

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

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

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

**IAW NEWSLETTER May 2008, no. 5**



**Equal Rights**

*Dear members,*

*In a time of disasters in Burma and China where millions of people are suffering, this newsletter brings a few stories of hope and help such as the Say NO to Violence campaign, UNICEF feeding thousands of Somali children and the health training scheme in Argentina.*

*However, there continues to be a greater number of stories about the ongoing lack of human rights for women in many guises and in many areas of the world.*

*Nonetheless, women worldwide are speaking up, supporting justified cases and continuing their campaigns for women's political rights.*

*As usual you will find data on conferences, reports and courses at the end.*

**Correction** [See Human Rights Council in the April IAW newsletter]

It was the opposite to that stated: IAW representative at the Human Rights Council Helene Sackstein has pointed out that Egypt did not oppose, but was one of the countries that supported the amendment mandating *the Special Rapporteur to report on any instances of "abuse of the right to freedom of expression that constitutes an act of racial or religious discrimination"*.

*With sincere apologies, Joke Sebus*

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

**Olive Bloomer**

This month the Alliance sadly lost her former President Olive Bloomer. E-mails with warm memories and good pictures of Olive were flying around this week. IAW members praised the way she lead the Alliance as treasurer and president.

*More in IWNNews and on the IAW website, [www.womenalliance.org](http://www.womenalliance.org)*

**Conference on Sexual Harassment**

The Greek League for Women's Rights has been running since July 2007 a program on the issue of combating sex discrimination in the labour market, including sexual harassment. This will last until June 2008 and within the context of this program the League has organised a Conference in Athens on sexual harassment at the workplace and how to deal with it.

Date: 9 June 2008, Joanna Manganara, Regional IAW Vice President for Europe.

FAX : 0030/2103616236, e-mail: [L.women-rights@otenet.gr](mailto:L.women-rights@otenet.gr)

**Quentin Bryce named as new Governor General of Australia**

Quentin Bryce, a member of Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) [www.wel.org.au](http://www.wel.org.au) has been a great advocate for women's rights in the positions she has held...as well as having five children and five grandchildren...superwoman indeed.

*Sent to us by IAW Membership Officer Pat Richardson*

**UNIDO - Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

The outcome of the 17th session in Vienna, Austria, from 14 - 18 April 2008, was disappointing, writes IAW representative *Alison Brown* in her IWA weblog. The resolution: 'Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women and girls', was doomed from the beginning.

More than two hours after the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCPCJ was to have ended, the Ambassador of Namibia, her voice choked with frustration and disappointment, announced that no resolution would be possible.

She managed to stave off postponing the debate on the topic for another year. In the end a draft decision was accepted and 30 nations became co-sponsors.

At least it requests the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to convene an intergovernmental group of experts to review and update, where appropriate, to make recommendations on addressing violence against women and girls.

*Read more on IWNews and on [www.womenalliance.org](http://www.womenalliance.org) Click on: IWA's weblog.*

*Websites: <http://www.unido.org/> and <http://www.unodc.org/>*

## UNITED NATIONS

### **CEDAW 41th session - 30 June - 18 July 2008**

Please note that as of 1 January 2008, responsibility for servicing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has been transferred to the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#).

Further information on the 41st session of CEDAW is available on the website of [OHCHR](#). Countries are: Finland, 5th and 6th periodic report; Iceland, 6th; Lithuania, 3th and 4th; Nigeria 6th; Slovakia, 4th; United Kingdom , 5th and 6th; United Republic of Tanzania, 4th, 5th and 6th; Yemen, 5th.

### **Shadow Report Sweden**

For those members who are interested, you can find an excellent Shadow Report of Sweden on: [http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/40\\_shadow\\_reports/sweden\\_sr.pdf](http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/40_shadow_reports/sweden_sr.pdf)

*Convenor IAW Commission on Justice and Human Rights: Margret Steinarsdottir*

### **Say NO to Violence against Women**

April 22. Since its launch late last November, the “Say NO to violence against women” petition has garnered more than 200,000 supporters.

Joanne Sandler, UNIFEM Executive Director, said at a press conference, in response to a journalist’s question over whether the current number of signatures is a disappointment, that she is thrilled at the current response, observing that “this is something that catches on over time”.

In a welcome development, governments have started to sign on to the campaign, including the entire Senegalese Cabinet, led by the West African nation’s President, she added.

Signing is urgent!

