

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

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER - July 1999**

Dear IAW members,

In this Newsletter you will find an inspirational letter from IAW President Patricia Giles, telling of some of her many activities - Women and Water 2000; the progress of Emily's List in different countries; interesting organisations like Sisterhood is Global. She has also been giving many lectures on women's suffrage, an issue that lies near the heart of Archives Officer, Marijke Peters.

IAW member Alexene Williams, President of the Black Women's Organisations in Denmark, has sent us an enthusiastic report of an ILO Conference in Geneva.

Other items include news about coming events with some informative hyperlinks; a note about "twinning" from the IAW Treasurer and ... our IAW e-mail list now has over one hundred members! We are delighted to be joined by new members from Uganda, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Fiji, up to a total of 34 countries.

**From the IAW President**

Patricia Giles writes. The World Water Commission held a meeting in Washington on June 10th to which I was invited, along with a number of women known for their NGO activities. The purpose was to workshop ideas about how to involve women in the activities being planned for Water 2000 and, among other things, we have been asked to provide names and addresses of women interested to participate in the regional consultation meetings; information about women's networks and meetings taking place in countries; newsletters and articles that could be included in the World Water Vision exercise; details of best practice which could be an asset to Vision, and bad practices to be avoided. As the project progresses, we will be provided with information on water, a crucial issue for us all, for our newsletters. Among those attending, most of whom were from developing countries, I was very honoured to be in the company of women like Gertrude Mongella, who is planning to run for the position of President of Tanzania, and Gwendoline Konie who, having also been a member of Parliament and an Ambassador for her country, has similar ambitions in Zambia.

**EMILY's List**

While in Washington I also met with EMILY's List, an organisation established to raise early funding (like yeast!) for progressive women who are standing for election in the USA. Our younger sister organisation in Australia has also shown considerable success in recent elections. There are seven women under the age of 33 now sitting in the Australian Federal Parliament, all with help from EMILY. I am happy to provide further information on request.

### **Sisterhood Is Global**

The brief Washington visit was also an opportunity for a meeting of Sisterhood Is Global, an NGO started in 1984 by Robin Morgan from the proceeds of the sale of her book of that name, and of which I am a member of the Steering Committee having contributed to the book. SIG has produced some very impressive results. For the past five years the Executive Director has been Mahnaz Afkhami, who was the Minister for Women's Affairs in the Shah's last government, and has been a refugee in the USA ever since. Her knowledge of the languages, traditions, religion and culture of Islamic women has been put to excellent use by the conduct of forums, particularly on Women's Human Rights and Violence Against Women, in various Arab countries, developing teaching materials in ten different languages, and recently setting up projects to protect women's rights in Jordan and Lebanon.

### **Health of Older Women**

I will be attending a Seminar on the Health of Older Women, conducted by the Tsao Foundation in Singapore next week, and will travel then to Sydney for another Women's Health Seminar at the University of New South Wales and attend a Beijing+5 regional meeting. While in Sydney I will address the Evatt Foundation, a research institution named for Herbert De Vere Evatt, one of the first Presidents of the United Nations, and uncle of Elizabeth Evatt who is well known for being the Chair of the first CEDAW Committee and for her membership of the UN Human Rights Commission.

### **Women's Suffrage**

My home State of Western Australia is this year celebrating the Centenary of Women's Suffrage. I was appointed to the planning committee when it was established nearly three years ago, and we now are seeing the fruits of all those early morning meetings. Practically every woman in the State must have been involved in some way or other in projects, mostly quite modest, which have been funded from government grants of between \$200 and \$5,000. The participation has been wonderfully varied, reflecting the activism of such organisations as the Women's Christian Temperance Union which worked so hard for suffrage in the 1890s and which, at that time, created a banner one mile long consisting of signatures in favour of suffrage. One of my favourites among the many innovative projects in 1999 is a banner created by the Women's Electoral Lobby (an affiliate of the IAW) which distributed one metre squares of calico to every secondary school, all women's organisations and everyone who showed any interest in decorating one, or more. At this stage WEL has had returned well over 300 completed works, all representing some aspect of women's suffrage in an amazing range of styles and media - colourful, educative and heartwarming. These works are being exhibited piece-meal during the year at suffrage events and will, we hope, be recorded on video.

