

# INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER - May 2000**



**Equal Rights**

Dear IAW members,

*If you are going to the Special Session in June, please take good notice of the closing date of 15th of May for registration. Pre-registration is wise, see [www.beijingplus5hostcomm.com](http://www.beijingplus5hostcomm.com). The IAW delegation will comprise Pat Giles, Kay Fraleigh and Jessika Kehl. There are other IAW members too, in another capacity. You can always reach us during the session at a hotmail address: [jokesebus@hotmail.com](mailto:jokesebus@hotmail.com). Women all over the world are coming to Beijing +5 and they are there: for their loved ones, for humanity, for the environment, for peace. The care women are giving worldwide is expressed beautifully in a letter of IAW Affiliate to be from ZHARIA in Kazakhstan. The EC wishes her IAW delegation a very good and fruitful mission!*

*Attention IAW Board Members and Office Bearers who are going to the Board Meeting in Israel. A new reservation Form is attached. This has a line for additional information – e-mail address and fax number. Please use this new one if you have not already sent your form to the Conference Secretary.*

## **Registration for Events at the Special Session, the Custom House**

Anne Walker from IWTC (International Women's Tribune Centre) writes: Registration is required for the events scheduled at the US Custom House; it is true. And they would like to have the registration by May 15. But it is also true that overseas people can register on-site when they arrive in New York. The events at the US Custom House are being organised by the US Host Committee, mainly for NGOs that do not have accreditation to the UN. There will however be other NGO events going on at the UN Church Centre at the UN for which no registration is required, also events at other locations in New York, including an outdoor welcome gathering on Friday afternoon June 2nd and an opening ceremony on Monday June 5th, also outdoors. Wherever there is space available, the event will be open to all.

The US Custom House has space limitations as does the UN. Both the International NGO Co-ordinating Committee and the US Host Committee however are bending over backwards to see that events are organised in other places that are open to all.

## **A Beijing +5 journal from day to day ...**

During the Special Session WomenAction 2000 will bring news on-line from day to day, written by a team of journalists from India, Europe, Africa, Asia and North and South America. The journal – in English, French and Spanish – will be distributed by print, by a listserv and by the World Wide Web. For the listserv, send an e-mail to [info@womenaction.org](mailto:info@womenaction.org) or read the news on [www.iiav.nl/european-womenaction-2000](http://www.iiav.nl/european-womenaction-2000)

The news from Beijing +5 is to be found on the radio too. WomenAction is working with FIRE, the Feminist Information Radio Endeavour from Costa Rica. FIRE programs are to be found on the Internet [www.fire.or.cr/indexeng.htm](http://www.fire.or.cr/indexeng.htm)

## **CSW 2000 and Beijing +5**

Comments by the European Women's Lobby on the 'Proposed outcome document' for the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, acting as a preparatory committee for the United Nations special session of the General Assembly 3-17 March 2000

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) wishes to express and stress the importance of embracing all the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action in the review process, as well as in future international and national activities in relation to gender equality. From a gender equality perspective, it becomes clear that different policy areas are inseparable, and to be truly efficient, it is absolutely crucial to pursue actions included under all the critical areas of concern. The EWL demands that governments firmly state their recommitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action during the CSW and the Special Session of the General Assembly in June 2000.

In order to show that the current work for gender equality has a solid and central place in the international community, the five-year review of the implementation of the BPFA must also include a decision to hold a Fifth World Conference on Women in 2005.

## **Rights of Women (Best Seller)**

IWTC is proud to announce the publication of A Guide to the Most Important UN Treaties on Women's Human Rights. Written in simple, non-legal language, Rights of Women gives a comprehensive review of women's human rights as defined by the most important United Nations Human Rights Conventions along with effective strategies for using international law. See WomenInk <http://womenink.org>

### **A letter from Kazakhstan**

Gulzi Nabiyeva, Director of ZHARIA (Women Development and Adaptation Association) from Kazakhstan writes in her letter to Pat Richardson.