On: "[http://www.unifem.org/news\\_events/story\\_detail.php?StoryID=675](http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=675)"

*Sent to us by IAW President Rosy Weiss*

### **UNICEF feeds 44,000 displaced Somali children**

14 May 2008 – Against a backdrop of drought, soaring food prices and large numbers of people being driven out of their homes by armed conflict, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has provided food to 44,000 displaced children in war-ravaged Somalia.

The agency [warned](#) that more than 2.6 million Somalis are currently considered ‘food insecure,’ and this number could climb to 3.5 million – almost half of the Horn of Africa nation’s population – by the end of the year.

### **UNIMIX - fortified corn-soya blend**

In the past three days, a supplementary food gruel called UNIMIX was provided to 44,000 children under the age of five, who are among the estimated 300,000 people who have fled clashes in the capital Mogadishu.

Over the next three months, each of the 44,000 children will receive 10 kilograms of the fortified corn-soya blend per month.

UNICEF, in collaboration with local elders and the Somali non-governmental organization (NGO) Jumbo Peace and Development, seeks to reach over 90 per cent of all children who have been displaced from Mogadishu.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26669&Cr=somali&Cr1=>

### **UNICEF - MYANMAR**

[UNICEF](#) estimates that about 1 million children have been affected by the cyclone in Myanmar, with many sleeping in the streets, or in schools and monasteries, often without bedding, and frequently without protection from the rain. “The destruction of homes, schools, water and sanitation systems is

an unrelenting threat to the child survivors,” said UNICEF spokesperson Shantha Bloemen. On: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26690&Cr=myanmar&Cr1=>

*Editor's comment: The devastation, particularly in the worst affected areas of Myanmar, has been exacerbated by the lack of internal disaster planning and health services coupled with the extremely slow acceptance by the Junta of the need to permit teams of health workers and supplies into the country. By comparison, while also limiting help from foreign sources, the government in China moved quickly and efficiently thousands of troops and volunteers to disaster earthquake areas.*

### **Human Rights Council**

The Human Rights Council will hold a Special Session on "the negative impact on the realization of the right to food of **the worsening world food crisis**, caused inter alia by the soaring food prices", on Thursday, 22 May, in Geneva.

The Special Session was called by Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. So far, 41 Council members and 41 non-members have signed the request to hold the Special Session.

### **UPR - Universal Periodic Review**

The second session of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group was held in Geneva from 5 to 19 May 16. States that had their human rights records examined are: Gabon, Ghana, Peru, Guatemala, Benin, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Pakistan, Zambia, Japan, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, France, Tonga, Romania and Mali.

*UPR by country on:* <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/search.aspx>

*UPR by session:* <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/MeetingsHighlightsSession2.aspx>

*Editor's comment: the summaries and in particular the questions asked about the state of human rights in your own country, are very interesting to read!*

### **UNFPA - New Programme to promote Midwifery**

Paying tribute to the work of midwives in saving the lives of women around the world, the head of the United Nations Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) has called for greater investments to train these critical health workers and get them into the communities that need them.

“Every day, midwives are saving women’s lives by making delivery safe. Their essential care before, during and after delivery ensures that no woman dies giving life,” UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid said in a message marking the International Day of the Midwife, observed on 5 May. Noting an urgent need for 334,000 midwives worldwide, she said UNFPA and its partners are starting a new programme to promote midwifery.

On: <http://www.unfpa.org/mothers/midwives.htm>

### **UN-backed television series to peel back silence on worldwide sexual violence**

With one in three women worldwide suffering rape or attempted rape during her lifetime and at least one in three likely to be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused, a United Nations-backed television series will seek to peel away the silence surrounding these brutalities.

“Even where there is no war, women's bodies continue to be battlegrounds,” says Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)), which with other UN agencies provided information for “Women on the Frontline,” the seven-part investigative series by BBC World to be broadcast to some 300 million households.

Trafficking, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, dowry murder, “honour” killings and female infanticide are also part of the problem.

The seven films cover:

- \* Nepal, where thousands of women are trafficked each year;
- \* Turkey, where killing in the name of honour continues;
- \* Morocco, where women political activists who have survived torture and imprisonment testify before a Government truth and reconciliation commission;
- \* Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where women bear the brunt of a 10-year war in eastern provinces;
- \* Colombia, where women have been tortured in the shadow of a guerrilla war;
- \* Mauritania, where women who have been raped may go to prison;
- \* Austria, where, under a new law, perpetrators of domestic violence are forced to leave home.

Ban Ki-moon, acknowledging the depth of the problem, launched a multi-year campaign to eliminate the scourge and a number of UN agencies are involved in various aspects of the battle.

