

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER - March 2000



Board Meeting, Israel, Oct.-Nov. 2000

On behalf of the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) our Vice-President Hana Elroy has informed us that the dates for our Board meeting are October 29th to November 2nd 2000, in Tel Aviv. This will give us three full days for the meeting, one day for a seminar (subject yet to be decided) and a day on which to visit projects in different cities in Israel. Hana has offered to recommend a tourist company to those who wish to spend extra time in Israel.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

New York, Feb. 28th to March 17th

IAW President Pat Giles, who is attending the CSW, writes:

"This Session will include preparations for the Beijing +5 Special Session to be held in June 2000. An advanced unedited version of the outcome of the Special Session: "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" - E/CN.2000/PC/L, proposed outcome document (28 pages) is now circulating. For future reference, the Advance Unedited Version of "Further actions and initiatives" etc. is at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/outcome.htm>

WomenAction Live CSW

It is a real pleasure to follow daily the reports of WomenAction 2000 at the 44th regular session of the CSW at the UN headquarters in New York at WomenAction Live at

<http://www.womenaction.org/csw.htm> or <http://www.womenaction.org/csw44/news.html>

WomenAction writes:

There is a DAILY Bulletin with news and views on-line, interviews, parallel NGO sessions and a calendar of events. There are links to the Political Declaration and the Background Document. There is an Events Notice Board and from 6th to 10th March Women Action will provide a linkage to the Global Knowledge Conference in Malaysia via bulletins on the website and a side bar in the daily newsletter.

To receive the news, join the mailing list from an online subscription page at

<http://lists.sn.apc.org/public/b5ngonews/subsform.htm> or send an email to <info@womenaction.org>

requesting for your email to be included in the distribution list.

IMPORTANT:

*we will *not* be reposting all news articles here. So, if you >wish to receive all of them as email messages please subscribe to the above mailing list NOW (otherwise, the information could be accessed through the website at <http://www.womenaction.org>.)*

Please spread the news to your network members! Thank you!

8 March 2000: "Women Make The News" Operation For International Women's Day

In aid of this year's International Women's Day, UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura has launched an appeal to the media: "By drawing attention to the glass ceiling that still limits the number of women journalists who rise to key editorial positions in the media, UNESCO is pursuing the commitment made at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 to defend equal professional opportunities for women."

UNESCO invites media organisations to register their participation in the initiative through the newly created Website <http://www.unesco.org/march8>

Scandinavian meeting in Oslo

The Norwegian Association for Women's Rights arranged on February 4th and 5th a meeting in Oslo for the IAW organisations in the Nordic countries. We

invited only two persons from each country because the first issue this time was to get to know each other. This was the first meeting for 20 years

although it has traditions back to the beginning of the century. Women from Denmark, Sweden and Norway participated.

On the program were visits to the Ombudsman for equal rights and the Office

for equal rights affairs. Our own speakers were: Elisabeth Lønnå (N):
A historical view on the collaboration of the Nordic IAW organisations,
Padmini Christiansen (DK): CEDAW and Beijing +5, Anna-Karin Sjöstrand (S):
Civil and political rights and Siri Hangeland (N): The congress in NY 1999,
action programme 1999-02, the Nordic region in IAW and the Baltic States.
The meeting was very inspiring and I am glad that Sweden will invite us to a
new meeting next year.
Siri Hangeland, Regional Co-ordinator Scandinavia/Baltic States

CILAF and new technologies

The CILAF, the French Affiliate of the IAW, is organising the following event on the 20th of March 2000. To commemorate the Journée de la Francophonie, a Colloquium will take place on "Technologies Nouvelles - Société Nouvelle - Place aux Femmes" or: "New Technologies - New Society - Women's Place", at the Palais du Luxembourg, Paris, 20th March 2000, under the auspices of Mme. Nicole Pery, Secrétaire d'Etat aux Droits des Femmes et à la Formation Professionnelle, and of M. Boutros Ghali, Secrétaire Général de l' Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie.

Questions to be discussed are: Are women ready to take their place in the Society of Information Technologies and Communication? And: Women are needed, but on what terms?

Three Roundtables with a variety of French and foreign panelists will deal with the issues and discuss the outcome with the participants of the Colloquium and Mme Nicole Pery will draw the conclusions.

IAW Website, Banner Postcard project

IAW President Pat Giles writes:

The Website is almost ready to be launched! However, one of the most tiresome and delaying aspects of the preparations is applying for permission to use symbols and other visuals which belong to the United Nations and the Inter-Governmental organisations, which must all be contacted separately. We hope that one of the functions of the site will be to interest and familiarise visitors with aspects of the UN system which have particular relevance for IAW.

The Banner Postcard Project is now completed and the cards are being posted out to Board and other members to judge the response. If you don't receive a sample within a couple of weeks please let the President know ... or if you have some and want more. They have been very cheap to produce, especially as the photograph was a gift from a kind Western Australian feminist/artist Helen Mathie.

