

**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 2009, no. 5



Equal Rights

Dear members,

Disturbing international news - we can give you only a selection, for example on the situation of Pakistan and the process against Aung San Suu Kyi.

A lot of worldwide preparation too in this newsletter, all important for the position of women. On Climate Negotiations leading to Copenhagen, on the Economic Crisis and on Disaster Reduction.

IAW is preparing the International Meeting in Switzerland and the issues of the Commissions on the Status of Women 2010.

At the end of the newsletter you will find a link to an interesting e-letter: a 'Legal Eye', on the International Criminal Court.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

IAW International Meeting 11-15 June 2009

When composing this May newsletter, the preparation of the International Meeting in Switzerland is in full progress. Participants have already received the reports of IAW Affiliates, Associates, Commissions, Representatives and the Executive from IAW Secretary Lene Pind. They can start the meeting well prepared!

News of the International Meeting will be in the June Newsletter, at the end of June.

CSW - work already started for 2010 – 2014

Now that the 53rd session has agreed on conclusions, work has already started for 2010.

The commission of the 54th session has been elected with delegates from Armenia, Italy, Japan, Senegal and Latin America (Brazil, Ecuador or Mexico).

All information on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm#agreed>

The themes that were agreed upon the multi-year programme 2010-2014 are:

* For the 54th session in 2010: Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly.

* For the 55th session in 2011: Women and girls in science and technologies: increasing opportunities in education, research and employment. Review theme: agreed conclusions from the 2007 session on the "Elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against the girl child."

* For the 56th session in 2012: The empowerment of rural women, in relation to climate change and food security. Review theme: the agreed conclusions from the 2008 session on "Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women."

* For the 57th session in 2013: Addressing stereotypes which constrain the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women, including in decision-making. Review theme: the agreed conclusions from the 2009 session on "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS."

* For the 58th session in 2014: Prevention of violence against women and girls. Review theme: the agreed conclusions from the 2011 session, "Women and girls in science and technology: Increasing opportunities in education, research and employment."

Aung San Suu Kyi

The United Nations envoy to Burma, Tomas Ojea Quintana, has said that the international community, including the UN, should step up pressure on the regime to ensure unwarranted charges against Aung San Suu Kyi are dropped. He said the charges are unsubstantial.

Suu Kyi faces charges of breaching her house arrest after US citizen John Yettaw swam to her lakeside home earlier this month. "The message to the government is first that this new file has to be dismissed immediately, because there are no grounds at all," he said. "She cannot be accused of any crime at all." Quintana reiterated a comment he made last week that the breach of security achieved by Yettaw is a fault of the government, and not Suu Kyi or her caretakers, who are also on trial for the incident. "The responsibility regarding the security and the conditions of the her house arrest lie in the government," he said.

"She was under government custody, therefore the government is responsible for the security conditions. "That's very important because her case under these circumstances requires all the attention from all of the world."

An excuse?

Similarly, the now exiled former Burmese ambassador to the United States implied that Yettaw's breach could have been allowed by security in order to give the government an excuse to continue her detention, which was due to expire on 27 May.

"There are about 250 security personnel around Daw Suu's house, including three outposts guarding the neighbourhood, the road at the front and Inya lake," said Aung Linn Htut. "It is no way possible for someone to infiltrate such heavy security."

On: <http://democracyforburma.wordpress.com/2009/05/19/the-un-human-rights-envoy-to-burma-tomas-ojea-quintana-said-however-that-the-charges-are-unsubstantiated/>

Petitions

Several petitions can be signed on the internet. For example, Amnesty International on:

<http://www.amnesty.org/> or AVAAZ on: https://secure.avaaz.org/en/free_aung_san_suu_kyi/

IAW President Rosy Weiss: IAW joins the call of the independent United Nations human rights expert on Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, for unconditional release of detained pro-democracy leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

CLIMATE CHANGES LEADING TO COPENHAGEN

2009 is a crucial year in the international effort to address climate change, culminating in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in **Copenhagen, 7 - 18 December 2009**. In 2007, Parties agreed to shape an ambitious and effective international response to climate change, to be agreed at Copenhagen.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol ([AWG-KP](#)) and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention ([AWG-LCA](#)) will operate in full negotiating mode in 2009 to advance work towards meeting their respective mandates. Important ongoing work under the Convention will also be taken forward in 2009 by SBI and SBSTA.