*More on:* <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26362&Cr=women&Cr1=Forgotten>

## **SISTERS WORLDWIDE**

### **Sisters - Women with Disabilities**

On September 8-11, Canada. In March 2008, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) in conjunction with the Disabled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada, submitted a proposal to present a paper and workshop at the first ever World Conference on Shelters, to be held in Alberta, Canada, September 8 – 11, 2008.

#### **Domestic Violence**

WWDA and DAWN's proposal 'Forgotten Sisters: Recognising and Responding to Domestic Violence in the Lives of Women with Disabilities' was accepted by the Conference organisers, which is a wonderful achievement for both WWDA and DAWN.

WWDA and DAWN's proposal will address a range of issues, including for example, incidence, prevalence, barriers to services, key strategies to end and prevent violence against women with disabilities.

Central to WWDA and DAWN's presentation is the need for meaningful engagement with women with disabilities so that their experiences and their views are integral to identifying potential solutions and building successful interventions.

WWDA is now in the process of working very hard to try and secure funding to enable a delegation of WWDA members to attend. Should we be successful in securing funds, we will then choose two [2] WWDA members via an Application process to attend the Conference as WWDA delegates.

Web: [www.womenshelter.ca/home\\_en.php](http://www.womenshelter.ca/home_en.php) or contact WWDA at: [wwda@wwda.org.au](mailto:wwda@wwda.org.au)

*Sent to us by IWNNews editor Priscilla Todd*

### **ARGENTINA: Training Health Agents to Reduce Child Mortality**

An ambitious new programme for training health agents to help reduce infant mortality in small rural communities and indigenous villages, launched by one of Argentina's best-known human rights groups, drew many more applicants than the organisers had hoped for.

"We expected 500 people to register, but we had to expand the programme to 800, and many health professionals even signed up," Oscar Natalichio, extension secretary at the Popular University of the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo.

The University was created by the Madres (Mothers) of Plaza de Mayo, a group founded during Argentina's 1976-1983 dictatorship to demand that their sons and daughters, who were "disappeared" by the military regime, be returned to them alive.

#### **Territorio Madres**

The formal name of the health agent project, which has the backing of the Ministry of Social Development, is Mothers' Territory National Labour Plan for Promotion and Training in Child Development", better known as "Territorio Madres".

The health agents will later be hired to work in indigenous communities or rural towns and villages with populations of less than 2,000. Financing for scholarships has come from the Ministry of Social Development, and the organisers hope the government will continue to provide support for the agents' fieldwork.

The course itself is tuition-free, and students who must bus in from other towns will be given free housing and meals for the one week a month when the classes are on, as well as a monthly scholarship of 100 dollars for travelling costs and other expenses.

*By Marcela Valente. More on:* <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42154>

### **UZBEKISTAN: Ongoing imprisonment of civil society leader**

Imprisoned Uzbek civil society leader, Ms Mutabar Tojiboyeva, was awarded the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders.

Tojiboyeva, leader of the Ardent Hearts Club of Uzbekistan, was detained on 7 October 2005 following her criticism of the killing of hundreds of demonstrators by government troops in May 2005 in the city of Andijan. As many as 17 different charges were brought against Tojiboyeva including "threatening public order", "membership of an illegal organisation", "slander", "fraud", "theft",

“blackmailing local businessmen” and “tax evasion”. In May 2006, she was sentenced to eight years in prison in a trial held under heavy security, raising serious questions about its fairness.

### **Repressive laws**

Although the Constitution of Uzbekistan pledges to safeguard the freedoms of assembly and association, repressive laws prevent citizens from registering independent organisations or organising public demonstrations, particularly those concerned with human rights. Any activity is regularly monitored by government officials, who use harassment as well as long and cumbersome procedures to deter and prevent peaceful civil society work.

At this year’s **CIVICUS World Assembly, from 18 to 21 June in Glasgow, Scotland**, close to 1,000 participants will again demand freedom for Tojiboyeva, as well as others who are behind bars for their peaceful civil society work

More on: <http://us.oneworld.net/article/view/160587/1/>

### **Rape – the ultimate violence used to terrorise, destroy and humiliate communities**

As many as 50,000 women were raped during the war in Bosnia. In conflicts in West Africa and Northern Uganda thousands of young girls have been kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery and prostitution. Rape is rampant in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where it has again been used as a weapon of war, a tactic used to terrorise, destroy and humiliate communities.

Its impact is devastating.

The European Council has called for significant scaling-up of programmes to combat violence against women, including in conflict and post-conflict situations. But we need to keep up the pressure to see these words turned into action.

