

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER July 2011, no. 7



Equal Rights

Dear members,

In this newsletter attention is drawn to several IAW activities: The preparations for the Board Meeting in Iceland, an incoming letter from Cameroon, an invitation for a conference on Health and a description of a Fair Play Flash Mob7 by our Affiliate in Australia.

Progress in fighting Female Genital Mutilation is slow, also in the European Union. FGM is an exceptionally brutal crime, says one of the most important EU politicians, Catherine Ashton. Yes, but what measures will be taken and when? Even her own country, the UK, fails in taking measures against FGM.

In India some child marriages are still arranged by parents, although authorities can intervene. Women in the Arab Spring are fighting for more equality in politics. The Human Rights Council has elected the first female President. The Communications Procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women has been published and the UN is preparing the conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

This month IAW Board Members and Presidents of Affiliates and Associates will mail their yearly reports to General Secretary Lene Pind for the Board Meeting in Iceland. Deadline: the first of August. All reports will be published in a general report, called the booklet, which will contain a lot of national and international activities!

Here is an example of the activities of Board Member Susanne Riveles.

Preparing for the IAW Board Meeting in Iceland

Susanne Riveles wrote us that she has worked as a consultant with UN-AIDS and US-AID in West Africa, in Chad, Niger, Senegal and Ghana, until family matters took her home.

On Tuesday July 12 Susanne attended the 'Citizens for Global Solutions' meeting in Washington DC; she is representing IAW in this Advocacy group. Its working group on the International Criminal Court (ICC) meets once a month and Susanne has been participating in that high level lobbying group during the last 3 years, and previously in New York. In February 2011 she presented a brief talk to this group on the ICC's ability to persecute crimes of violence against women in the context of war and post conflict. This week the arrest warrant for Libyan leader Gadaffi was discussed in the context of the general effectiveness of the court in the Hague.

From Bawufac, Cameroon

Dear Members,

The rural women I represent are only known to the governments of WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA during elections. Most of the rural communities of these countries are made up of women who have never had the opportunity of visiting other women to even know about human rights, or to discuss talking to the governments about their rights. They produce all the food but have no means of transporting to other parts of the country.

We have no access roads to the cities, no electricity, no potable water, so we are still a long way back from even thinking of women's rights.

Mailed to us by IAW member Elisabeth Nkwah

World Conference on Social Determinants of Health

Gudrun Haupter of the IAW Health Commission writes that the International Alliance of Women has received an invitation to attend the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 19 to 21 October 2011.

Specific objectives of the conference will be to strengthen political commitment by member states to develop and implement national policies on social determinants of health in order to reduce health.

Also:

- * to share experiences, challenges and technical knowledge on how to address social determinants of health and construct national policies to reduce health inequities;
- * to consider the need for strengthening governance arrangements, and
- * to learn from different contexts.

The programme also features a round table for the non-state sector. Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in New York, 19-20 September, and of other UN Conferences scheduled for 2012 and 2013.

An excellent report

The conference is a follow-up of the conclusions of the excellent Final report of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health, to which IAW made an input.

The IAW Health Commission recommends this recent publication: 'From Concept to Practice'. Examples and best practices are giving an idea of what has already been done and also of the difficulties that have been encountered.

It can be freely accessed on http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789241564137_eng.pdf

Gudrun Haupter, Convenor IAW Commission on Health

The Greek League for Women's Rights - GLWR

The GLWR was established as the first exclusively feminist organisation in Greece. In their excellent journal we found a well written report of the 90th Anniversary of the Greek League of Women's Rights 1920-2010. With introductions and felicitations by IAW President Rosy Weiss, [GLWR](#) President Soula Panaretou, Maria Strategaki, the Greek Secretary General for Gender Equality and many members of sister organisations.

During the day academic authorities mentioned the targets and the achievements of the GLWR in those 90 years. Actions on equal political rights, education, national and social problems, the setting up of a Free Legal Counselling Service and a Documentation and Study Centre for Women's Issues. Unique for the GLWR is also to award prizes to journalists and to women for social achievements.

Alice Yotopoulos-Marangopoulos

At the end of the festivities the great fighter for women's causes Alice Yotopoulos-Marangopoulos addressed the audience. Telling the GLWR to be always in the avant-garde, and to keep their fighting spirits, safeguarding what was won and achieving more, in collaboration with women of the world.

WEL-Informed

the Newsletter of Women's Electoral Lobby NSW Australia

A publication that is well worth reading is from our IAW Affiliate in Australia, WEL.

We selected a description of the Fair Play Flash Mob, by Jozefa Sobski

Equal Pay

As a seasoned activist, I have been to hundreds of protest marches, rallies, demo's, vigils and various stunts to draw attention to an issue or loudly proclaim a position.

WEL NSW members were also present to add their voice to the action.

This rally was unique

It was a cold sunny winter Wednesday. Activists huddled in small groups discussing FWA's decision and assessing its implications. Music blared aimlessly from the back of a truck loaded with loud speakers. The speeches from workers and officials traversed the usual arguments with rousing rhetoric to stir the masses.

Then we were invited by an energetic young man to practice a "flash mob" routine and some of us felt immediately physically challenged.