The first round of negotiations this year took place in [Bonn, 29 March-8 April](#). Four further sessions will be held prior to Copenhagen: 1-12 June in Bonn; 10-14 August in Bonn (informal meeting); 28 September-9 October in Bangkok and 2-6 November (location to be confirmed.)

The Bonn Climate Change Talks, 1-12 June 2009

The second of 6 major negotiating sessions (2009) of the UNFCCC, the thirtieth sessions of the UNFCCC Convention subsidiary bodies - SBSTA and SBI, the sixth session of the AWG-LCA and the eighth session of the AWG-KP, will take place from Monday 1 June till Friday 12 June 2009, all in Bonn, Germany.

The Chair of the AWG-KP has prepared two key documents to be discussed at the Bonn Talks in June that will provide a basis for the group to intensify negotiations on further emission reduction commitments for Annex I Parties.

- * One key document focuses on amendments to the Kyoto Protocol relating to emission reduction commitments of industrialized countries for the second phase of the Protocol (post-2012).

- * A second document covers other related issues, including emissions trading and the project-based mechanisms, and land use, land-use change and forestry.

On: <http://unfccc.int/meetings/sb30/items/4842.php>

Count down to Copenhagen - a Gender Perspective

The Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) will conduct a Training of Trainers (ToT) and a Delegates' Update Session in the days prior to the opening of the negotiations in Bonn. In Bonn WEDO (Women's Environment & Development Organisation) will coordinate a team of advocates and host a side event entitled "Realizing the Bali Action Plan: Adaptation, Mitigation, Technology and Finance from a Gender Perspective". *More on:* <http://www.wedo.org/events>

UNITED NATIONS

GEAR - Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign

A new website invites European civil society organisations and citizens to join a global campaign to create a strong United Nations agency for women's rights. Join us at www.un-gear.eu and make history by helping to build United Nations that really works for women!

Worldwide, women are less likely to go to school, receive adequate health care, or own property. The United Nations could have a better role in working for women's rights at the global level. However, its current bodies dealing with gender equality lack resources and coherence to really deliver for women. Millions of women and men and hundreds of civil society organisations from all over the world are at the moment working together in the (GEAR) Campaign to press governments to improve the way the United Nations works for gender equality, and to create a single strong women's entity.

More information on: www.campaign@un-gear.eu

Sent to us by IAW member Helen Self

GEAR and CSW - Join the Petition!

A new modalities paper was presented to GA member states on March 13, 2009 -the last day of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The paper endorses the **Composite option D** – the GEAR Campaign's preferred option, stating that it has the greatest potential to consolidate the strengths of the existing four gender-specific entities, address the gaps and challenges previously identified and create synergy between operational and normative and policy development functions.

Join the petition on <http://gear.collectivex.com/>

ECONOMIC CRISIS

World Financial and Economic Crisis,

its Impact on Development, to be held in New York from 1 to 3 June 2009.

The Conference will be presided over by the President of the General Assembly, and will result in a concise outcome to be agreed by Member States.

On: <http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/interactive/uneconference.shtml>

Draft Outcome Document for World Financial Crisis June 1-3

"This is a moment that requires audacity", President of the General Assembly Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, of Nicaragua, said as he discussed the draft outcome document for the Conference on the World Financial Crisis.