I have taken part in many of the events and have written for two publications which will commemorate this centenary year. The first, already published, is called "Carrying the Banner" and is an examination by about 30 prominent West Australian women of their own lives in the context of their approach to the concept of leadership. The other will be the publication later this year by the Edith Cowan University of a series of twelve Suffrage Lectures, of which I gave the first. I called it "Suffrage; Human Rights, and Women's Well-Being", using the history of the International Suffrage for Women Alliance and its transformation into the International Women's Alliance, with emphasis on the links between our organisation over the years and the League of Nations, and later the United Nations. I'm

told that this article is to be the leading essay and accompanied by an interview with me, also to be published.

Talking about interviews..... I seem to be on the list of a whole lot people who are planning to write, broadcast or film works about the status of women, encouraged by suffrage grants. Only six months to go!... Our Triennial Congress in New York will be a welcome break.

### **New and Emerging Trends : Electronic Communication**

Women NGOs in all countries and regions are preparing for the UN special session of "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century". The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which met in March 1999 as the Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) agreed that the review process would focus on: 1) best practices; 2) obstacles encountered; 3) vision for the future; 4) identification of new and emerging trends.

It is this fourth item that fires the imagination and, in particular, the imagination of the members of your Editorial Committee IAW on Internet. Just think of the possibilities of electronic communication for Beijing +5 and for the future!

In March 1999 Prepcom representatives of "Global and regional networks women's information and media networks" met in New York. They discussed global communications strategies that would increase the active participation of NGOs in the review process of the Plan For Action. The outcome was as follows:

- 1) Develop global and regional websites as "platforms" for the information of the NGO Beijing +5 review process. Work on this has already started on a global website and on websites in Asia, Africa and N.America, with sites planned in Europe.
- 2) Undertake training and capacity building for regional facilitators of regional website coordinators and on-line working groups, in collaboration with WomenWatch. A training course for Asia/Pacific online and web facilitators is currently underway.
- 3) Develop a score card/checklist for monitoring implementation of critical areas of concern. A draft survey/checklist has been developed for Section J: Women and the Media, as a possible template for other sections of the Platform for Action.

All those interested in learning more about Womenaction 2000, inc. the Section J template, can send a message to: [HYPERLINK mailto:Wimnet@gn.org](mailto:Wimnet@gn.org) [Wimnet@gn.org](mailto:Wimnet@gn.org) See also [HYPERLINK http://www.womenaction.org/2000](http://www.womenaction.org/2000) [HYPERLINK http://www.womenaction.org/2000](http://www.womenaction.org/2000) and [HYPERLINK http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forum](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forum) [HYPERLINK http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forum](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forum)

### **The International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

Alexene Williams, President of the Black Women's Organisation in Denmark, has sent us a report of the ILO 87<sup>th</sup> Session Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, June 1-17 1999. The International Labour Organisation's primary purpose is to improve the situation of human beings in the world of work. Its primary goal is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Other IAW members in attendance at the ILO Conference were Erika Bopp, Helene Sackstein, Jessika Kehl-Lauf and Alice Yotopoulos-Marangopoulos.

The main theme of the meeting was Child Labour and Maternity Protection at Work. I arrived in Geneva on the June 3. Being my first time in Geneva, I was eagerly looking

forward to the conference and being in Switzerland. While I was looking for Jessika, she appeared in the arrival hall with a bag marked "Beijing '95" with a Peace Train sign in front of her. We exchanged the usual pleasantries and were excited to see each other. Jessika Kehl-Lauf is the IAW permanent representative with the UN in Geneva.

Shortly after leaving the airport, we arrived at the Palais des Nations. Jessika then accompanied me through all the formalities of registration, which didn't take very long. We immediately headed for the Committee Meeting on Child Labour. On the way we made a courtesy call on Mme. M.A.Ducci who is the Relations Person for Inter-Governmental Organisations in Geneva. A charming, elegant lady who was very happy to meet us.

### **Committee on Child Labour and Maternity Protection at Work**

We finally arrived at the Committee meeting which was being held in an impressively big hall. There were delegates from about 186 countries, representing governments, employers, and workers of member states of the ILO. All were concerned to deliberate and agree on a new International Convention and Recommendation on the worst forms of child labour in the world and on Maternity Protection at work. Though the deliberations were slow, they were surely productive and clearly the best way to set out a clear standard and direction for all concerned worldwide. When adopted and ratified, these conventions and recommendations will set a standard for all nations in an effort to eliminate child labour worldwide. In my own opinion, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour globally depends on each of us all as individuals and as family members. In a world where there is child prostitution, child pornography and children being employed in factories, mines and other dangerous workplaces around the world, the importance of this meeting cannot be overemphasised. With children's health and moral upbringing at stake, I suppose the best legacy we can leave for the next generation is the goal of stopping the suffering of children worldwide. To eradicate child labour we must guarantee free basic education for all children.

