

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER January 2008, no. 1



Equal Rights

Dear members,

In all countries women's organisations are preparing for the 52nd CSW and so is IAW. The three issues are of equal importance.

In this newsletter news about CEDAW, UNCTAD, the national tipline in Canada, leadership training for Muslim women in Delhi, police training for Liberian women, gender guidelines to implement two European Asylum Directive, and smashing the glass ceiling in Norway.

As usual you will find news of conferences, publications and events at the end of the newsletter.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

During the 52nd session the Commission will consider a priority theme and an emerging issue. In addition, the Commission will review implementation of the agreed conclusions (recommendations) on a theme considered at an earlier session.

Priority theme - Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women

(Monday 25 February 2008 – 3 to 6 pm and Tuesday 26 February 2008 – all day)

Expert Group Meeting on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women"

Related On-line Discussion (Final report of the on-line discussion)

Emerging issue - Gender perspectives on climate change

(Thursday 28 February – 3-6pm)

Further details on the interactive event – experts, discussion guide, and following the event, presentations by the experts and the moderator's summary, will be posted on the CSW site.

Review theme - Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding

(Friday 29 February – 10am – 1pm)

The agreed conclusions were adopted by the Commission at its 48th session in 2004, will take the form of an interactive dialogue.

All on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/52sess.htm>

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

CEDAW - 40th session – Geneva

As of 1 January 2008, responsibility for servicing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has been transferred to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. Information on the [40th](#) and future sessions of the Committee is available on the [website of OHCHR](#), on <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/index.htm>

Accreditation will enable participants to obtain a badge from the UN Security Unit at the Pregny Gate of Palais des Nations (Geneva, Switzerland), where the Committee's 40th session will take place. States to be examined are, among others: Morocco, France, Saudi Arabia and Sweden.

A guide to NGO Shadow Reports to CEDAW is to be found on:

<http://iwrw.igc.org/shadow/CEDAWNGOguideJune2003.pdf>

IAW Commission Justice, Human Rights (and CEDAW) - convenor: Margret Steinarsdottir, Iceland

CEDAW and Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, appearing for the first time before a UN watchdog for women's rights, faced tough questions on Thursday and was challenged to grant gender equality. The world's biggest oil exporter ratified the pact in 2000, with the proviso that Islamic Sharia law would prevail if there were any contradiction with its provisions.

Saudi delegation under fire

At a one-day debate on its record, the Saudi delegation came under fire for failing to meet international norms guaranteeing women's political, economic, social and civil rights.

'Only when women are free to make their own decisions on all aspects of their life are they full citizens,' committee member Maria Regina Tavares da Silva told the Geneva session.

Heisoo Shin, another committee member, said that a system of male guardianship 'governed virtually every aspect of a women's life' in Saudi Arabia.

'Without a man's consent, a woman cannot study or get health service, work, marry, conduct business or even get an ambulance service in an emergency,' she said.

Sharia law

A report submitted by Riyadh on its compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women said that there was 'no discrimination against women in the laws of the Kingdom.' The Saudi government said while women's rights outlined in the Convention could be invoked before the courts or state authorities, Sharia law must ultimately prevail.

More on: http://www.gulfintimedia.com/index.php?id=373935&news_type=Top&lang=en
<http://iwwraw.igc.org/shadow/CEDAWNGOguideJune2003.pdf>

UNITED NATIONS

UNCTAD XII: Accra, Ghana, 20 to 25 April 2008

Theme: "Addressing opportunities and challenges of Globalization for Development".

Accreditation procedures for NGOs/CSOs which do not have observer status with UNCTAD

DEADLINE: 31 January 2008

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will be holding its quadrennial Conference, UNCTAD XII in Accra, Ghana, from 20 to 25 April 2008.

All requested documents should reach the following address by 31 January 2008. Applications can be posted, faxed or emailed to: Civil Society Outreach Unit, Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach Service, UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, E: cso@unctad.org

Information and registration at: <http://www.unctadxii.org/en/Civil-Society-Outreach/>.

Strategy to aid victims of sexual abuse by Organisation's staff at the UN

In a major step forward in addressing sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel, a working group of the General Assembly [agreed](#) on a strategy to assist victims, ranging from medical treatment and counselling to social support, legal services and material care. In addition, the strategy commits the UN to helping children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The UN, which fields nearly 200,000 people from over 100 countries in its peacekeeping missions, has instituted a policy of zero tolerance against sexual abuse and exploitation ever since the problem surfaced in 2004, when a UN report found that a "shockingly large number" of peacekeepers had engaged in such practices in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The report cited payments for sex sometimes ranging from two eggs to \$5 per encounter. The victims included many abandoned orphans who were often illiterate.

The adoption of the strategy today was undertaken by an ad hoc open-ended working group. The Assembly is expected to formally adopt the strategy before the current session closes

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=25135&Cr=UN&Cr1=staff>

Gender Equality Architecture Reform at the UN

The UN still lacks an effective mechanism to deliver on many of the essential commitments made. It has several small under-resourced agencies focused exclusively on women's issues and other larger agencies make critical contributions to women's human rights and gender equality, but it is usually a small part of their mandate, and often receives low priority.

The campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform therefore calls on member states of the UN, with the support of the women's movement, to act now to create a stronger United Nations entity for women. More on:

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/csw08/CSW%202008%20GEAR%20submission%2>

AROUND THE WORLD

Canada's national tipline Cybertip!ca

If you know about a child who is in immediate danger or risk, call 911 or your local police. If you have any information on a missing child, call Child Find's toll free line at **1-800-387-7962**

Safety and Child Development

The Internet holds incredible potential and educational value for youth in Canada. However, along with its benefits, it can also be a dangerous place if children are not properly monitored.

