Dear IAW members,

In this newsletter an impression of the 46th CSW Conference, where IAW organised an excellent side event. April will bring the Conference on Ageing in Madrid and May will bring the UN special session on Children’s Rights, followed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg at the end of August and the beginning of September. The WSSD will probably be a huge event.

In this newsletter we are urging our readers to lobby within their countries to end the use of three deadly pesticides and asbestos. We are sending our warmest congratulations to the Nepali women and to Hands Across The Divide, a group of Turkish and Greek Cypriot women joining minds and hands.

And everywhere, at every conference and also in daily life, women are in need of “a strong voice for human rights”.

WOMEN - THE STRONGEST VOICES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

U.N.: Robinson’s Departure a ”Disappointment"

Human Rights Commissioner was a Target of U.S.

Geneva, March 18, 2002

Human Rights Watch today expressed disappointment that Mary Robinson would not continue as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and pointed a finger at the United States for opposing her re-nomination for a full second term. "Mary Robinson paid a price for her willingness to stand up to powerful governments that violate human rights," said Reed Brody, Advocacy Director of Human Rights Watch. "She has set a standard of candour and strength for future High Commissioners, and we are sad to lose her as an ally."

Ms Robinson announced today in Geneva that this would be her last session of the UN. Commission on Human Rights, which opened its annual six-week meeting today. Although she made no mention of the U.S. campaign against her, it is widely known that officials in Washington had pressed UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan not to ask her to serve out the last three years of her second term. The United States made no secret of its displeasure with Ms Robinson after the World Conference Against Racism last summer in Durban. The U.S. delegation walked out of the conference, saying the proceedings had been hijacked by anti-Zionist extremists.

More recently, Ms Robinson has expressed concern about the status of Afghan war detainees that the U.S. government is holding at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and about civilian casualties from the U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan.

Ms Robinson has also publicly confronted other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, such as Russia for atrocities in Chechnya, and China.

Human Rights Watch said any candidate for the High Commissioner’s post should possess a number of qualities, including: A solid background in human rights, including direct, practical experience of human rights monitoring and field operations.

International Women’s Day

Three Special Rapporteurs on Women's Rights (from the UN Commission on Human Rights, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and African Commission on Human and People's Rights) met for the first time in Montreal on 28 February and 1 March, 2002, under the auspices of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (Rights & Democracy), to identify avenues of collaboration on issues of common concern. The three Special Rapporteurs then issued the following Joint Declaration for International Women's Day, March 8, 2002.

"Recalling that women's rights are human rights, we, the Special Rapporteurs, reaffirm our commitment to international standards of women's rights contained in, inter alia:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women;
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol;
The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
The American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man;
The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women;
The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, and


"We affirm that these international and regional instruments provide comprehensive protection against gender-based violence and discrimination against women. We call on all States that have not yet done so to ratify the relevant treaties and to ensure compliance with international norms.”

Cyprus - Women Unite for Peace and Multiculturism

Friends,

For the first time ever, Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot women from the northern and southern parts of the island, as well as women from the diaspora have managed to set up one NGO to work together for peace, equality and a better future for our island and our world.

Hands Across the Divide is the name of our NGO and we'll be posting more news in future months.

Here is the press release issued on the 7th of March, 2002.

Sevgul Uludag, Cyprus

Hands Across The Divide - Women’s Group makes Cypriot history

A group of Turkish and Greek Cypriot women, Hands Across The Divide, who attended a bi-communal workshop in London last week have made Cypriot history by becoming the first internationally recognised women's NGO (non-governmental organisation). Members come from three regions _ north and south of the Green Line and overseas. The inaugural meeting of the group will be held later this month.

The women's group was initiated by Cypriot women from both communities who met at an international seminar last March entitled 'Communication in Divided Societies: What Women Can Do' and have continued meeting since then despite difficulties in bi-communal contact.