All the deliberations I attended during the week were slow but productive. Between meetings on child labour, there were sessions on Maternity Protection for women at work. These were also long, tedious and productive. Several amendments to the Conventions and Recommendations were considered and one of the amendments finally adopted was that women would be allowed paid maternity breastfeeding breaks.

My thanks go to the efficient networking of a group called "WABA", an interesting group which would very much like to work with IAW in the future.

A highlight of the Conference was on June 8 when Mme Ruth Dreifuss, the President of the Swiss Confederation, came to address the conference. Mme. Dreifuss pointed out that women were among the poorest in the world and stressed the need for more women to be upgraded in terms of education and work. After the conference she attended an informal tripartite meeting on "Let's make gender equality a reality".

All delegates were treated to a grand reception at the "Salle des Assembles" of the "Palais des Nations." Jessika Kehl-Lauf, Erika Bopp and myself were formally introduced to Mme. Dreifuss. It was a sumptuous evening that one couldn't easily forget.

On June 10 the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr Henri Konan Bedie addressed the conference. He commended the ILO for its good work and emphasised what a great effect the deliberations by all the nations had on the everyday life of a worker. The President stressed the importance for any country to have a good international policy. He said that an end should be put to the exploitation of man by man. The President further stated that Social Liberties and Rights should be favoured and hoped that this would lead to a world where all

humanity's fate is interlinked. In conclusion, Mr Bedie said: "We place all our hope on the plenary discussion of the ILO".

The ILO Conference continued until June 17. I left the conference on June 10 with a completely informed view of the instruments of the ILO and its Conventions and how important and effective and necessary they are. All these laws and legislation should, in my opinion, be enforced within the basic life of all people because they affect us all in one way or another..

By IAW member Alexene Williams, President of the Black Women's Organisation in Denmark.

### **The UN in Geneva, Switzerland**

Erika Bopp of Swiss Women's Rights reports that in June and July the UN held some important conferences in Geneva:

The NGO Consultation with UN/IGOs on "Trafficking, Prostitution and the Global Sex Industry" on 21-22 June 1999, in conjunction with the twenty-fourth session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Geneva, 23 June-2 July 1999;

A CONGO meeting, with a seminar on Trafficking on Women, an ECE Hearing on the Millennium, ECOSOC.

The High Level Segment of: "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication; the empowerment and advancement of women", July 5 – 7. The agenda was concluded by a declaration, Document number E/1999/L21. IAW representative, Jessica Kehl, made a statement and the Editor hopes to obtain a copy of that statement for the next newsletter..

The Sub-Commission on Human Rights *I CAN'T HELP WITH THESE DETAILS (???)* is scheduled for August 2 – 5.

IAW representatives in Geneva: Jessika Kehl, Erika Bopp, Helene Sackstein, Barbara Cramer and Gudrun Haupter. The website of our Swiss Affiliate is well worth visiting, HYPERLINK HYPERLINK <http://www.feminism.ch> <http://www.feminism.ch>

### **A selection of Coming Events**

International Year of Older Person

**Exhibit** at UNHQ, New York, NY, USA 1 September - 21 October 1999

Sponsors/Hosts: DPI, DESA and Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts

**Symposium** at UNHQ, New York, NY, USA 17 September 1999

Sponsors/Hosts: DESA; AARP; and DPI

Observance: - International Literacy Day 8 September 1999

Sponsors/Hosts: UNESCO

Global Forum for Poverty Eradication, Strasbourg 14-16 October 1999

European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, Council of Europe

International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC)

We have just received from IWTC a wonderful list of upcoming conferences, workshops and other meetings, from July till the end of the 1999. It covers events in the USA, Nepal, Germany, Bangkok, South Africa, the Philippines, the UK, N. Ireland, Australia, Malaysia, Belarus, Korea, Canada, Lebanon, Ethiopia, the Netherlands. We made a selection, focussing on the URLs of the events with websites, for those members who like to browse around.