Cybertip!ca receives countless reports from the public where children and adolescents are not using the Internet safely.

This includes the use of webcams and posting images, revealing personal information or engaging in other high risk behaviour.

Parents should be aware of what they can do to improve their child's safety on the Internet. In addition to reviewing the above information, please visit www.kidsintheknow.ca for a comprehensive collection of safety tools for children from kindergarten to high school. Kids in the Know is an education program that addresses all aspects of child personal safety and the prevention of sexual exploitation.

On: https://www.cybertip.ca/en/cybertip/inet_safety_tips

IAW Commission Elimination of Violence - convenor Mmabatho Ramagoshi, South Africa

Government sop for minority women

NEW DELHI: In view of the poor socio-economic status of Muslim women, the government is finalizing a scheme for leadership training and skill development aimed at tackling the 'double discrimination' faced by them.

Moving forward on the PM's 15-point agenda, the women and child development ministry's scheme will reach out to minority women so that they can move out of the confines of their home and community and assume leadership roles, accessing facilities that will improve their lives and livelihoods.

In the first phase, the scheme — called the 'Leadership Development for Life, Livelihood, and Civic Empowerment of Minority Women' — will be launched in five states with a large minority population. It is expected to reach 35,000 to 50,000 women directly and many more others indirectly.

Under the scheme, government agencies will give them training, inputs and information so that they gain confidence to interact with the government system.

Initially NGOs

Officials said in the initial phase, the scheme would be implemented through non-government organisations. This would also encourage the sector to take up work with this marginalized community.

According to government statistics, the literacy rate among Muslim women is worse than women from other religious groups. Only 50% of Muslim women are literate. The female work participation rate among Muslims is a bare 14% against 27.5% for Hindus.

Mahendra Kumar Singh on: mahendra.singh@timesgroup.com

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Government_sop_for_minority_women/articleshow/2667170.cms

Over 100 Liberian women complete police training under UN-backed initiative

24 December 2007 – More than 100 female police recruits have completed basic training with the help of a United Nations-backed programme designed to increase the number of women in the Liberian National Police (LNP), now bringing the total number of female officers to 356 – or nearly 10 per cent of the force.

The group represents the first set of female officers to benefit from the special educational support programme for female candidates – a joint initiative between the UN, the Liberian Government and the LNP which aims to bring the educational level of women up to the high school graduation level so that they can qualify for recruitment into the country's national police force.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony at the LNP Training Academy in Paynesville, a suburb of Monrovia, the Officer-in-Charge of the UN Mission in Liberia ([UNMIL](#)) congratulated the female police officers, and charged them to “further the cause of good governance in Liberia by conducting yourselves in line with the tenets of professionalism and the principles of democratic policing.”

Look at a wonderful picture and read more on: <http://www.unmil.org/>
Sent to us by IAW Member Anjana Basu

Smashing the glass ceiling in Norway

From 1 January 2008 it became compulsory for Norwegian companies to appoint a substantial number of women to their management boards, but is government intervention on gender issues the best way to create real change in the corporate world? Norway now leads the globe in gender equality at board level, with a higher percentage of women at the uppermost echelons of its firms than any other country.

The change was achieved by introducing tough legislation threatening to close publicly listed firms that failed to comply with the 40% female quota for board members. Days after the 1 January 2008 deadline passed, almost every single listed firm has female faces on its board.

The government can now proclaim its policies a success - and they have provoked a vital debate about women and work. "As of today, all major publicly listed companies do comply with the law," says Marit Hoel, head of Norway's Centre for Corporate Diversity. "The number has quadrupled in less than five years."

Tough love

The legislation, which was initially introduced in 2003 but gave companies five years to comply, means that the country has almost double the percentage of female board members even compared with its Nordic neighbours.

"Norway now has close to 38% of women on the board of publicly listed companies," Ms Hoel says. "The next country is Sweden with close to 20% of board membership female within companies listed on the Stockholm stock exchange."

This is well above a European average, which the European Professional Women's Network puts at around 8% and far more than in Italy, for example, where the figure dips to below 2%.

More on: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7176879.stm>

European Common Asylum System - Advocacy Guide

The European Women's Lobby and the Refugee Women's Resources Project at Asylum Aid (UK) launched a practical advocacy guide on the need for gender guidelines to implement two European Asylum Directives.

The joint publication comes at a crucial time as 2008 will set the place for the second phase of the European Common Asylum System. A European Asylum Action Plan is expected in July and an evaluation of both Directives in November 2008. It is therefore crucial that all Member States have a clear understanding of the nature of gender-based persecution as well as gender sensitive asylum procedures.

The publication is available on the website of the EWL, <http://www.womenlobby.org/site/hp.asp>

EVENTS - CONFERENCES - PUBLICATIONS

The MDG Monitor shows how countries are progressing in their efforts to achieve the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. With the 2015 target date fast approaching, it is more important than ever to understand where the goals are on track, and where additional efforts and support are needed, both globally and at the country level. On: <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/>

Africa Regional Workshop: Women's Leadership in HIV/AIDS, January 28-February 15, 2008. CEDPA, Nairobi, Kenya http://www.cedpa.org/section/training/aids_leadership

Sexuality, Poverty and Accountability in Africa, February 4-7, 2008. Third African Conference on Sexual Health and Rights, Abuja, Nigeria <http://www.arsrc.org>

UN Commission for Social Development (CSD), February 6-15, 2008, 46th session, UN Headquarters, NY <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2008.htm>

The Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking, UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), Vienna, Austria
http://www.ungift.org:80/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=369&Itemid=681

UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), February 25-March 7, 2008, 52nd session, UN Headquarters, NY <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/52sess.htm>.

UN Human Rights Council (HRC), March 3-28, 2008, 7th session, Geneva, Switzerland
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil>

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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