In celebration of International Women’s Day, March 8th, Hands Across The Divide have issued this press statement to share their vision with all Cypriot women which is: "We aspire to live in a united country and to create a democratic society, where there is equality, including equal access to resources and gender equality, and respect for all, irrespective of differences. Our mission is to contribute towards a culture of peace and multiculturalism. We stress the urgency for an agreement on the Cyprus
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Procedure - CSW 2002, 46th session
The Bureau of the 46th UN/CSW consisted of nominees from Croatia (chair), Denmark, Japan, Chile and Senegal (vice-chairs). The forty-five current member states of the CSW (elected for three year terms and the only members with voting rights) were joined by about forty other member states' representatives (not as many as usual because of the International Conference on Financing and Development in Monterrey, March 18-22, attendance at which which was a priority for many Central American, Southern American and Caribbean States). They composed two very short documents of two pages each, after two days of listening to statements of UN member states and UN organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), followed by one day listening to two panels of experts. After that it took a long time to conclude the documents on poverty and mitigation of disasters. Lots of amendments were formulated and put in, some with text of the BfA. Rounds of adding and changing text and paragraphs followed. At the end when time was running short, some strong passages were cut down to weak ones in order to reach consensus. In a way this is nothing new, but the procedure was a different one this year. The idea behind it, three days of input with a short document afterwards, was to create an open dialogue between member states first. That idea seems all right. It had been promoted by Carolyn Hannan, the newly appointed director of the Division for the Advancement of Women. She seemed to see some progress on the whole, but I’m sorry to say that we, as NGOs sitting on the sidelines, did not see much of that kind of interactivity between the member states.

Experts speaking
The introductions of the experts of the two panels at the other hand were excellent. Elaine Enarson for example focussed on the power of women as community leaders when their region was hit by a disaster, and illustrated it with good examples.
“*We will never escape the untimely volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and extreme weather events. But just as certainly we have a moral obligation to minimise preventable harm by changing the taken for granted world which transforms extreme but natural events into human tragedies.*”

Jan Vandermoortelle showed us how difficult it is to corroborate “feminised poverty” statistically. In general he gave us much food for thought.
“*Gender discrimination is the source of endemic poverty and low economic growth. Women are vulnerable because they are unequal in politic, economic, social and cultural status. This, like with other population strata that are discriminated on the basis of race or class and excluded from the mainstream of benefits and opportunities, directly relates to the universality and indivisibility of human rights.*”

Resolutions
In a resolution approved on the final evening, the Commission requested that ECOSOC condemn violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian populations and call for an effective response to such acts, in particular, the immediate release of women and children taken hostage or subsequently imprisoned. ECOSOC was also requested to condemn the consequences of hostage-taking, in particular, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as rape, slavery and trafficking in women and children for the purpose of their sexual exploitation, forced labour or services. In the resolution on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS the Commission would call on governments to intensify efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and attitudes and gender inequalities in relation to HIV/AIDS, encouraging the active participation and involvement of men and boys. The draft text on assistance to Palestinian women was approved by a recorded vote of 38 in favour to one against (US), with no abstentions. The Commission was not, however, able to complete the remainder of its work – the adaptation of a draft resolution on women and girls in Afghanistan - by the deadline set by the Secretariat.
See, for the text of the agreed conclusions and for particulars of the resolutions, the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women at: [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/46sess.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/46sess.htm)

**IAW and Communications, the 1503 procedures**

An IAW delegation was, as always, present at the 46th conference of the Commission on the Status of Women. They organised an excellent side event with a discussion on “Reporting on Violations of Women’s Rights”. Three experts, Jane Connors, Philomena Kintu and Eleanor Solo, all from the DAW Secretariat, presented the “UN Human Rights Procedures of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights” on communications”, or the 1503 procedures. 

