

IAW NEWSLETTER 1 - January 1999

Dear IAW members,

In this first month of 1999 we have again been welcoming IAW members with an e-mail address, now more than 50! We are also very happy to find many Board members on our list.

IAW CONGRESS 13 - 17 September 1999

IAW President Patricia Giles sends her best wishes for 1999, with the latest news from IAW representative Kay Fraleigh about the IAW CONGRESS in New York.

The suggested dates for the IAW CONGRESS are: September 13 to 17 1999, the week before the United Nations General Assembly commences. We will be meeting in the Church Centre, opposite the UN. The women of the Lucy Stone League are looking forward to welcoming us and are planning the first reception to be held in a roof garden overlooking the UN building.

The overall Congress Theme is the New Century and the main issue to be considered is Violence Against Women based on the 1993 Declaration, with the objective of mobilising all NGOs to work with us towards achieving a Convention. A sub-theme proposed by Kay Fraleigh is Social Development, surely an issue of great importance to the IAW.

As well as delegates from Affiliate and Associate Organisation, all individual IAW member are welcome to attend the Congress. Information about hotel accommodation is still being compiled. Watch for more Congress news in our later Newsletters. Also you will find "A Call to Congress" in IWNNews.

UNITED NATIONS

During Congress the IAW will certainly visit the United Nations. It will be a wonderful opportunity for us to be there and that's why we have put the UN in the centre of this Newsletter, with a visit to some UN websites on the Internet.

UN - BEIJING PLUS FIVE, 5-9 June 2000

The General Assembly, in resolution 52/231, decided to convene, from 5-9 June 2000, a special session to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of 1) the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and 2) the Beijing Platform for Action, five years after its adoption. The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) is encouraging NGOs to contribute to the preparatory process at national, regional and international level. The IAW will be there in June 2000 and will also be well prepared!

UN - CSW, 1-19 March 1999

The 43rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held from 1-19 March 1999. This will also be an opportunity to begin consolidating ideas, good practices and actions to accelerate achievement of the goals set out at Beijing.

Women and Health and Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women will be considered 1-12 and 15-19 March. The Commission will act as the preparatory committee (Prepcom) for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly to review and appraise implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

NGO observers to the CSW 43rd Session must apply by 29 January 1999

"The CSW 42nd session can be seen, with the 40th and 41st, as one of a set of post-Beijing triplets", writes Kay Fraleigh in an excellent report presented to the IAW meeting in Malmo last year. "The texture, the patterns and the colors of the session of the 42nd were richer, deeper and brighter than ever. More than 600 representatives from nearly 300 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were accredited to the CSW. Face to face exchanges,

email and fax paved the way for that vibrant 42nd session. The issues : Violence against Women - Women and Armed Conflict - Women and Human Rights - the Girl Child - are of deep concern for women at any time".

The two issues of the CSW 43rd session, Women and Health and Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, are again very important issues for the IAW.

NGO representatives will find their way to the CSW sessions, with their laptops, fax and e-mail. We will try to send you outcomes of the CSW 43rd Session in the IAW Newsletter.

IAW representative at Intergovernmental Organisations, for UNO - Human Rights - DAW: Kay Fraleigh-Potts

UN - CSW - CEDAW - Optional Protocol

During the 43rd Session, the CSW will also begin preparations for the Beijing Plus Five meeting in New York in 2000. And, continuing the discussions on the possible development of an OPTIONAL PROTOCOL, for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). There are still many differences to negotiate. It is hoped, however, that the Protocol can be adopted this year, because 1999 is the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the CEDAW Convention.

The twentieth session of CEDAW is meeting from 19 January to 5 February 1999.

Countries reporting at this session are Algeria (1st report), Austria (3rd & 4th), Chile (2nd), China (3rd & 4th), Colombia (4th), Greece (2nd & 3rd), Jordan (1st), Lichtenstein (1st), Thailand (2nd & 3rd), UK (3rd & Addendum 1); Alternates: Belarus (3rd), Spain (3rd).

The Pre-session Working Group has already met, from 11 to 15 January 1999.

IAW Commission Convenor: Padmini Casinader Christiansen

UN - Women and Health

An introduction by Gudrun Haupter to the 40-page report on WOMEN AND HEALTH.

In May 1998 the World Health Organisation (WHO) briefed NGOs on a Joint Expert Group Meeting held in Tunis in September 1998. On the agenda: were mainly those health issues which had not been closely looked at as to their impact on women: Occupational and environmental health, Tuberculosis, Malaria, HIV and AIDS, Mental health and, of course, Reproductive and sexual health was not left out.

The concept 'Mainstreaming of a Gender Perspective' was explained in line with WHO's commitment towards this goal. The results are to be discussed at the 1999 CSW session.

