

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN  
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

**CENTENARY 1904-2004**

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

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities  
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWSLETTER - May 2004, nr. 4



**Equal Rights**

*Dear IAW members,*

*At the CSW March we discussed Article 1325 about including more women in conflict prevention and building up peace processes. Women were so full of hope after reaching consensus. However, every day we hear and read about the terrible situation in Iraq, in Gaza, in the Sudan – when will this mad brutality ever stop? Surely this must be discussed at our Jubilee Congress with a view to issuing a media release internationally. As usual in this newsletter we also have news, good and bad, from around the world and ... an urgent reminder to register for the Berlin-Freiburg train no later than 1 June.*

## INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

**CENTENARY CONFERENCE – BERLIN**  
11 – 14 September

**JUBILEE CONGRESS – FREIBURG**  
14 – 19 September

**Have you registered yet? Your early registration  
will help those planning this unique Celebration**  
[www.iaw-congress-2004.org](http://www.iaw-congress-2004.org)

### **CENTENARY CONFERENCE – BERLIN**

In order to be certain that you have a seat on the train from Berlin to Freiburg it is essential for you to **send your booking to [Sigrid.stadler@tele2.at](mailto:Sigrid.stadler@tele2.at) (with a copy to the Secretariat) no later than 1 June** otherwise we may not be able to acquire enough group seats from the German railway authorities.

### **JUBILEE CONGRESS - FREIBURG**

**Resolutions** Please start discussing ideas for resolutions that can be presented for debate at the Jubilee Congress and then forward texts of resolutions to the Secretariat. It is planned to circulate a list of these resolutions in advance of Congress so that you and your organisations have time to discuss them and they will form part of the Congress papers.

The Secretariat would also like to hear from volunteers who would be willing to sit on the Resolutions Committee.

**Delegations and Nominations** Please make sure that delegation and nomination forms from our affiliate and associate organisations are sent to the Secretariat no later than September 1. The registration form was attached at the March-April Newsletter; the nomination form is attached here.

**Elections Committee** Please advise the Secretariat if you would like to volunteer to sit on this committee. You will not be eligible to do this if you are standing for election.

Contact: Alison Brown, IAW Secretariat [iawsec@liwest.at](mailto:iawsec@liwest.at)

### **Individual members**

On Sunday 12th of September there will be an "Open Forum Meeting of IAW individual members and friends". All who are able attend the Centenary are welcome. They will be asked to pay a small fee, 10euro, to cover cost of tea/coffee.

*IAW Board member Mary Noonan.*

### **All India Women's Conference is preparing Beijing +10**

You will be happy to know that AIWC has started a process with some other NGOs of reviewing Beijing + 10. The National Consultation is open May 22-23, 2004 in New Delhi. The South Asia

meeting will be in Kathmandu, Nepal on 8-9 June and Regional Consultation in Bangkok at end of June, 2004.

*Aparna Basu, President AIWC & Vice-of the International Alliance of Women.*

### **Kuwaiti women step closer to equality**

Women's rights in the Middle East received a boost yesterday when Kuwait's council of ministers approved a bill giving them the right to vote and stand for parliament. The draft legislation must still go before parliament, which in 1999 narrowly voted, by 32 to 30, against giving women the vote. Women's campaigners yesterday expressed confidence they would win this time. "We will win, not with a landslide, but with enough votes," Rola Dashti, one of the campaign leaders, said. Legislators opposed to the change met yesterday to discuss their strategy. If women in Kuwait succeed this time, it could have a knock-on effect on other parts of the Middle East, not least neighbouring Saudi Arabia where women are not even allowed to drive, although it has been hinted that they may get to vote in municipal elections in October. The council of ministers said the draft law would amend 1962 legislation in order to "widen popular participation in parliaments". At present, only males older than 21 can vote.

The ministers passed the draft to the emir, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who has publicly supported reform in the past, to forward to parliament. The ministers said the amendment would "allow the Kuwaiti woman to practise her right in electing and running a candidate for the national assembly". Women in Kuwait, who enjoy more freedom than women in many other parts of the region and occupy senior positions within government departments and in the private sector, *have been campaigning for the vote for four decades*. By Ewen MacAskill, Kuwait City, May 18, 2004, The Guardian UK.