*The Moderator was Kay Fraleigh, IAW Representative at UNCHR and CSW in New York.*

IAW President Pat Giles writes:

*Complaints to the Human Rights Commission under Resolution 1503 can come from any concerned citizen of a member nation, or from an NGO once all possible avenues for legal redress in that country have been exhausted. No relationship between the writer and the subject of the complaint is necessary; but the complaint, which can be sent by mail, email or fax, must be signed by the writer. It will be screened by the secretariat and sent to the relevant government for a response. Complaints are summarised on a monthly basis. The deadline for reception of complaints each year is the beginning of May.*

*The Sub Commission, consisting of a group of experts who are appointed as independent representatives of the Secretary General, deals with these twice, firstly in August to hear the response of the member state complained against, and secondly to produce a short resolution on each complaint which will be either to review the issue; to publish the matter, or to keep the matter pending further contact with the complainant.*

*Three to four hundred files are considered annually, sifted into regional groupings. The HRC has noted a consistent pattern of violation of Human Rights and Freedoms.*

**Is CSW losing its momentum?**

*Lobbying for Women’s Fifth World Conference in 2005*

Worried NGOs met at a caucus of the 46th session of CSW 2002. There has been little or no implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Beijing +5. In fact, some countries went backwards in terms of human rights. There is also an urgent need to discuss new issues.

The following statement was sent out to all the delegations meeting at CSW.

*The NGOs present at the 46th session of CSW, in great majority, need another world conference:*

1. **to address the support of women of those areas where Beijing + is not wanted, and**
2. **to address new issues e.g. globalisation, transnational crime, anti-terrorism tactics, ICT, medical biology ethics, modern day slavery (child and forced marriage), human smuggling, prostitution.**

It needs to involve all NGOs, from the small grassroots groups to the large international organisations. We wish to emphasise the need for an NGO/Government dialogue on this. The nature of the conference should be to ensure that all countries commit themselves to clearly defined targets to be achieved by specific dates. This proposal needs to be drawn to ECOSOC’s attention for inclusion on the agenda of the 47th session of CSW to debate the clear need for such a conference and to schedule it in 2005.

*The caucus was expertly chaired by IAW member Marilyn La Toma.*

**The Youth Caucus of CSW** organised well attended meetings on subjects of concern to all age groups including "Towards a Safer World for Next Generations" and "Change or Status Quo: Multigenerational Stakeholders". Jessie Giles of Australian affiliate WEL represented IAW.

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

**Vale Jim Fraleigh**

"It is with great sadness I wish to inform you that James (aka Jim or Jimmy), brother of Kay Fraleigh, our Vice President and IAW representative to the UN in New York, died on 22 February 2002 after an operation for bowel cancer on 4 January."
I met James through Kay as many of you have done. It was years ago when I made my first visit to his house in the mid-west of the USA where he worked for ITT and lived in a neat suburban street in a neat suburban house. It was not what I had expected, but I soon learned that he was a charming man and nothing perturbed him - always calm, always bright and smiling, never a dandy but neatly dressed. I don't think I ever saw him lose his temper and he had infinite patience and these assets held me in awe as I don't recall many people being blessed with them.

After he took early retirement from ITT he often accompanied Kay to the IAW and UN meetings. I knew little about his life before I met him, but I knew he had worked overseas in the Philippines, Turkey and Viet Nam. James trod lightly on this earth and enjoyed all the good things of life like the theatre, grand opera and operettas, and he read a great deal and had a huge collection of books and videos which almost took over the bedroom. He was a willing chauffeur to many on their trips to New York.

He will be missed by many - may he rest in peace.

A Solemn Catholic Mass was held on Saturday morning 2 March for him.

The Editor thanks Una Ellis, longstanding friend and IAW member, for this contribution.