We need your help.

We're calling all our supporters to write to the presidency of the European Union, which for the first half of 2008 will be held by Prime Minister Janez Jansa of Slovenia, urging Europe to take the lead in global efforts to end violence against women.

We have prepared an email in the form below - feel free to personalise it to make your message more effective. You will find the email in 5 languages on the following website

<http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=61&ea.campaign.id=326>

*Sent to us by IAW President Rosy Weiss*

### **New Delhi - Women's Reservation Bill - Women's quota splits all groups**

At a late night meeting, the Union Cabinet cleared the contentious Women's Reservation Bill in its original form for introduction in the Rajya Sabha.

One of the last of the major commitments of the Congress-led UPA's common minimum programme, the women's bill seeks to reserve one third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies. Once introduced, the constitutional amendment bill would be routed to the standing committee to help hammer out a consensus on it.

Meanwhile, whether in the UPA, NDA or UNPA, parties opposed to the original bill are now trying to coordinate their strategies ... More in 'The Telegraph', Calcutta, India:

<http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=1372911>

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080510/jsp/nation/story\\_9251431.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080510/jsp/nation/story_9251431.jsp)

*Sent to us by IAW Member Anjana Basu*

### **Gender issue lives on as Clinton's hopes dim**

With each passing day, it seems a little less likely that the next president of the United States will wear a skirt — or a cheerful, no-nonsense pantsuit.

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton is now in what most agree are the waning days of her bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.

To use her own phrase, she has been running ‘to break the highest and hardest glass ceiling’ in American life, and now the presidency, or even a nomination that once seemed to be hers to claim, seems out of reach.

Still, many credit Mrs. Clinton with laying down a new marker for what a woman can accomplish in a campaign — raising over \$170 million, frequently winning more favourable reviews on debate performances than her male rivals, rallying older women, and persuading white male voters who were never expected to support her.

More on: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/19/us/politics/19women.html>

*Jodi Kantor in The New York Times Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu*

## CONFERENCES - REPORTS - COURSES

### **WHO - Women, Ageing and Health, a Framework for Action**

This report summarises the evidence from a gender perspective, to improve the health and well-being of aging women. On: [http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib\\_pub\\_file/684\\_filename\\_ageing.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/684_filename_ageing.pdf)  
*IAW and Older Women: Marieluise Weber; IAW Commission on Health: Gudrun Haupter.*

### **Sweden, Course on Disarmament**

'Senior/Middle Management Course on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)' 8-19 September 2008 in Stockholm, Sweden. The course is organised and hosted by the Swedish National Defence College. Participants are expected to have a basic knowledge of Peace Support Operations and a need or strong interest to learn about DDR.

Invited participants are civil servants, diplomats, civilian police, military personnel, academics and representatives from International and Non-Governmental Organisations.

The course is free of charge. However, participants are expected to cover their own travel costs and costs for board and lodging. In a limited number of cases where sufficient funds are not available scholarships may be granted to cover parts of these expenses.

Applications must be received no later than 6 June 2008. For further information please see [www.fhs.se](http://www.fhs.se) and [www.folkebernadotteacademy.se](http://www.folkebernadotteacademy.se) or contact Hans Thorgren, [hans.thorgren@fhs.se](mailto:hans.thorgren@fhs.se)  
*Website: [www.iansa.org/women](http://www.iansa.org/women)*

*Convenor IAW Commission on Peace, Susanne Riveles*

### **Gender and Climate Change**

#### **The third Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance**

*October 19-22, 2008 - Dusit Hotel, Makati City - Metro Manila, Philippines*

See: [http://www.wunrn.com/news/2008/05\\_08/05\\_08/050508\\_global.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2008/05_08/05_08/050508_global.htm)

### **Equality in Politics**

A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments – 2008

On <http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/equality08-e.pdf>

### **Human Rights Council**

The eighth session of the Human Rights Council will be held from 2-13 June 2008.

Report of [http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id\\_article=471](http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=471)

*See also the website of the International Service for Human Rights: [www.ishr.ch](http://www.ishr.ch)*

### **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	< <a href="mailto:iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net">iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net</a> >
International Women's News	: Priscilla Todd (English)	< <a href="mailto:iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org">iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org</a> >
	: Mathilde Duval (French)	< <a href="mailto:aifnfi@womenalliance.org">aifnfi@womenalliance.org</a> >
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Treasurer	: Rakesh Dawan	< <a href="mailto:iaw.treas@womenalliance.org">iaw.treas@womenalliance.org</a> >