*Kazakhstan is an Asian ancient nation, which in former times led a nomad's life. Kazakhs are great singers and philosophers, love horses and free steppe (the steppe is only in Kazakhstan and in a small part in Russia). Our women never wear a veil, nevertheless the head of the family is a man. Our nation traditionally honor old people. The faith – Islam. Today representatives of all the religions live in Kazakhstan. There are more than 100 nationalities. During the second World War Kazakhstan was a jail for political prisoners, and after the War the German prisoners of war were send here.*

*Our country is long-suffering. During genocide of 1933 perished 2 million of Kazakhs, in 1954 during the mass tselina settling (the land was ploughed up for grain cultivating) died thousands of people. During the 70 years of Soviet regime the Kazakh language completely died, the national traditions were forgotten, but we have saved unique ancient memorials: rock carvings, burial mounds, mausoleums.*

*We have also rare species of birds, for example: pink flamingoes. Rare species of animals, which are registered in The Red Book. We have many rivers, lakes, mountains, a steppe ... And we have very kind, hospitable and talented people. It is advisable to visit Kazakhstan ... It is an astonishing country.*

*Unfortunately, the financial problem is the most difficult for our Association. In spite of the financial difficulties our NGO fulfills lots of task:*

*remedial practice (human rights protection activity): we have free consultations of lawyer psychologist, we fight against discrimination ( as you may understand it is a very difficult question in our conditions),*

*we help women to start their own business (specially unemployed women),*

*we organize free classes to learn foreign languages, specially Kazakh native language,*

*we collect the remedial library, conduct training for women, organise charity measures (clothes, food) for the people in need. Our women put so much energy, love and enthusiasm to the feminine movement. We love our work so much.*

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March (International Women Day) the President of our country Nursultan Nazanbayev invited me and other active women to the Palace in Astana, thanked us for a good input to feminine movement and presented us watches. By the way, Astana (the city which I live in) –is the new capital of Kazakhstan. It has a status of capital for two years. It is a young city. It is only 120 years old...And a great Silk Road, which united the West and the Orient, passed through Astana ...

### **New Web Magazine**

WomensWire, a web magazine founded by Anaga Dalal, a magazine editor in New York, was launched on March 8, International Women's Day, 2000 with a special edition covering the UN's upcoming June review of the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference. In addition to a new archive section with articles on young women's activism and NGO access, the latest news and views can be found on the site [www.womenswire.net](http://www.womenswire.net) or [www.womenswire.org](http://www.womenswire.org) Two of the subjects are for instance:

**Trafficking:** Lisa White reports on a new initiative by the United Nations to stem the trafficking of women and girls into forced prostitution under the rubric of the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

**Latin America & Caribbean.** This article by R. Erica Doyle, highlights the concerns and accomplishments of women throughout the region with detailed updates for thirteen countries in the region from Argentina to Trinidad & Tobago. Doyle writes that according to "the Network of Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin American women ...not only is there 'feminisation' of poverty [in the region], there is also an 'ethnicisation' of poverty."

### **IRAN , Women's Rights Activists Jailed**

On Sunday April 30, 2000, the Islamic Republic of Iran formally indicted and imprisoned Mehrangiz Kar, a lawyer, writer, and human rights advocate, and Shahla Lahiji, director of Roshangaran, a prominent publishing house of women's books, as well as four other activists and intellectuals, because they had participated in a conference on the future of Iran held in Germany a week before. They have been denied access to their lawyers and have not been allowed to receive medicine. Ms Kar and Ms Lahiji are charged with "acting against the internal security of the state and disparaging the sacred order of the Islam". The charges are severe and the range of possible punishments is broad. This action follows the closing during the past week of all newspapers and magazines associated with a popular movement that seeks pluralism and reforms within the framework of the

constitution of the Islamic Republic. In recent years, there have been reports of numerous cases of assassination, assassination attempts, and threats against proponents of democracy, as well as suspicious deaths within Iran's prisons. During the past weeks, there have been several inflammatory statements by the leaders of the Islamic Republic condemning supporters of reform generally and the participants in the Berlin conference specifically. We are therefore gravely concerned about the safety of the imprisoned activists, particularly Ms Kar and Ms. Lahiji, who have often been singled out by the regime as foremost proponents of women's human rights in Iran.

Please send your letters of concern to the following officials:

Hojjatolislam Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Office of the President, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, The Islamic Republic of Iran Fax: 98-21-646-4443

E-mail: khatami@president.ir

H.E. Ambassador Najad Hosseinian, Iranian Mission to the United Nations, 622 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA, tel: 212-687-2020 Fax: 212-867-7086

Please also send copies of your correspondence to your local Iranian Embassy, and to :

Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations, High Commissioner for Human Rights, CH 1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland, tel: (41) 22-917-9000 . Email: webadmin.hchr@unog.ch

Source: Mahnaz Afkhami, Women's Learning Partnership. E-mail: wlp@learningpartnership.org