## **UNITED NATIONS**

### **Giving Teeth to Economic, Social and Cultural (ESC) Rights**

On Friday, 23rd April, the Commission on Human Rights closed its 60th session during which it voted to approve a further two years for the Working Group for an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on ESC Rights. The vote to renew the WG's mandate is a success for the numerous NGOs working together to keep the Optional Protocol process going. Currently, there is no mechanism for the complaints of individuals when their rights under the Covenant are violated. Mechanisms for individual complaints already exist for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights but many governments have resisted a similar move for the ICESCR.

Food Information Action Network, FIAN and other NGOs welcomed this outcome, which secures the continuation of discussions on the elaboration of an Optional Protocol for the coming two years. However, the results so far have fallen behind expectations. Although many states have expressed their support for an Optional Protocol, no concrete drafting proposals have so far taken place. States that support an Optional Protocol have been facing tough resistance from unsupportive states that question the entire process.

Nevertheless, the renewal of the mandate of the Working Group for another two years opens up the possibility of beginning the actual drafting of the Optional Protocol by 2006.

Source (FIAN \_ International <http://www.fian.org> )

### **UN Norms**

The UN Norms Campaign, a new global campaign to strengthen corporate accountability, achieved an important breakthrough as the UN Commission on Human Rights confirmed the importance and priority accorded to companies' responsibilities in relation to human rights and acknowledged the need to strengthen standards. For the first time, the Commission has put companies' human rights responsibilities on its agenda.

The campaign in support of the UN Human Rights Norms for Business was initiated this year by RAID, Amnesty International and ESCR-Net through the Corporate Accountability Discussion Group. For a list of all the organizations that endorsed, plus additional information on the Norms, please see: <http://www.escr-net.org/EngGeneral/unnorms1.asp> (English)

## AROUND THE WORLD

### WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO HUMANITY?

**The Iraq war** *by William Rivers-Pitt, New York Times, May 10 2004*

We have travelled a long, dark, strange road since the attacks of September 11. We have all suffered, we have all known fear and anger, and sometimes hatred. Many of us have felt - probably more than we are willing to admit it - at one time or another a desire for revenge, so deep was the wound inflicted upon us during that wretched, unforgettable Tuesday morning in September of 2001. But we have come now to the end of a week so awful, so terrible, so wrenching that the most basic moral fabric of that which we believe is good and great - the basic moral fabric of the United States of America - has been torn bitterly asunder.

In the eyes of the world, this is America today. It cannot be dismissed as an anomaly because it went on and on and on in the Abu Ghraib prison, and because now we hear of Camp Bucca. According to the British press, there are some 30 other cases of torture and humiliation under investigation. The Bush administration went out of its way to cover up this disgrace, declaring secret the Army report on these atrocities. That, pointedly, is against the rules and against the law. You can't call something classified just because it is embarrassing and disgusting. It was secret, but now it is out, and the whole world has been shown the dark, scabrous underbelly of our definition of freedom.

So...the reason to go to war because of weapons of mass destruction is destroyed. The reason to go to war because of connections to September 11 is destroyed. The reason to go to war in order to bring freedom and democracy to Iraq is destroyed.

What is left? The one reason left has been unfailingly flapped around by defenders of this administration and supporters of this war: Saddam Hussein was a terrible, terrible man. He killed his own people. He tortured his own people. The Iraqis are better off without him, and so the war is justified.

And here, now, is the final excuse destroyed. We have killed more than 10,000 innocent Iraqi civilians in this invasion, and maimed countless others. The photos from Abu Ghraib prison show that we, like Saddam Hussein, torture and humiliate the Iraqi people. Worst of all, we do this in the same prison Hussein used to do his torturing. The "rape rooms" often touted by Bush as justification for the invasion, are back. We are the killers now. We are the torturers now. We have achieved a moral equivalence with the Butcher of Baghdad.

William Rivers Pitt is the senior editor and lead writer for *t r u t h o u t*. He is a New York Times writer and international author of two books - 'War on Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn't Want You to Know' and 'The Greatest Seditious Silence.' An excerpt. See also <http://www.truthout.org/index.htm>  
*Note from editors: We feel that this article says it so much better than we can.*

### WOMEN'S PLIGHT

#### **Rwanda Experiencing High Maternal Mortality Rate**

Poverty and ignorance have been marked as the leading factors for the persistent increase in maternal mortality rate in Rwanda, Rwanda News Agency reported Thursday. Financial constraints have contributed to an estimated 60 percent maternal deaths in Rwanda, ignorance of the danger for delivery contributed to 18 percent, while 15 percent were caused because there is a long distance for the mothers who give birth to go to hospitals and the lack of knowledge of when to give birth, and 7 percent because the mothers still believe in traditional ways.