The choreographer on the small distant stage was undaunted by the slow start to simple, coordinated movements. In no time, physical challenge gave way to euphoria which comes with the pleasure of

mass movement!

The practice run ceased and we marched to Governor Macquarie Tower to remind Premier Barry O'Farrell that we wanted wage justice; that we were angered and disappointed by his new government's additional submissions to the case, making more excuses for the injustice to continue. Then we launched our *Fair Pay Flash Mob* routine assisted by an Elvis Presley impersonator. I would have preferred Dolly Parton, but the point was made regardless and the cold, all but forgotten. *A shortened version of an article in WEL by Jozefa Sobski*

PROTECT OUR GIRLS !

UK fails to halt female genital mutilation

Girls are still at risk as 'cutters' are flown in from abroad to perform the illegal procedure here. Hundreds of British schoolgirls are facing the terrifying prospect of female genital mutilation (FGM) as experts warn. Parents typically take their daughters back to their country of origin for FGM during school holidays, but The Independent has been told that 'cutters' are being flown to the UK to carry out the mutilation at 'parties' involving up to 20 girls to save money.

Failure to prosecute a single person (!)

The police face growing criticism for failing to prosecute a single person for carrying out FGM in 25 years; new legislation from 2003 which prohibits taking a girl overseas for FGM has also failed to secure a conviction.

Experts say the lack of convictions, combined with the Government's failure to invest enough money in education and prevention strategies, mean the practice continues to thrive. Knowledge of the health risks and of the legislation remains patchy among practising communities, while beliefs about the supposed benefits for girls remain firm, according to research by the Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development (Forward).

Long term-health problems

As a result, specialist doctors and midwives are struggling to cope with increasing numbers of women suffering from long-term health problems, including complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Campaigners are urging ministers to take co-ordinated steps to work with communities here and overseas to change deep-seated cultural attitudes and stamp out this extreme form of violence against women.

Ruth Rendell

The author and life peer Ruth Rendell, who has campaigned against FGM for 10 years, said: "When I helped take the Bill through Parliament seven years ago, I was very hopeful that we'd get convictions and that would then act as a deterrent for other people. But that has never happened and my heart bleeds for these girls.

I have repeatedly asked questions of ministers from all departments about why there has never been a prosecution and why we still do not have a register of cases. But while they are always very sympathetic, nothing ever seems to get done. Teachers must not be squeamish and must talk to their girls so we can try and prevent it from happening."

Four types of varying severities

FGM is classified into four types, of varying severity; type 3 is the most mutilating and involves total removal of the clitoris, labia and a narrowing of the whole vagina.

An estimated 70,000 women living in the UK have undergone FGM, and 20,000 girls remain at risk, according to Forward.

The practice is common in 28 African countries, including Somalia, Sudan and Nigeria, as well as some Middle Eastern and Asian countries such as Malaysia and Yemen. It is generally considered to be an essential rite of passage to suppress sexual pleasure, preserve girls' purity and cleanliness, and is necessary for marriage in many communities even now. It has no religious significance.

Between 8 and 11 years old

The most common age for the procedure is between eight and 11 but it can be carried out just after birth or just before marriage.

It carries the risk of death from bleeding or tetanus, and long-term problems include urinary incontinence, recurrent infections and chronic pain. Reversal procedures are necessary in order to avoid major problems for a woman and baby during childbirth.

In the UK, some women have to travel hundreds of miles to one of 15 specialist clinics because services and training are so patchy. There are no specialist clinics at all in Scotland, or Wales, and student doctors, midwives and social workers are not routinely taught to recognise or deal with FGM.

Mailed to us by IAW member Helen Self

Editor's comment: This is a summary. The whole article, by Nina Lakhani, was published in December 2010 before the Christmas holidays, in The Independent.

On: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-fails-to-halt-female-genital-mutilation-1845731.html>

The European Union on FGM

Catherine Ashton, Vice-president and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, marked the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) on 6 February 2011.

"This is an opportunity to remind the world that the European Union condemns this abhorrent practice that severely violates the human rights and dignity of hundreds of thousands women and girls.

Today, we reaffirm our commitment to work toward the eradication of this exceptionally brutal crime.

We need to promote measures that will lead to the eradication of FGM. We have to focus on protecting and caring for the young girls and women who are victims of FGM.

We will continue fighting gender-based violence in the EU and in our external relations. We need to promote measures that will lead to the eradication of FGM".

More on: <http://www.vrouwenbelangen.nl/english/euenglish.htm>

FGM worldwide

Legislation and other national provisions

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is attempting systematically to gather information on the current state legislation and other national provisions dealing directly or indirectly with the issue of female genital mutilation. At this stage, data is available for the following countries (to see detailed information, please click on the country's name):

- A** [Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan](#)
- B** [Bahrain, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi](#)
- C** [Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus](#)
- D-E-F** [Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France](#)
- G** [Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau](#)
- I-K-L** [India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg](#)
- M** [Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique](#)
- N** [Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway](#)
- P-R-S** [Peru, Poland, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland](#)
- T-U-Y-Z** [Togo, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe](#)

On: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/fgm-prov.htm>

Send to us by IAW Vice-President for Europe Joanna Manganara

Child marriages rampant in Godavari - India

Vadrevu Srinivas, July 12, 2011, Kakinada/Rajahmundry:

Last month, nearly 400 child marriages were stopped by the authorities. It was in Adoni division in Kurnool district. But Punyavathi (name changed) wasn't lucky. The 12-year-old girl was forced by her parents to marry a much older person, a 31-year-old widower, in Samalkot in East Godavari 10 days back.