- NGOs asked that:
- their expertise be 'actively' included
 - the report be made available well before the CSW
 - priority for women's health be safeguarded.

The full report (40 pages) is to be found at website:

<<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/wohealth.htm>>

A Summary of the Tunis report (thank you, Gudrun) can be found as an attachment to this Newsletter. If you cannot open it, please e-mail us at <sebus.gj@inter.nl.net> and we will send you the summary by separate e-mail.

UN - SPECIALISED AGENCIES

A worldmap with websites of the UN System, with links to most UN agencies, is to be found on: <<http://un.org/aroundworld/map/>>. The map shows also the cities where important conferences are being held. It is great to surf from link to link on the UN map to look at the variety of UN websites. There are wonderful homepages with beautiful designs and pictures. Some have cartoons and information games for the young, others are clear and businesslike, a few are a bit dull or not updated. Some have translations in many languages or consist mainly of serious reports of 'heavy' reading. Overall you will get a good impression of the work that has been and is being done by the UN agencies and also of the immense international problems the UN has to face.

We found four websites of the five UN regional commissions, ECA - ECE - ECLAC - ESCAP. The ESCWA website is missing. Let's have a close look at ECE and ESCAP.

UN - ECE

The Economic Commission for Europe has a friendly looking website with pretty pictures, cartoons and games. But the sessions this month of the European Parliament (EP) were certainly not friendly. Two Ministers of the European Commission were accused of favouritism to their friends and their chairs were badly shaken. The Commission refused to let them go and threatened to resign as a whole. That would have left the European Union without Ministerial leadership until the elections in June. After promises of investigation into the accusations, the Commission stayed in place.

This seems only a political incident though, when seen in the light of one of the biggest steps in European history: the introduction of the Euro. A historical step indeed, accomplished after years of negotiating.

The effect of the introduction of the Euro in the EU is difficult to predict. IAW member Marieluise Weber has given several lectures in the past four years about the Euro. She has a lot of material, mostly in German but it can be translated on request. If you would like to have information you are free to contact her (or e-mail <sebus.gj@inter.nl.net>). IAW representative of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg: Marieluise Weber.

UN - ESCAP - April 22-28 1999

The website of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is well worth visiting. It is to be found at <<http://www.unescap.org/>>

ESCAP is preparing the 55th session of the UN, to be held on 22-28 April 1999 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme topic of the 55th session is "Asia and the Pacific into the 21st century: information technology, globalization, economic security and development".

The site contains the documents for the session. They can be read on-line in English and it is also possible to download them as self-extracting files in Chinese, English, French and Russian.

May we draw your special attention in this UN YEAR OF THE OLDER PERSONS, to item 6(c) of the provisional agenda: Socio-economic measures to alleviate poverty in rural and urban area's. With a report of the regional meeting on a Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific in Macau, 28/9 - 1/10 1998. An important social issue.

Perhaps you are wondering, when looking at the vast provisional agenda of this 55th session: Why is the position of women not mentioned in the view towards the 21st century? It is not on the agenda as such but let's trust there will be mainstreaming of women's issues in the whole of the Conference.

Please look at: <<http://www.unescap.org/unis/unap31/unap3-1a.htm>>, the website of the UN Asia-Pacific News. Here you'll find a range of articles with some wonderful pictures, put in by the UN. For instance: 'Women have special needs', and other social issues.

IAW Regional Co-ordinators are:

for Central Asia: Meena Pimpalpure, India

for South East Asia & the Pacific: Sachiko Okumura, Japan.

IAW WEBSITE NEWS

The Editorial Committee, appointed in August in Malmo, is working hard to establish a website that is in harmony with both the IAW's aims and its limited budget. We will keep you informed about progress under this heading. Until we have our own IAW website, we will publish interesting website addresses in the Newsletter. To start the list we give you those of some IAW Affiliates and Associates.

WEL, Women's Electoral Lobby, Australia <http://www.tip.net.au/other/wel/>
Dansk Kvindesamfund, Denmark <http://www.kvindesamfund.dk>
National Council of Ireland <http://www.nwci.ie>
Vrouwenbelangen, the Netherlands <http://www.dds.nl/vr~belang>
Swiss Rights of Women, Switzerland <http://www.feminism.ch>

With best wishes,
from the Editorial Committee IAW on Internet,
Joke Sebus

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.

=====

International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

Hon. Secretary: Priscilla Todd, <toddsec@surfnetworkcity.com.au>
9th Floor, 10 Queen Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000, Australia
Membership Officer: Pat Richardson, <patgum@nvi.net.au>
P.O. Box 380, Nambucca, Heads, NSW 2448, Australia

IAW Newsletter, provisional e-mail address: Joke Sebus <sebus.gj@inter.nl.net>

=====