More than 10 maternal deaths occur each day due to the difficulties faced by mothers during domestic births in the country. "In Rwanda, most families do not regard pregnancy and giving birth as a disease hence visiting hospitals is a waste of money," said Health Minister Abel Dushimimana. "Most of those mothers are poverty-stricken and can not afford to pay for hospitals bills."

Pregnant mothers going for medical checkups have been estimated at 90 percent; however, only 15 percent go to hospitals for delivery. The government has tackled this problem by increasing more Health Centres to shorten long distances covered to reach hospitals in time. The government intends to reduce hospital bills for pregnant mothers who can not afford to pay, and through the Ministry of Health, plans are underway for use of health centers in sensitising the elimination of ignorance and traditional beliefs. Emergency obstetric care in health centers have also played a central role in reducing maternal mortality.

Xinhua General News Service, April 22, 2004

### **Sudan: systematic rape of women and girls**

"In our culture, it is a shame, and women will hide this in their hearts so that the men do not hear about it," said a woman interviewed by Amnesty International. Alarming reports about the systematic rape of hundreds of women by the government backed armed militia, the Janjawid, have been coming from Darfur region in western Sudan over the past months, demonstrating the need for the international community to step up its pressure on the government. The Sudanese government must take urgent steps to address the human rights and humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Amnesty International said today.

"The cease-fire agreement of 8 April is an important step but remains largely insufficient, if the government does not immediately give access to humanitarian agencies and international human rights monitors. This must include monitors who are trained to deal with issues relating to sexual violence."

"We have received countless reports of women being raped by the Janjawid militia. The long term effects of these crimes can be seen in countries like Rwanda where many women and children remain traumatized and live with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, following the systematic rape during the genocide 10 years ago. We have also received unconfirmed reports that many women and girls have been abducted to be used as sexual slaves or domestic workers," Amnesty International said.

#### **Raped while collecting water**

In March a sheikh told the UN that, in Mornei in Western Darfur, up to 16 women per day were being raped as they went to collect water in the river bed (wadi). Women had no choice but to continue to go to collect water despite the threat of rape, because they feared that their men would be killed if they went instead. The extent of the problem has yet to be fully established. As one refugee woman in Chad told an Amnesty International researcher in January: "women will not tell you easily if such a thing happens to them. In our culture, it is a shame, and women will hide this in their hearts so that the men do not hear about it."

For more information and news related to the campaign "Stop violence against women" visit: <http://news.amnesty.org/mav/actforwomen>

## **HEALTH**

### **World Health Organisation on HIV/Aids - Lowest prices**

On April 6th, 2004, the Global Fund, World Bank, UNICEF, Clinton Foundation announced an agreement to make lowest priced AIDS drugs and diagnostics available to hundreds of thousands of patients through the developing world. The WHO welcomes agreements and initiatives to make medicines and diagnostics affordable and available to developing countries and is partnering with these organisations and governments around the world to help countries treat 3 million people with antiretroviral medicines by 2005. The drugs in the agreements announced include individual formulations and two and three drug fixed dose combinations which have been pre-qualified by the World Health Organization to assure quality and efficacy.

#### **The 3 by 5 Target - getting three million people on ART by the end of 2005**

"Lack of access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) is a global health emergency. To deliver antiretroviral treatment to the millions who need it, we must change the way we think and change the way we act."

LEE Jong-wook, Director-General, World Health Organization

The 3 by 5 Initiative was created because currently, six million people infected with HIV in the developing world need access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) to survive. Only 400 000 have this access. The failure to deliver ART to the millions of people who need them is a global health emergency. To address this emergency, WHO is fully committed to achieving the 3 by 5 target - getting three million people on ART by the end of 2005. Read more on

<http://www.who.int/3by5/en/>

### **Distortion of Scientific Knowledge on HIV/AIDS Prevention**

President George W. Bush has made no secret of his view that sex education should teach teenagers "*abstinence only*" rather than including information on other ways to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Unfortunately, despite spending more than \$10 million on abstinence-only programs in Texas alone, this strategy has not been shown to be effective at curbing teen pregnancies or halting the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

During President Bush's tenure as governor of Texas from 1995 to 2000, for instance, with abstinence-only programs in place, the state ranked last in the nation in the decline of teen birth rates among 15 to 17 year old females. Overall, the teen pregnancy rate in Texas was exceeded by only four other states.