Greece: Women’s Pension, substantive equality and social policy
The views of the Greek League for Women’s Rights on the controversial issue of the age limits for retirement for women, were set out in detail in a paper communicated to the government, the political parties, the members of the European Parliament etc. These views, expressed by former IAW President Alice Marangopoulos, can be summarised as follows:
1. Equal age limits for pension for the two genders is compulsory by EU law, as interpreted by the European Court.
2. Justice as well as reason demand that equal age limits be combined with measures of relief for working mothers during that period of their life when they really carry the burden of multiple tasks, and not at the age of 60.
3. The package deal of equal age limits and relief measures will eliminate many detrimental consequences of the existing arrangement.
4. The State, schools and parents must conscientiously contribute to establishing substantive equality and justice, without discrimination based on gender, in all walks of life.

SRI LANKA
A Tradition of Welcome
A warm welcome awaits all members who attend the IAW 32nd Congress from 14-22 September 2002

The palms clasped together and a gentle bow of the head accompanies the “Ayubovan”: Sri Lanka’s gentle gesture of welcome and respect. It is the age-old greeting of our people, and the chances are you will be greeted this way, wherever you happen to travel throughout the island.

What may strike you most about Sri Lanka is its amazing diversity of scenery. It is possible to pass brilliant green paddy fields, sun-bronzed beaches, ruined cities, small lively villages, near desert regions, sanctuaries for wildlife in tropical jungles, and hill country tea plantations, literally within hours of each other.

The history of Sri Lanka stretches back over 2,500 years: its very beginnings are lost in myth and legend, and the arrival of Prince Vijaya an exile from North India with his entourage of seven hundred followers. However, the earliest recorded civilisation dates back to 380 BC when Anuradhapura (206 km from Colombo) was established as the first capital city. Following the advent of Buddhism in the 3rd Century B.C., a civilisation rich in Indo-Aryan culture took root. It produced the great cities with their dagobas which compare, and even exceed in size, the pyramids of Egypt, palaces and pleasure gardens, a rich art and architecture and gigantic irrigation works, many of which are still in use today.

Registration forms and all information will be circulated very soon. Meanwhile, enquiries can be made to Priscilla Todd, IAW Secretary toddsec@netlink.com.au

INTERNATIONAL NEWS
Share the Victory of Nepali Women

Dear Friends,

We are so happy to share with you all that after so much effort, lobbying and advocacy by Civil Societies, the Country Code (Eleventh Amendment) Bill has been finally passed by the Lower House of the Parliament of Nepal. Now it will be forwarded to the King for the Royal Seal. The twentieth session of the Parliament passed the Bill on March 14, 2002 by majority of the parliamentarian present. Out of the present total 148 Parliamentarians, 147 votes were in favour of passing the Bill whereas only one vote was against the passage of the comprehensive Bill. Though it was quite challenging and difficult to convince all the concerned groups of the stand, we are excited that we have been able to get many rights that includes inheritance, abortion, equality in marriage and divorce and laws against sexual violence. We would like to thank all of you for your support, help suggestion and encouragement throughout the process.

With warm regards,
Sapana Pradhan Mall, Co-ordinator Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD)
Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal

NIGERIA: Justice minister says Sharia against constitution

Sharia judgment on Safiya Husseini Tunga-Tudu

Nigeria's federal government has declared the application of strict Islamic or Sharia law unconstitutional and has asked states using the legal system to modify it according to the provisions of the country's constitution. Justice Minister and Attorney-General Kanu Godwin Agabi, in a letter to state governors in Nigeria's predominantly Muslim north, said some judgments passed under Sharia were discriminatory against Muslims. He said this was contrary to the constitution.

"A Muslim should not be subjected to a punishment more severe than would be imposed on other Nigerians for the same offence," Agabi said: "Equality before the law means that Muslims should not be discriminated against." He warned: "To proceed on the basis either that the constitution does not exist or that it is irrelevant is to deny the existence of the nation itself. We cannot deny the rule of law and hope to have peace and stability."

