

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

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

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWSLETTER March 2011, no. 3



Equal Rights

Dear members,

March was a turbulent month. Tension in the Middle East and a heavy earthquake followed by a tsunami and by big trouble at the nuclear power plants in Japan. The images of the suffering of civilians, many of them women and children, during armed conflicts and during environmental disasters shocked us all.

At the beginning of this month IAW was focussing on the outcome of negotiations of the Commission on the Status of Women. Tension there too, but all went well in the end.

We describe the result of research after Chernobyl, in the light of the many nuclear power plants that are already built or are being planned. There is a call for grant applications for projects on forms of contemporary slavery. The Dandi March led by Mahatma Gandhi will be repeated, now against corruption in India. Domestic workers are taking action to secure decent work.

Female Genital Mutilation is seen as an 'exceptionally brutal crime', and a survey on sexual violence by men in India, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Mexico and Rwanda shows there are differences in the kind of sexual violence by men per country.

Devastating Natural Disasters

We have watched with horror the devastating effects of the massive earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan this month and left so many thousands dead and missing. The quakes are continuing while people in many areas are coping with no home, little or no water, occasional power and limited supplies of food. In other areas water is rationed, power is intermittent, petrol is for emergency services and there are decreasing supplies in the supermarkets. Even more frightening is the damage to nuclear power stations in the Fukushima Prefecture followed by explosions causing evacuation and warnings about the release of low levels of radiation, while frantic efforts to stabilize the plants are continuing.

We have contacted friends in Japan and we have heard some happy stories and some sad ones yet through it all the Japanese people seem to be stoically facing these disasters.

In the midst of this crisis, and completely by coincidence, a study was released on 17 March by the [National Cancer Institute](#) on the after effects of the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant in the Ukraine in 1986. An international team of researchers has been monitoring the health effects of the Chernobyl accident for years. The study says that health risks linger after nearly 25 years. Children and teenagers who drank contaminated milk or cheese in the days and weeks after that explosion still suffer an increased risk of [thyroid cancer](#).

Thyroid cancer is largely a non-lethal cancer

“This study confirms the risk of thyroid cancer from radioactive iodine,” Dr. Alina V. Brenner, a radiation epidemiologist at the cancer institute and a co-author of the study, said in an interview. “But thyroid cancer is largely a non-lethal cancer. If detected and treated in a timely manner, they have a good prognosis.” By Gardiner Harris.

More on:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/health/research/18cancer.html?_r=1ref=global-home

The Japanese disaster has taken our attention but we have not forgotten other friends around the world who have been facing other natural disasters – the earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand; cyclones and floods, many still continuing, in Australia; the crippling snowstorms that hit Europe and USA – the list goes on and, while the term ‘global warming’ seems odd in these circumstances, it is impossible to ignore the growing and ongoing signs of upheaval in weather patterns around the world.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The Agreed Conclusions

Daniela Reiter from Austria was the first from IAW to tell us by e-mail that the draft CSW Agreed Conclusions had been adopted. She mentioned that the outcome of the cumbersome negotiations can be described as a relative happy end, even though content-wise not ideal.

The Beijing BfA has been kept as the base of the agreed conclusions. The word 'gender', like in gender stereotypes etc., which suddenly caused a lot of tension, was at last accepted by all.

The following phrases were also accepted: 'life skills and sex education; sexual reproductive health; equal sharing of responsibilities of 'daily life and care work'; and 'multiple discrimination'.

The atmosphere at CSW was definitely better in the end.

Thank you, IAW Board member and Coordinator of Young Members Daniela Reiter!

Read more of the tension around the word 'gender' on the IAW website in the President's Letter. And see below a short description of two of the many events at CSW mailed to us by IAW Secretary General Lene Pind.

Links to CSW

Agreed conclusions on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm#agreed>

Webcasts on: <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2011/02/55th-session-of-csw-2.html>

Resolutions on: <http://www.ngocsw.org/blog/?p=389>

Input of IAW

The events organised by the International Alliance of Women all went very well. See also the President's Letter at the IAW website on: www.womenalliance.org

A Statement on Physical Barriers can be found on IWA's Weblog. It is also well worth while to have a look at the other content of IWA's weblog and at the Book Nook, both written by Alison Brown.

