryland and Washington. In Minnesota, voters voted against an amendment that would have defined marriage as being between a man and woman in the state's constitution.

By Maggie Freleng, WeNews correspondent On: <http://womensenews.org/story/campaign-trail/121107/women-mark-historic-gains-in-2012-election#.UKgJlmeHO-o>



EUROPEAN UNION

EU Presidency of Ireland

On 01 January 2013, Ireland will take on the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The European Women's Lobby calls on the forthcoming Presidency to be a driving force for women's rights in Europe, especially in the current crisis, ensuring that further cutbacks which would have a long-term negative impact on gender equality are avoided or reversed.

Who's afraid of equality?

The European Women's Lobby is very concerned at the news that a number of EU Member States are seeking to block the passage of promised legislation to ensure a more equal representation of women and men on company boards in the EU, namely **Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary,**

Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Sweden, Slovenia and the UK. Considering the more-than-reasonable nature of the proposed legislation, it is shocking that a number of Member States are taking position against Vice-President Reding's initiative, in preparing the draft Directive.

Go beyond the talk and walk the walk

It is time for the EU and its Member States to live up to their commitments, to go beyond the talk and walk the walk. It requires effort to break with the status quo and move towards more equal societies, but history has demonstrated the wide-ranging benefits of such a move.

Now, as the EU struggles to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of its economy, it is all the more important to put aside anachronistic conceptions of gender roles and allow for true equality between women and men. We look forward to seeing you rise to the occasion.

More on: <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique9&lang=en>

Mailed to us by Joanna Manganara, IAW Regional Vice President Europe

EVENTS - CONFERENCES - LINKS - BOOKS

IAW member Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen is presenting her **book on Bona Peiser** – Die erste deutsche Bibliothekarin, Wegbereiterin der Bücher- und Lesehallen-Bewegung on 27 November 2012.

Congratulations! More on: [www.bibspider.de /](http://www.bibspider.de/)

Over two billion people now connected to Internet but digital divide remains wide – UN

This week's meeting comes less than a month before the start of the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT-12), which runs from **3 to 14 December in Dubai**, in the United Arab Emirates, and will review the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) that date back to 1988.

On: <http://www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/default.aspx>

Statement UN CSW 57 on Widow's Rights, to be found on:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_12/111212_widows.htm

Somalia: for the first time in Somali history, a woman was appointed as minister. Fowsiyo Yusuf Haji Adan, **minister of foreign affairs**. On: <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/04/247629.html>

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Congratulations! More on: www.bibspider.de

Report on impact of the austerity measures on women's rights and gender equality

Download the EWL report from: <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique9&lang=en>

Joanna Manganara, IAW Regional Vice President for Europe

Note

We are sending this Newsletter as an attachment, saved in .pdf. An attachment saved in Word 97 is available, if you cannot open the attachment.

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 also can mail them this Newsletter.

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