Johannesburg South Africa, Beijing +5, [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#)  
<http://www.enda.sn/synfev/synfev.htm> <http://www.enda.sn/synfev/synfev.htm>  
Isis Manilla, the Philippines, Beijing +5 and Media, [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#)  
<http://www.isiswomen.org> <http://www.isiswomen.org>  
Cambridge UK, Women in the History of Science, [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#)  
<http://www.awise.org> <http://www.awise.org>  
Brisbane Australia, Bahai, [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#)  
[http://www.uq.net.au/bahai\\_women/](http://www.uq.net.au/bahai_women/) [http://www.uq.net.au/bahai\\_women/](http://www.uq.net.au/bahai_women/)  
Calgary, Alberta Canada, on "Personhood", [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#)  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca> <http://www.ucalgary.ca>  
Beirut, Libanon by UN/ESCWA, [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#) <http://www.escwa.org.lb>  
<http://www.escwa.org.lb>  
Washington USA, Association Women In Development, [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#)  
<http://www.awid.org> <http://www.awid.org>  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Beijing +5, [HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#)  
<http://un.org/depts/eca/news/mtng99.htm> <http://un.org/depts/eca/news/mtng99.htm>

### **From the Treasurer**

Several members have written to tell me that their organisation has difficulties in paying its full membership fees. These letters come not only from countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but increasingly from countries in Central and Eastern Europe. What can we do about it? Is it possible that one richer organisation supports one which is less fortunate? And that these two start a kind of twinning process beyond financial support? Thus we can transform a handicap (shortage of funds) into strength (empowerment).

Our Action Programme 1997-1999 calls for more twinning programmes between affiliates. How many of us have taken up this call? Our Action Programme also identifies five priority areas to work in. May I suggest that organisations look for twinning partners which are active in similar priority areas?

To facilitate this twinning process could member organisations identify themselves? You can do this by writing to the Treasurer either by post or to the Secretary through IAW e-mail. Please indicate (a) the preferred area in which a twinning partner is active for your organisation to consider a twinning process and, (b) whether your organisation needs or can give (financial) support. Please also indicate which part of the membership fees your organisation can pay. This is what is called women's empowerment.

Anje Wiersinga, Treasurer and Convenor of the Commission of Elimination of Poverty

### **June Newsletter**

We repeat the three hyperlinks of the June Newsletter, because they did not 'blink', so you could not stow them away at your leisure in your bookmarks list for future use.

[HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#) <http://www.babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate>  
<http://www.babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate>

[HYPERLINK](#) [HYPERLINK](#) <http://www.acfoa.asn.au> <http://www.acfoa.asn.au>

### **An interesting study**

Surfing the net and arriving in Canada at the York University, we found a website that is called: International Women's Rights Project. One of the Project's priorities is: To conduct a study resulting in a detailed comparative analysis of the impact of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on national systems.

HYPERLINK HYPERLINK "http://www.web.net/~marilou/"  
http://www.web.net/~marilou/

### **General items**

In the June Newsletter we asked Affiliates to send us their report for Congress, so we can put (parts of) it in the Newsletter. We got one report from the Netherlands and are waiting for more. The Dutch also proposed that, during Congress, all countries which are especially active in one area, to report as a group in the same session, so that the session can be more like a workshop. Also IAW representatives who deal with the same subject might give their report on the same day. Maybe there are other ideas?

### **IAW Centenary Publication**

Dear Friends:

As Archives Officer I appeal to all of you to bring to Congress any material that you can spare and that could be useful for the archives and the centenary publication which I am trying to organise on behalf of IAW. Some of you have already reacted to my request handed to you in Malmö. Please bring: 1) a copy of the constitution of your organisation (English or French); 2) any publications regarding your organisation (English or French); 3) reports of workshops held in the past in co-operation with IAW; 4) clear photographs of past Congresses, perhaps even lantern slides!

Especially important is any material pre-1962 - Action programmes, leaflets, etc. Also back numbers of IWNNews or Jus Suffragii. In the past year I have managed to collect a lot of most interesting information on how the IAW worked in the past. We are preparing a preliminary plan for our publication to be available at Congress.

Looking forward to seeing you in New York with your archival material.

>Marijke Peters, IAW Archives Officer

With best wishes from the Editorial Committee (EC) 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, and in that case: please be so kind to contact Pat Richardson.

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International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

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