Physical barriers and Education

To name a few participating IAW members. Mmabatho Ramagoshi from South Africa gave an introduction on current physical barriers that obstruct a girl's right to education. Georgette Arrey Taku of Cameroon gave a PowerPoint presentation on the painful and harmful traditional practice for girls called 'breast ironing'. It moved several African participants into promising the audience that they will take action against this custom. The Vice-Minister for Public Works in South Africa, Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, made a very interesting contribution talking on 'decent work'. What is a decent workplace? Who should define what it means? Judy Gordon from the IAW New York team talked about Education and IAW.

Dr Koasar Afsana from Bangladesh

The conversation during lunch organized by Soon-Young Yoon on Thursday February 24, in honour of and with Dr Koasar Afsana from Bangladesh, was very well received. *Lene Pind comments:* It is very interesting how they use modern technology to reduce maternal mortality and also reduce the number of babies born per woman.

More on Dr Koasar Afsana on:

<http://beijingcircles.wordpress.com/2011/02/22/uncsw-dr-afsanas-remarks-on-consultation-day/>

Interactive Participatory Workshop on CSW 55 Priority Theme

A workshop organised by Women's Partnership for Learning - a huge international NGO.

The event was called **Celebrating UN Women: THE WAY FORWARD.**

Women's Empowerment Principles are directed at helping the private sector do what is necessary for promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.

We begin the second decade of the 21st century facing grave challenges around the world. At the heart of these challenges—from environmental degradation, to extremist ideologies, poverty, and income disparity, violence, crises in government, the dilemmas and potentials of globalization, and expansion of information technology—we find gender inequality as the issue cross-cutting race, ethnicity, religion and class, among others.

Questions raised during the workshop:

- (1) Describe the **major obstacles** to women's equal participation in the economic life of your country.
- (2) What do you see as **policies and priority actions** that can be taken by the private sector in your country?

On: <http://www.learningpartnership.org/lib/un-women-way-forward-speakers>

CSW Themes for 2012

The Priority theme is: "The empowerment of rural women, in relation to climate change and food security."

The Review theme is the agreed conclusions from the 2008 session on "Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women."

UNESCO

Education For All - The hidden crisis

Armed conflict is robbing 28 million children of an education by exposing them to widespread sexual violence, targeted attacks on schools and other abuses, the 2011 Education for All Global Monitoring Report warns. Girls are suffering the most.

The report is called 'The hidden crisis: armed conflict and education' and was released on March 1 2011. It calls for tougher action against human rights violations, an overhaul of global aid priorities and more attention to education's potential to foster peace.

On: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/>

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Call for grant applications: on Contemporary Forms of Slavery 2012

The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery allocates project grants (for a maximum of 15,000 USD), for programmes of humanitarian, legal and financial assistance to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery.

Contemporary forms of slavery include chattel slavery, serfdom, forced labour, debt bondage, the worst forms of child labour, forced and early marriage and the sale of wives, trafficking of persons and human organs, sexual slavery, sale of children and children in armed conflicts, etc.

Projects undertaken with the Fund's grants include medical, psychological, education and housing assistance aid for women and girls who are victims of forced marriages, vocational training to victims of human trafficking for sexual and economic exploitation; support to rehabilitation centres for sexually and physically abused street children and projects to identify and release bonded labourers in the agriculture, carpet and construction industries.

Other projects have provided victims with the means to generate sustainable sources of income, such as sewing machines, hairdressing equipment, or farming tools.

Application form

The application form in English is available on the following web link:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/SPdocs/Slavery/AppSH-EN2012.doc>

Deadline: 31 May 2011.

If you need more information on the Fund, you can consult OHCHR website:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Slavery/Pages/SlaveryFundMain.aspx>. You can also contact us by email at: slaveryfund@ohchr.org.

You are more than welcome to disseminate this message to organizations working on contemporary forms of slavery. *Sent by IAW Secretary General Lene Pind*

AROUND THE WORLD

Navi Pillay on women in the Middle East and North Africa

Geneva, 8 March 2011. On this day, I salute the women of the Middle East and North Africa, along with women all over the world who are taking great risks to stand up and fight for dignity, justice and human rights for themselves and for their compatriots. In Egypt and Tunisia, women were on Twitter, on Facebook, and on the streets. Women from all walks of life were marching alongside men.

Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,

on: <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article1282&lang=en>

Female Genital Mutilation - an exceptionally brutal crime

7 February 2011. The European Union is committed to eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM). The foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said that this practice is an "exceptionally brutal crime".