Agabi said his office was being inundated with hundreds of protest letters daily from around the world on the "discriminatory punishments" being handed down for a number of offences by Sharia courts. He said Nigeria could not afford to be indifferent to such protests. A total of 12 of 19 states in Nigeria's northern region have in the past two years extended the jurisdiction of Sharia law to criminal matters and moral offences. Punishments prescribed under the new code include stoning to death for adultery, amputation of limbs for stealing, and public flogging for drinking of alcohol and premarital sex.

So far, the most controversial Sharia judgment in Nigeria has been a sentence of death by stoning passed on Safiya Hussein Tunga-Tudu, 35, for adultery in Sokoto State. She was set free this week on "procedural grounds", the Court having no jurisdiction because the law did not exist at the moment the so called crime was committed.

Sharia has also fuelled religious violence in Nigeria, split almost evenly between a largely Christian, non-Muslim south and a predominantly Muslim north. The new directive by President Olusegun Obasanjo's government is a significant departure from its previous refusal to interfere with states that had adopted the strict Sharia code. Obasanjo had characterised them as political manoeuvres whose significance would wane with time. But the latest position is likely to put the federal government on a collision course with pro-Sharia governors who had threatened to defy federal directives on the controversial issue.

Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN)
IWTC Globalnet, Ann Walker

THREE DEADLY PESTICIDES AND ASBESTOS TARGETED FOR TRADE CONTROLS

Readers are urged to lobby within their countries to end the use of these dangerous products

Geneva, 21 February 2001

A committee of government-appointed experts has concluded that three widely-used pesticides and all forms of asbestos should be added to an international list of chemicals subject to trade controls.
Monocrotophos
This insecticide is applied in many developing countries, particularly in Asia, to control insects and spider mites on cotton, citrus, rice, maize and other crops. It is actively traded and is manufactured by more than a dozen firms, almost all in Asia.
Like other organophosphorus insecticides, monocrotophos poses an acute hazard to hundreds of thousands of farm workers, particularly in developing countries where the lack of protective clothing and mechanical equipment makes it more likely that people will come in direct contact with chemicals. Medical effects include nausea, diarrhoea, blurred vision, and, in severe cases, respiratory depression, convulsions and death. Monocrotophos is also highly toxic to birds and mammals.

Asbestos
The recommendation to add five remaining forms of asbestos to the PIC list (one is already listed) launches a process that will conclude in 2003. The Committee's review of asbestos was triggered by bans in the EU and Chile (under the Convention a review is initiated when two countries in two different regions ban or severely restrict a chemical; the monocrotophos review was triggered by bans in Australia and Hungary). Once widely used as insulation for houses and specialised equipment, asbestos was eliminated in many countries when it became understood that its tiny fibres were being inhaled into the lungs of workers and residents and causing cancer, other illnesses, and death. Asbestos is still used in seals, gaskets, joints, brakes, armaments, and other applications, although cost-effective substitutes are increasingly available for most applications.

Granox TBC and Spinox T
The Committee has also launched the process for listing the related pesticides Granox TBC and Spinox T, a mixture of fungicides and the highly toxic insecticide Carbofuran. This case was initiated by Senegal ("severely hazardous pesticide formulations" require only one notifying country to start the listing process). Suspicious of growing reports of illnesses and deaths, the government started to map incidents of rural poisoning. Its findings pointed the finger at Granox TBC/Spinox T, which is used in a powdered form by peanut farmers. In developed countries seeds are often treated and planted mechanically, thus protecting farmers from contact. In many developing countries, however, the farmer works without protective clothing and seeds manually. The resulting close contact with the pesticide produced hundreds of cases of poisoning featuring fevers, chest and abdominal pains, vomiting, insomnia - and at least some deaths. In this respect, 25 countries and the EU have no registration of powdered carbofuran formulations.

DNOC
DNOC, is an insecticide, weedkiller and fungicide. It is highly toxic to humans and also poses a high risk to other organisms. The review process was initiated by bans in Peru and the EU. Once widely used, DNOC is being targeted for inclusion in the PIC procedure in order to further reduce its remaining uses.