"What can my daughter achieve by pursuing education? She will not go for a job after marriage. So, we married her off. We want to discharge our responsibility as parents," her mother Lakshmi Rajyam said nonchalantly.

This is not a one-off incident. Officials are worried as shocking tales of child marriages are tumbling out from East and West Godavari districts.

Several girls are getting married by the age of 12-13 years and many of them are becoming mothers by their late teens.

"In spite of the campaigns against child marriages, social reforms and stringent laws, such marriages are taking place on a large scale in the rural as well as urban areas," a senior official of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) told TOI.

When contacted, ICDS project director K Raghavarao said the child marriage menace cannot be rooted out entirely. "Apart from illiteracy and economic backwardness, the people are still stuck with age-old practices," he pointed out.

Though there are nearly 8,000 anganwadi centres in both Godavari districts, its workers were of little help in preventing the child marriages in the rural areas.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Child-marriages-rampant-in-Godavari-dists/articleshow/9191310.cms?prtpage=>

Mailed to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

AROUND THE WORLD

Women and the Arab Spring - a follow-up

With actions of IAW member Joanna Manganara and her emergency motion in the European Women's Lobby, with the lobby for a motion in the Council of Europe by IAW representative Anje Wiersinga, and with Open Letters from women's organisations including those of IAW, the demands for women's equal political and economic participation of the Egyptian Women's Charter got worldwide support.

Egyptian Women Demand Greater Role in Government

As Egyptian Prime Minister Essam Sharaf reshuffles his cabinet, trying to placate the boiling Egyptian street with a more representative government, women have started to speak up, demanding greater representation in politics.

Sharaf reshuffled 14 ministers in his cabinet, replacing ministers of finance and foreign affairs, but retaining the controversial interior and justice ministers. Women's organizations had to be content with only one woman in the new cabinet, International Cooperation and Planning Minister Fayza Aboul-Naga.

Intentional ignoring women's representation

"This is an intentional ignoring of women's representation," Nahed Shahata, head of programming at the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR), a Cairo-based organization, told The Media Line. "Women stood alongside men at Tahrir Square. They were killed and injured just like men. It's not a question of gender; this is an important period of democratic transition."

Shahata said there is no religious or educational barrier preventing women from holding leadership positions in Egypt, noting that women already serve as judges, academics and social leaders. She said it was the government's responsibility to instil notions of equality in society by appointing more women in parliament, in the new government and as governors.

The press release issued by ECWR did not explain what female ratio would be considered "fair", but Shahata said that 30% was a reasonable goal.

More on: http://www.themedialine.org/news/news_detail.asp

Mailed to us by IAW member Arina Angerman.

The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) confirms the necessity to commit to the principle of citizenship and equality which are the principles of democratic countries, and which were approved by the Military council in the constitutional declaration Article.7:
'All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination due to sex, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed.'
More on: www.mediterraneas.org/article.php3?id_article=274

UNITED NATIONS

Communications Procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Communications Procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women is a unique tool for individuals and organizations to use in order to raise awareness about injustice and discriminatory practices against women in any country in the world.

Claims to the Commission on the Status of Women for consideration at its next session (27 February to 9 March 2012) must be submitted by 1 August 2011.

To learn more click here: <http://www.unwomen.org/csw/communications-procedure>

Human Rights Council elects first woman President

Ms Laura Dupuy Lasserre, the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the UN Office at Geneva, was elected as the new Council's first ever female President.

On: http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?page=courrier&id_courrier=65

Global aid for trade efforts vital for boosting development

19 July 2011: Today Aid for Trade accounts for as much as one-third of official development assistance (ODA).

"However, all is not well," UN Secretary-General Ban pointed out at the WTO's Third Global Review of Aid for Trade, held in Geneva. "As we all know, this is a time of economic uncertainty. Budgets are tight. But difficult fiscal conditions are no excuse for letting up our efforts; they underscore the need for collective action."

Noting that the annual rate of increase for Aid for Trade has slowed sharply, he urged the donor community not to fall short of the present level of Aid for Trade.

Climate change, food crisis, global health and gender empowerment

Mr. Ban also noted that in an age of integration and interconnection, initiatives such as Aid for Trade have to be looked at along with other interlinked issues such as climate change, food crisis, global health and gender empowerment, as well as other development objectives, including the anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)).

Sustainable Development in 2012

Next year's UN Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June, will provide an opportunity to do just that, said the Secretary-General, who has made sustainable development the world body's top priority for this year.

The two day forum brings together senior officials from the WTO, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as well as dozens of international trade organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private corporations.

Source: *UN News Centre* on <http://www.un.org/ohrlls/>

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