He has called on the **Rio Group**, an alliance of 23 Latin American and Caribbean nations, to play a central role in shaping the future of the global economy to truly reflect the needs and concerns of the region. On: <http://www.un.org/ga/news/news.asp?NewsID=30711>

Finding solutions to alleviate the economic and financial turmoil enveloping markets around the world needs to widen participation to include **poor and developing nations**, a senior advisor to the President said:

On: <http://www.un.org/ga/news/news.asp?NewsID=30668>

The world's **370 million indigenous people** are suffering from the worst impacts of climate change, President Miguel D'Escoto said, stressing that they must play a pivotal role in any decisions made on the issue. On: <http://www.un.org/ga/news/news.asp?NewsID=30579>

UN lacks more than 70 per cent of funds sought to aid Central and East Africa

Only 27 per cent of the funds needed to support relief efforts in Central and East Africa have been donated, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported today.

The Consolidated Appeals Process ([CAP](#)) was launched in November to raise almost \$5.3 million to respond to crises in seven African countries:

Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

The Office noted that only 2 per cent – or \$3.9 million – of the more than \$225 million required for Uganda is available. By contrast, the appeal for Chad has received almost \$134 million or 35 per cent of the nearly \$387 million it requires, the highest of the seven countries.

No funds for new emergencies?

The overall aid bill for 2009 is expected to go way beyond the \$7 billion requested for all humanitarian crises around the world, since the CAP does not include the so-called “flash appeals” which are launched throughout the year to meet the needs of new emergencies.

On: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30817&Cr=humanitarian&Cr1=appeal>

Weekly Bulletin for NGOs

at the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development
A Weekly Bulletin for NGOs with the latest developments and events leading to the UN Conference from 1-3 June 2009. On: http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf_ngls_bulletin_3.pdf

Editor's note: Warmly recommended!

AROUND THE WORLD

US among 18 nations elected to UN Human Rights Council

The General Assembly elected 18 countries to serve on the Geneva-based United Nations Human Rights Council for three-year terms starting next month, including – for the first time – Belgium, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Norway and the United States.

Members elected:

Bangladesh, Belgium, Cameroon, China, Cuba, Djibouti, Hungary, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, United States of America and Uruguay.

Number of votes in parentheses obtained in a single round of balloting (the required majority was 97):

African States (5 seats):

Senegal (165), Mauritius (162), Nigeria (148), Cameroon (142), Djibouti (141)

Asian States (5 seats):

Jordan (178), Kyrgyzstan (174), Bangladesh (171) China (167), Saudi Arabia (154)

Eastern European States (2 seats):

Russian Federation (146), Hungary (131)

Latin American & Caribbean States (3 seats):

Mexico (175), Uruguay (173), Cuba (163)

Western European and Other States (3 seats):

Norway (179), Belgium (177), United States of America (167)

More on: http://www.un.org/ga/63/elections/hrc_elections.shtml

When the exact number of candidates are presented, they will be elected. The US got elected that way because New Zealand withdrew to avoid competition ...

From Helene Sackstein, IAW representative at the Human Rights Council.

Education in Pakistan

MOHRI PUR, [Pakistan](#) - The elementary school in this poor village is easy to mistake for a barn. It has a dirt floor and no lights, and crows swoop through its glassless windows. Class size recently hit 140, spilling students into the courtyard.

But if the state has forgotten the children here, the mullahs have not. With public education in a shambles, Pakistan's poorest families have turned to madrasas, or Islamic schools, that feed and house the children while pushing a more militant brand of Islam than was traditional here.

Madrasas

The concentration of madrasas in southern Punjab has become an urgent concern in the face of Pakistan's expanding insurgency. The schools offer almost no instruction beyond the memorizing of [the Koran](#), creating a widening pool of young minds that are sympathetic to militancy.

In an analysis of the profiles of suicide bombers who have struck in Punjab, the Punjab police said more than two-thirds had attended madrasas.

Education no priority

[President Obama](#) said in a news conference last week that he was “gravely concerned” about the situation in Pakistan, not least because the government did not “seem to have the capacity to deliver basic services: schools, health care, rule of law, a judicial system that works for the majority of the people.”

He has asked Congress to more than triple assistance to Pakistan for nonmilitary purposes, including education. Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the United States has given Pakistan a total of \$680 million in nonmilitary aid, according to the State Department, far lower than the \$1 billion a year for the military.