Some 70,000 different chemicals are available on the market today, and 1,500 new ones are introduced every year. This poses a major challenge to many governments who must attempt to monitor and manage these potentially dangerous substances. Many pesticides that have been banned or whose use has been severely restricted in industrialised countries are still marketed and used in developing countries.
Responding to increased scientific understanding of the health and environmental risks of long-term exposures to low levels of some of these chemicals, combined with the clear dangers posed by aging and leaking stockpiles and chemical dump sites, the international community adopted the Rotterdam Convention in 1998 under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO).
The Convention has been signed by 72 governments (plus the EC) and has thus far been ratified by 18 countries; it will enter into force 90 days after the 50th ratification. In the interim governments have agreed to apply the prior informed consent provisions of the Convention on a voluntary basis. The original Convention list included 22 pesticides and 5 industrial chemicals(*). Since then, four pesticides have been added. The chemicals described above represent additional new entries into the legally-binding PIC process. See: http://www.pic.int.
New paper on HIV/AIDS and Development
Response to AIDS at Individual, Household, and Community Levels in Thailand, by Wassana Im-em and Gary Suwannarat.
The national-level response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Thailand is well documented. However, less is known about how individuals, families and communities cope with and respond to the challenges presented by HIV/AIDS. This paper attempts to redress this gap. It begins by reviewing the social transformation in Thailand that is related to the epidemic. It then explores HIV/AIDS by region, arguing that little is known about Thai responses to HIV/AIDS outside the Upper North region (where the epidemic is most severe).
The paper examines how individuals have changed their behaviour in order to prevent infection, how people living with HIV/AIDS respond, how families adjust when a member is infected, and how communities use resources to support affected people. See: http://www.unrisd.org/engindex/research/hivaids.htm

UNITED NATIONS

Prepcom III, World Summit in Johannesburg, 25 March – 5 April
News is available online at http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/prepcom3.html
For the WSSD in Johannesburg, 26 Aug. to 4 Sept. 2002, see http://www.johannesburgsummit.org

UN preparing to combat trafficking in human beings
ABIDJAN, 20 February (IRIN) - The United Nations is pressing ahead with activities to combat trafficking in human beings in Benin, Nigeria and Togo following the adoption in December 2001 by members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of an anti-trafficking declaration and action plan. The activities will be carried out in co-operation with ECOWAS, the Vienna-based UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) said on Tuesday.
In a statement launching a global awareness-raising television campaign, ODCCP said trafficking in humans, a multi-billion-dollar business, was the fastest growing organised crime. About 700,000 people are trafficked every year for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour in the world, it said. "More than 200,000 children are enslaved by cross-border smuggling in West and Central Africa. The children are often 'sold' by unsuspecting parents who believe their children are going to be looked after, learn a trade or be educated. Besides being a human rights issue, trafficking in human beings is a public health concern due to the widespread infection of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases," ODCCP said.
A total of 101 countries have signed a protocol linked to the convention that seeks to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Only Four have ratified it. WEST AFRICA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), http://www.irinnews.org

Ageing, Development and Social Protection, 8-9 April 2002
United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing, IFEMA, Madrid, Spain
This UNRISD conference will bring together internationally renowned social scientists and gerontologists from various regions of the world. They will present papers and lead discussions at the two-day event, which will complement the World Assembly by providing participants with knowledge on the current state of academic research and debate on some core issues related to ageing and development, as they affect different social groups (including the non-elderly), countries and regions, as well as different contexts of development, change and crisis.
The UNRISD conference will also examine the opportunities, problems and challenges of effective social protection for older people. This includes formal public policies, as well as strategies derived from informal institutions, such as household support systems. The UNRISD conference will address three related themes:
(1) Development trajectories, social change and well-being in later life
(2) Formal social protection and older people
(3) Older people and the care economy
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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