### ***Kofi Annan Demands Action on Girls' Schooling - In Vain***

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, opening the World Education Forum meeting in Dakar in April, accused politicians of failing children - particularly girls - and ignoring human rights. He did not hide his frustration that communities are being denied a future labour force of healthy, literate and employable citizens. The Forum was unable to give a good report on its promise in Thailand in 1990 'to provide primary schooling for all by the year 2000'. On the contrary, 125 million children have never been to school, and another 150 million have been forced to drop out of education in the past decade before they can read or write - two thirds of those excluded are girls. There have been some advances, particularly in Asia, but lack of action in general means that the poorest 1 billion in the world remain uneducated. Education activists blame the complacency of political and financial elite, who refuse to spend the required \$8 billion - *the equivalent of four days of global defence spending* - that would provide free education for all. Sub-Saharan Africa, with over 40 million children not in school, spent on average \$12 billion a year on debt repayments in the 1990s, three times the amount spent on education. In a recent review of 16 countries, 12 had cut education budgets. India, with more children out of school than any other country, spends twice as much on arms as on basic education. Pakistan, with a huge gender gap in education, spends 6 times as much.

***The leaders of UN agencies, 181 government delegates, the head of the World Bank and other global financial institutes reaffirmed education as a basic human right - and made new pledge to achieve universal primary education – by 2015. But they failed to back an international action plan to commit more money to guarantee results - issuing instead a vague commitment of good intent.***

Source: BBC World Service, 28.4.00. Website: <http://www2.unesco.org/wef>

### **Poverty**

The World Bank's world development indicators show that the percentage of people in poverty has fallen from 28% to 24% in recent years, but the increase in population has meant that the actual number of people in poverty has stayed the same. A sixth of the earth's population - mainly those in North America, Europe and Japan - receive nearly 80% of world income, which is an average of \$70 a day. However, the 57% of the world's population in the 63 poorest countries received only 6% of world income, an average of less than \$2 a day. According to James Wolfensohn, the World Bank's president, the target of reducing the number of people in absolute poverty by 2015, is only achievable if there are higher levels of economic growth, an end to rising inequality, and action to forestall the spread of Aids. The indicators also point out the unchanged state of 1.2 billion people surviving on less than \$1 a day since 1987

There has been a fall in the number of children suffering from malnutrition from 32% to 27% during the 1990s, though infant mortality rates have increased in Africa, due to the civil conflict and the Aids crisis. 50 million people are believed to be infected with the Aids virus, 34 million of those are still alive, with 23 million of them in Africa. This has contributed to a fall in life expectancy rates, by as much as 10 years, for the countries that have the highest rates of infection. Source: BBC World Service, 14.4.00.

### **7-12 July, Irkutsk, Lake Baikal (Russia), a workshop of UNDP**

The Unity of Women "Angara" invites you to take part in the Third International Women Forum "Women for the Surviving of the Planet" which will take place in Irkutsk from the 7th to 12th of July. The Baikal Forum is held every 2 years in Irkutsk and at Lake Baikal since 1996. You will also have a possibility to have a rest at Lake Baikal and on the unique island of Olhon. The registration fee (120\$) may be paid on your arrival.

If you want to take part in the Forum you have to apply before June 1, 2000. If you'd like to help organise the seminar and section work, round table, training or any other form of work, we ask you to apply before May 15 2000. We are looking forward to seeing you at the Forum.

#### **Chat and debate in French and English at the Special Session!**

The Cyberfemmes "Les Penelopes" would like you to meet and join them during six consecutive days, to take part and follow in live the Special Session. Program will be held live from 1.30 PM to 2.30 PM local time. A chatroom will be open at 3.30 GMT, 10.30 PM in France. You are strongly encouraged to participate in the online debate. From the 4th of June at <http://www.canalweb.net/vers/cyberfemmes/asp>

#### **Domestic Violence at an IAW workshop at the Cyprus Conference**

Rosy Weiss, IAW Vice-President and Commission Convenor on violence and trafficking in women, has proposed to organise an IAW workshop at the International Cyprus Conference on Family Violence, (date)

The main theme will be domestic violence against women as a fundamental violation of human rights.

The IAW will be presenting papers starting from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Protocol, over the gender aspects of violence and grassroots experience with education, women & shelters and the perspective of co-operation and networking.

In the meantime several IAW members have given their support. Mmabatho Ramagoshi from South Africa will be presenting a paper on "networking to end family violence". Our Affiliate in Sri Lanka has chosen "gender and violence" as the main topic of a paper.

Rosy Weiss is inviting IAW members with expertise in CEDAW as well as on good practices, to join in the preparation of this important workshop at Nicosia, Cyprus, 26 – 30 November 2000.