Pat Giles is happy to cover the initial cost of printing and posting. If, as she hopes, the response is positive, the Board will doubtless discuss this in October. It would be possible to sell the cards in bundles of 10 and cover costs including postage for UK 2 pounds (Australian \$5.00) and make a small profit.

Police 'Should Track Girl's Killers - Not Harass Women'

Anastasia Mhango, Chair for the Working Party on Violence against Women writes that she and 38 other are appearing in court on January 24 on charges of 'unlawful assembly'. The women were arrested after holding a peaceful demonstration on Violence Against the Girl Child, after they had been refused a permit for the gathering. A group of NGOs gathered to protest at the lack of police action following the murders of 4 girls aged 11 to 13 years- who were all raped and strangled in the Lusaka area in the past 10 months. The protest involved the women standing quietly holding placards on January 17. After 20 minutes (and the passing of the President's car), police bundled the women into their vehicles and took them to the police station where they were detained until midnight before being charged. Ms. Mhango writes to protest the action of the police in harassing innocent women - and urges that they spend their energies instead on apprehending the killers of young girls.

Messages of solidarity please, to:

Women for Change (WFC): P.O. Box 33102, Lusaka, Zambia E-mail: wfc@zamnet.zm

Source: A. Mhango via Ausfem Polnet, 31.1.00. E-mail: wwda@ozemail.com.au

During the same incident journalists Rachiel Chiumya and Kanwa Mulenga report that they were also attacked by police, who attempted to grab their recorder and notebooks. Ms. Chiumya sustained blows to her body - but managed to pass her recorder to Mulenga - who was then cornered, beaten and forced to hand over the recorder. The two journalists were saved from arrest by the intervention of a police spokesman and a human rights activist. The rights activist condemned the blatant attempt to censor the report of the demonstration, and the use of violence against both demonstrators and journalists.

Source: Media Institute of Southern Africa, 18.1.00. Website: <http://www.ifex.org/>

Honour Killings, Jordan

Two princes of the Jordan Royal family took part in a demonstration against a Jordanian law, which is giving perpetrators of so called 'honour killings' a lot of room to get away with it. The demonstration was organised in February by human rights groups and 4000 people took part in it.

Every year an average of 25 women are murdered by their fathers or brothers because they seem to have offended the family honour. The revengeful Jordanian law will set the man free *in a case of adultery* or it will give a light punishment to the man if a woman is caught in an adulterous 'situation'. If a woman is raped, it can be judged as an injury to the family honour.

Up to now a campaign to change this law has not had any result. The Jordan Parliament has twice rejected amendments because the majority is of the opinion that women are being deterred from adultery by current law. Some members of Parliament even accused the government of yielding to Western conspiracies to undermine the values of the Islamic society. Prince Ali (a brother of Jordan King Abdallah II) who, together with his cousin Prince Ghazi, headed the demonstration, said: "The current law is against our tradition and against Islam. I'm ashamed a law like this exists, a law being opposed by former King Hussein and by King Abdallah".

Strange enough there were also some supporters of the current law among the participants in the demonstration. A tribe spokesman said: "A woman is like an olive tree. When a bough gets woodworm it has to be cut off to keep the community clean and pure".

Editorial comment: Are there no male olive trees?

Websites with pictures of King Abdallah II and Queen Rania Al-Abdallah and that of Queen Noor are to be found on <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/> and <http://www.noor.gov.jo/>

Legislation on the Global Sex Trade

UN members met in Vienna to work on a new Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, to legislate, among other things, against the trafficking of women. Some countries, including the US, support law that will prohibit the trafficking of people across borders for 'forced' prostitution. That wording is a concession to countries with legalised prostitution - but objectors say it could offer traffickers a defence. Indeed, in many cases, impoverished women are willingly lured by promises of highly paid work abroad - although the type of work is misrepresented. Beyond that deception, a coercive environment envelops the women. Travel documents are often seized by traffickers, who may also threaten physical violence. This makes testifying against their 'employers' problematic.

Most women continue in virtual slavery until they can repay the 'debts' concocted by their traffickers - then return to their home country as poor as when they left. Under these circumstances, the question of what is 'forced' becomes academic.

Women's groups recommend that the UN Convention be ratified with the strongest wording possible. Co-operation between law enforcement agencies in countries involved in the sex industry should be strengthened - which may not be easy since officials in the countries of origin are sometimes implicated in the trade. Police in the receiving countries often limit their enforcement to deporting the women. The trade in women, estimated at hundreds of thousands in the past decade, represents only a fraction of the worldwide prostitution market on every continent. Criminal syndicates pocket an estimated US\$12 billion a year from the sex trade.

Source: Christian Science Monitor, 21.1.2000

Note: to avoid misunderstanding, we always send the IAW Newsletter twice, 1) in the body of the e-mail, and 2) as an attachment, saved in Word 6.0/95. Both have exactly the same content. The only difference is, that the attachment has a better lay-out, so it will be easy for Affiliates to copy it and send it by post to IAW members without e-mail.

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.

International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

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