Representatives in Senegal and Mali villages have agreed to ban the practice, reported a local non-governmental organisation.

This ceremony 'of the declaration of abandonment of excision and early and forced marriages of girls' brought together about 1,500 people from 70 Senegalese villages and 19 Marian villages' in the town of Gathiary. The NGO Tostan campaigns for an end to female genital mutilation.

More on:

<http://www.medindia.net/news/African-Communities-Against-Female-Circumcision-82235-1.htm#ixzz1GtDzEOYI>

IAW Affiliate the 'Deutscher Frauenring' in Germany has organized an exposition on 'Mädchenbeschneidung' (FGM) in the Stadtbibliothek in Ludwigshafen, 15 March - 9 April with an explanation of the situation (why and where) and how to put an end to this harmful traditional practice. There will be an introduction of experts on the opening on March 15 and a good flyer.

Sent to us by Gudrun Haupter, from the IAW Health Commission.

New European Pact for equality between women and men for the period 2011-2020

March 7, 2011. The new Pact reaffirms the EU's commitments to closing gender gaps in employment, education and social protection, promoting better work-life balance for women and men and combating all forms of violence against women. It also reaffirms the importance of integrating the gender perspective into all policies including external actions of the EU.

The European Women's Lobby welcomes the pact, but regrets that no binding concrete measures, including targets, are foreseen in the Pact, except the renewed commitment to the Barcelona childcare objectives.

More on:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/119630.pdf

IAW Representative to the European Women's Lobby, Joanna Manganara.

USA - Next Equal Pay Day on Tuesday 12 April 2012 - wear red!

Wear red on Equal Pay Day to symbolize how far women and minorities are 'in the red' with their pay! On: <http://www.pay-equity.org/day.html>

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) welcomes the launch of the first ever! European Equal Pay Day that in 2011 will fall on **Saturday 5 March**, an initiative that already exists in many Member States and that is supported by women's organisations. But ... the First European Equal Pay Day must be followed by concrete targets and multidimensional strategy.

Mailed to us by Joanna Manganara, IAW representative to the European Women's Lobby

They're angry and unafraid - the Girl Rioters in the UK

Britain may still have appalling representation of women in parliament (following the last general election there were 144 female MPs to more than 500 male MPs) but the streets tell a different story.

In the four major education protests before Christmas, women were frequently at the forefront: organising, talking to the media, standing up against increasingly aggressive police tactics, and articulating how and why the cuts would affect students.

Trade Union demonstration

In the build-up to what looks likely to be the biggest trade union demonstration in recent history, on 26 March, the role of women in organising and participating in protest will continue to be central.

Nevertheless, for the usual suspects the participation of so many young women - in the education protests in particular - has given rise to a certain moral panic.

See, for example, the hilarious *Daily Mail* cover: "Rage of the Girl Rioters".

A long line of attacks on women

The attempted pillorying of these young women - accused of "lacking respect" - by the *Mail* is the latest in a long line of attacks on women who campaign directly against the state: the suffragettes; women involved in the 1926 general strike; the miners' protests in the mid-80s; those who fought for reproductive rights and against domestic violence.

Girl rioters - terrifying?

While the *Mail* presumably thought that "girl rioters" would terrify its middle England readership, this should only serve to encourage us to recognise that female emancipation - and political emancipation more

generally - will start with those most angry about its incompleteness.
By Nina Power in *The Guardian*, Tuesday 8 March 2011.
Sent to us by IAW member Helen Self.

Convention to Secure Decent Work for Domestic Workers

Despite formal recognition of domestic workers' rights in South Africa, they still face a struggle for fair treatment.

A domestic worker is defined as an individual in a private home doing services such as cleaning, childcare, driving, gardening, cooking, elderly and frail care.

According to the 2010 Labour Force Survey, there are about 880,000 domestic workers in South Africa. The majority of these workers are women with low levels of education that render them vulnerable to exploitation and sexual harassment. Many are also migrants.

South African domestic workers met in Cape Town as part of efforts to ensure that the South African government along *with 93 other countries*, votes in favour of the Convention come June.

Myrtle Witbooi, General Secretary of SADSAWU, was an active participant in Geneva in 2009 when a first round of discussions on the Convention was held. "If we can win, if we can get a Convention on Domestic Work as Decent Work, it means we will be able to have one voice in the world. And all governments must listen to that voice."