The American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists all support comprehensive sex education programs that encourage abstinence while also providing adolescents with information on how to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases. In fact, a recent systematic analysis of pregnancy prevention strategies for adolescents found that, far from reducing unwanted pregnancies, abstinence programs actually "may increase pregnancies in partners of male participants."

#### **Concern about scientific integrity**

Scientists are concerned about the Bush administration's misuse of science. At the instigation of higher-ups in the George W. Bush administration, fact-based information on the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) website has been altered to raise scientifically questionable doubt about the efficacy of condoms in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Excerpt from the 2004 UCS report Scientific Integrity in Policymaking, <http://www.ucusa.org/index.cfm>

### **LIVING IN POVERTY**

The **European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) welcomes 10 New Member States** and is looking forward to their contribution towards a social Europe for all!

This new enlargement of the European Union will bring great opportunities as well as huge challenges. EAPN calls for a vision of enlargement based on real commitments rather than nice words on the 1st of May. "There is an urgent need of reinforcing social policy strategies, in particular the Social Inclusion Strategy and the process of National Action Plans on social inclusion, while at the same time reforming economic and financial policies within a social perspective", concludes Michaela Moser, coordinator of the EAPN strategic group on enlargement.

The number of people living in poverty is unacceptable: the **68 million people** who, according to official statistics, face poverty in the enlarged Union, if put together, would form the second largest State of the Union. However, their rights and realities are - to a large extent - ignored or even denied. "The enlargement of the EU must not only be seen as an extension of the single market, but as an opportunity to build up a real Social Europe, taking account of the experience and best practices of 'old' and 'new' Member States", says Fintan Farrell, EAPN Director.

### **World Food Prices Rising - Decades of environmental neglect shrinking harvests in key countries**

When this year's grain harvest begins in May, world grain stocks will be down to 59 days of consumption - the lowest level in 30 years. The last time stocks were this low, in 1972-74, wheat and rice prices doubled. A politics of scarcity emerged with exporting countries, such as the United States, restricting exports and using food for political leverage. Hundreds of thousands of people in food-short countries, including Ethiopia and Bangladesh, died of hunger. Now, a generation later, a similar scenario is unfolding, but for different reasons. After nearly tripling from 1950 to 1996, growth in the world grain

harvest came to a halt. In each of the last four years world grain production has fallen short of consumption, forcing a drawdown of stocks. During this period, expanding deserts, falling water tables, crop-withering temperatures, and other environmental trends have largely offset the positive contributions of advancing technology and additional investment in agriculture.

Read more on <http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/Update39.htm> and see data on [http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/Update39\\_data.htm](http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/Update39_data.htm).

#### **EDUCATION – A PROVEN TOOL TO EMPOWER WOMEN**

According to the World Health Report 2003 published by WHO, **Japan has the highest life expectancy of the whole world** - the average for males is 78.4 years and for females 85.3 years! In the interview Toshihiko Hasegawa, Director of the Department of Policy Sciences at the National Institute of Public Health, in the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare explains this as follows:

"Just after the war Japan had the lowest average life expectancy of any developed country; people from the developing world have asked how Japan managed to change so quickly. The



reason is the reduction of acute illnesses such as tuberculosis and strokes. This can be attributed at least in part to education, in particular a rapid increase in the number of females receiving education at the beginning of the 20th century.

By the 1920s, the infant mortality rate and the birthrate had peaked and were starting to go down. I refer to this as the 'enigma of the 1920s'.

The cause is generally held to be the democratisation of Japan and the movement for emancipation of women, but I believe the key to this is the education policies adopted by the governments of the time. Before then, the number of girls attending school was fairly low - until around 1890, only about 30% of females received a basic education. However, around the turn of the last century, changes were enacted to ensure that all girls went to school. Literacy rates increased as a result, and females were able to read books for themselves about health-related issues and child-rearing; they gained access to a wealth of information which had been unavailable to them.