See for information website [www.familyviolence.org.cy](http://www.familyviolence.org.cy)

#### **IWNews editor Jan Marsh on Slavery and Freedom**

If you happen to be in the UK on Friday the 19th of May, just go tot the lecture theatre at the Tate Gallery where Jan Marsh is speaking on Turner, Ruskin and issues of Slavery and Freedom. At 1.00 PM, as part of the lecture series accompanying the current Ruskin exhibition.

#### **From the EC**

*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.*

*We also have to inform you that we often cannot reach (the same) members from South Africa, Madagascar and Sri Lanka. Please, if it concerns you, write Pat Richardson at [patgum@nvi.net.au](mailto:patgum@nvi.net.au)*

*Please note too that the e-mail address of IAW Secretary Priscilla Todd has changed into [toddsec@golocal.com.au](mailto:toddsec@golocal.com.au)*

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

IAW Secretary: Priscilla Todd, [toddsec@golocal.com.au](mailto:toddsec@golocal.com.au) [*Note new email address from 24 April*]

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Dear Friends,

As you can see, there will be an interesting activity of the IAW Commission on violence and trafficking during a conference on domestic violence later this year. Please visit their web site and look if you would be interested and available to contribute. Joke, please put this call into the next Newsletter.

What you do not see here is that I have contacted the group as the convenor of the IAW Commission and the response was great. Against this background I have made the present proposal of an individual IAW workshop on violence against women as a fundamental violation of Human Rights, hoping that the organizers will give us the opportunity to do so. In planning this, I am looking for your expertise on CEDAW as well as on good practices out of our member organizations to report to the conference participants.

Thanks for your co-operation.

With best regards

Rosy Weiss

Original Message

"mailto:Mmabatho Ramagoshi:mmabathor@mweb.co.za"

"mailto:Rosy Weiss rosa-anna.weiss@vienna.at"

Tuesday, May 09, 2000 8:23 PM

Cyprus Conference

Hi Rosy

Thanks for sending this mail. This is a very exciting opportunity for IAW to really make an impact at the Cyprus conference. I really support your proposal for IAW to be given space to organize a workshop on violence against women as a fundamental violation of Human Rights. What we need to think of is the format of the workshop and how each theme will be presented to link up with all other themes within the IAW workshop. This needs brainstorming from other members and you are the appropriate person to coordinate that process. Thanks again for your hard work.

From rosa-anna.weiss mailto:Hana elroy; Mmabatho Ramagoshi; [news@sitnet.lk](mailto:news@sitnet.lk)

Subject: Cyprus Conference

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INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities

Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

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Ms Mary Pyrgos Chairperson

International Conference on Family Violence</P>

e-mail: [pyrgos.com@cytanet.com.cy](mailto:pyrgos.com@cytanet.com.cy)

Dear Ms. Pyrgos,

this time I am writing you primarily in my function as Vice-President of the International Alliance of Women (IAW) and Convenor of the IAW Commission on violence against and trafficking in women.

As promised I have spread the news about the Family Violence Conference among the members of the above mentioned IAW Commission and am happy to be able to report now about the great interest of our constituency in the Conference.

One member from South Africa, Ms. Mmabatho Ramagoshi, has already contacted you directly offering to present a paper or to hold a workshop on networking to end family violence. With this letter I would like to ensure you my full support for this important initiative. In the meantime I have been informed by our Sri Lanka member organization, that they have chosen "gender and violence" as main topic for a paper to be presented at the Cyprus Conference - and, there will be much more IAW input coming in during the next weeks, as our organization and its affiliated and associated societies all over the world have a long-standing experience in practical and theoretical work done in the area of domestic violence. I am therefore suggesting that IAW is given time and space during the Congress to organize a workshop on the overall theme of "violence against women as a fundamental violation of Human Rights". Under this umbrella theme we would present our papers starting from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Protocol to it, over the gender aspects of violence and grass-root experiences with education, women & shelters to the wider perspective of co-operation and networking. As a member of the International Committee of the Conference, I am thankful for your note dated 10 March 2000 and the information contained therein.

Congratulations also for the web site [www.familyviolence.org.cy](http://www.familyviolence.org.cy). I have forwarded my registration form today. Others from Austria and from the IAW will follow suit.

Waiting for your second announcement, I remain

Sincerely yours

Rosy Weiss, m.p.

CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH:

UN-ECOSOC (category general), FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNIDO, WHO; COUNCIL OF EUROPE; member of the EU - WOMENLOBBY

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