In June this year, the second and final reading of an International Labour Organization Convention on the rights of domestic workers will take place. Countries, including South Africa, would be bound by this Convention if it is adopted at the ILO's 100th session.

By Erna Curry. More on: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?>

Latest news

The ILO has published a second report, REPORT IV (2B) (French/English), which contains the draft Convention and Recommendation and will serve as the basis for the negotiations at the 2011 ILO Conference. Read the reports at <http://www.domesticworkerrights.org/?q=node/166>

See also: <http://www.domesticworkerrights.org/?q=node/165>

Editor's comment: during the IAW Congress in South Africa we had the pleasure of meeting Myrtle Witbooi. We wish Myrtle and her organisation a lot of success!

Indian men commit the most sexual violence in a survey of 6 developing countries

NEW DELHI: Nearly one in four Indian men has committed sexual violence at some point in their lives and one in five has admittedly forced his wife or partner to have sex. The findings of a recent International Men and Gender Equality Survey reflects a new low for Indian men. Only 2% Brazilian males and less than 9% of men in Chile, Croatia, Mexico and Rwanda were found to have indulged in sexual violence.

Researchers from the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW in US and India) and Instituto Promundo in Brazil, who led the survey, interviewed more than 8,000 men and 3,500 women, aged 18 to 59, from these countries.

While Croatia topped the test, with 82% 'gender-just' men, more than 50% men in Brazil, Chile and Mexico made the grade. Rwanda, which is among the least developed nations in the world, in fact fared better than India, with 30% males qualifying as 'highly equitable'. Rwanda, however, joined India with the highest rate of domestic violence, with 38% men admitting they had physically abused their partners. **Worse, more than 65% Indian men also believed that women should tolerate violence to keep the family together and that women sometimes deserved to be beaten.**

Yet, although Indian men were the most sexually and physically violent at home, they were not involved in violent or criminal behaviour outside. Only 4% Indian men had participated in robbery and 7% had been involved in fights with weapons, compared to 36% in Croatia and 22% in Brazil.

The findings, released in Washington last month, reiterated that although India may be on its way to becoming the world's fastest developing economy, it figures at the bottom of the pile when it comes to gender equality. "Indian men are far more traditional, to put it mildly. Even young, educated men are not changing as rapidly as women. They are still living in the old ages," said Ravi Verma, director of ICRW's Asia regional office in Delhi.

More on: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/7643154.cms?prtpage=1>

Mailed to us by IAW member Anjana Basu.

ACTIONS - EVENTS - LINKS - CONFERENCES - REPORTS

South Asian women speak out on climate change adaptation

A report with articles from experts from Bangladesh, Nepal, India and many others, who contributed and participated in the research from the Pabna and Faridpur district in Bangladesh, the Muzaffarour district in India and the Bank and Bardiya districts in Nepal. *Sent to us by IAW member Ida Kurth.* On: <http://www.ngocsw.org/files/actionaid-what-women-need.pdf>

IANSA - the International Action Network on Small Arms - has a new website: <http://www.iansa.org/>

The **UK All Pakistan Women's Association** has a new website on: <http://www.theukapwa.com/>

Against corruption in India - On March 2, in Washington, a group of NRIs, inspired by the historic Dandi March led by Mahatma Gandhi in India's fight for freedom from foreign rule, have organised a 240-mile walk in the US against corruption in India. Every major city in USA, 10 major cities in India and 8 other countries globally join the movement by organizing supporting events March 26, the organisers said. The dates coincide with the dates Gandhi did his historic march in 1930.

Sent to us by IAW member Ida Kurth.

On: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/news/Now-Dandi-March-in-US-against-corruption-in-India/articleshow/7609152.cms#ixzz1FSB1Yr4c>

Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV)

In Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 may 2011. On <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=ldc4>

More information on the Conference, and its preparatory process, at <http://www.un-ngls.org/ldc4>

Drug-resistant tuberculosis continues to spread: new report.

A new report, Tuberculosis surveillance in Europe 2009, a joint publication from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the WHO Regional Office for Europe to mark World TB Day 2011, provides evidence for concern about the spread of multi drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) and the persistence of TB among children.

The report can be downloaded on: <http://pr4.netatlantic.com/t/2209569/45169333/136655/0/>

Newsletter of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

16 March 2011, Volume 2, Issue 5* on: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=40>

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.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash	: Joke Sebus	<iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>
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