The girls who were educated at this time were giving birth to babies around the year 1920, and this is the key to understanding the 'enigma of the 1920s'. There is much evidence around the world to show that female education is linked to reduced infant mortality and higher life expectancy rates, and this has undoubtedly been the case in postwar Japan. At the same time, the country's postwar economic affluence and the rapid medical advances also played essential roles."

*Comment from IAW Secretary Alison Brown: While this is not a new concept for women's movements, it is refreshing to hear it coming from a man in a position of power.*

## THE ENVIRONMENT

### **International Coalition Condemns Waste Incineration / Favours Non-Burn Options**

An international coalition of 111 organizations in 39 countries issued a new report today condemning waste incineration. According to the GAIA report, prepared by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), waste incinerators generate pollution, harm public health, and place huge financial burdens on host communities. Pitfalls such as high capital costs, tonnage shortfalls, expensive pollution control equipment, and hampering least-cost options such as recycling can beset an incinerator project in California as easily as one in Manila. The report points out the economic benefits of non-incineration strategies and indicates that sorting recyclables alone employs at least 11 times more jobs than incineration on a per-ton basis.

At least 16 jurisdictions worldwide have banned or restricted municipal solid waste incineration. Chicago, California's Alameda County, and Rhode Island are U.S. examples. **The Philippines is the first country to explicitly ban all types of waste incineration.**

Photographs are available at [www.no-burn.org](http://www.no-burn.org). The 76-page Resources up in Flames is available as a PDF file on GAIA's website at [www.no-burn.org](http://www.no-burn.org). Parts of the report have been translated into 22 languages. See also the websites at [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org)

### **Russia - World Trade Organisation and the Kyoto Protocol**

Russia moved a step closer to becoming a member of the World Trade Organization on Friday, signing an important trade deal with the European Union that could pave the way for Moscow's admission to the WTO as early as this year. In exchange for the EU's support for Russian membership in the WTO, Moscow reversed its position on the environmental agreement known as the Kyoto protocol, promising to speed up its ratification.

### **EVENTS - BOOKS - CONFERENCES - NEWSLETTERS**

10-21 May	Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues - third session - New York Special theme: Indigenous Women.
28 June - 23 July York	Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - Substantive 2004 session - New York
28-30 June	High Level Segment
1-7 July	Coordination Segment
7-12 July	Operational Activities Segment
12-14 July	Humanitarian Segment
15-22 July	General Segment

30 Aug - 3 Sep Barbados +10: International Meeting to Review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States – Mauritius

### **The Newsletter of Peace Women**

Peace Women is a project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), an organisation with strong and historic ties with the International Alliance of Women. You will find their excellent newsletter on <http://www.peacewomen.org/news/1325News/issue39.html> .

For the printer-friendly version of this electronic newsletter and for past issues, visit: <http://www.peacewomen.org/news/1325News/1325ENewsindex.html>

### **Journalist Workshop on Water Issues- Kuala Lumpur -June 2004**

The Asian Development Bank is holding a one-day workshop on water issues in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday June 6th 2004. The workshop will run prior to the 1st Malaysian Water Week (7-12 June, 2004) and the 9th GWP Consulting Partners Meeting. The ADB will be funding journalists to attend both the workshop and the ensuing events (which will include field trips) with 60% of journalists coming from Malaysia and the remaining from other parts of Asia. If you are interested in attending (in particular, if you are a Malaysian journalist), please contact Paul Fisher at:

<mailto:environmentaljournalists-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com>

### **ASIA \_ PACIFIC NGO FORUM on Beijing + 10**

The United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) will be holding a High Level InterGovernmental Meeting to review ten years of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) on **September 6-9, 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand**. A comprehensive regional paper based on reports emerging from UNESCAP member countries response to the questionnaire by the UN will be prepared. The outputs from this regional government meeting will input into the Extended Meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women for the Review and Appraisal of Implementation of the BPFA and the Outcome Document, to be held in March 2005 in New York.

### **Millennium Declaration and MDGs**

Please use the following link: [http://www.un-ngls.org/millennium\\_development\\_goals.htm](http://www.un-ngls.org/millennium_development_goals.htm)

### **An interesting website**

Union of Concerned Scientists: <http://www.ucsusa.org/>

**Note:** to avoid misunderstanding, we always send the IAW Newsletter: 1) in the body of the e-mail, and 2) as an attachment. 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. Also, please advise Pat

Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address

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