But education has never been a priority here, and even Pakistan’s current plan to double education spending next year might collapse as have past efforts, which were thwarted by sluggish bureaucracies, unstable governments and a lack of commitment by Pakistan’s governing elite to the poor.

But even today, only about half of Pakistanis can read and write, far below the proportion in countries with similar per-capita income, like Vietnam. One in three school-age Pakistani children does not attend school, and of those who do, a third drop out by fifth grade, according to [Unesco](#).

Girls’ enrollment is among the lowest in the world, lagging behind Ethiopia and Yemen.

Safety Net from Despair

The phenomenon began in the 1980s, when General Zia gave madrasas money and land in an American-supported policy to help Islamic fighters against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

The Islamic schools are also seen as employment opportunities. “When someone doesn’t see a way ahead for himself, he builds a mosque and sits in it,” said Jan Sher, whose village in southwestern Punjab, Shadan Lund, has become a militant stronghold, with madrasas now outnumbering public schools. Poverty has also helped expand enrollment in madrasas, which serve as a safety net by housing and feeding poor children.

Fear and Respect - Kabirwala seminary

Even if the madrasas do not make militants, they create a worldview that makes militancy possible. “The mindset wants to stop music, girls’ schools and festivals,” said Salman Abid, a social researcher in southern Punjab. “Their message is that this is not real life. Real life comes later” — after death.

There was also a girls’ section in the Kabirwala seminary, with its own entrance, where hundreds of young women chanted in unison after directions from a male voice that came from behind a curtain. “We have a passion for this work,” said Seraj ul-Haq, a computer teacher who is part of the family that founded the seminary.

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu. This is only a selection. The whole article on:

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/pakistan/index.html?inline=nyt-geo>

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Global Report on Disaster Risk Reduction launch in Bangkok, 25 May 2009

In early May 2008, the deaths of approximately 140,000 people in the Myanmar cyclone and the collapse of more than five million buildings, followed by damage to 21 million more structures in the China's Sichuan earthquake just ten days later, were stark reminders that disaster risk associated with tropical cyclones, floods, earthquakes, droughts and other natural hazards are constant threats to our modern society, rich or poor.

Most susceptible region

Asia and the Pacific is the most susceptible region in the world to the natural hazards, and being the most populous region in the world, it experiences enormous losses in terms of lives, livelihoods, and social and economic assets in natural disasters, reversing the region’s economic and social development drastically.

For example, in the first nine months of the year 2008, disasters across the region accounted for 37 per cent of the world’s total, amounting to more than 99 per cent of the world’s reported victims, more than 94 per cent of people affected, and over 87 per cent of overall economic damage.

Hazards in the region are likely to become more frequent and severe as a result of the emerging challenges presented by climate change.

20 disaster risk reductions

The United Nations is launching its first global report that identifies increasing disaster risk factors and

recommends 20 disaster risk reduction actions that will reduce poverty, safeguard development and adapt to climate change, with beneficial effects on broader global security, stability and sustainability. The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction launched for the first time internationally in Bahrain on 17-18 May by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will be launched regionally in Bangkok on 25 May 2009, in the presence of senior officials from the Regional Organisations, Government of Thailand, senior representatives from the UN Agencies, International Financial Institutions, and the Civil Society, followed by a discussion on the implications of the Report's findings for the Asia and the Pacific. On: www.unisdr.org/asiapacific

Women worst affected

Unfortunately the sexes are affected quite differently, with women more frequently victims, according to the announcement of a conference on the topic by the UN International Strategy for Risk Reduction ([ISDR](http://www.unisdr.org/)).

More on: <http://www.unisdr.org/>

Next year - 2010 - there will be the 10 year anniversary of 1325

Legal Eye on the International Criminal Court

A monthly e-letter from the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice. In the Legal Eye you will find summaries and gender analysis of judicial decisions and other legal developments at the International Criminal Court (ICC), and discussion of legal issues arising from victims' participation before the Court, particularly as these issues relate to the prosecution of gender-based crimes in each of the Situations under investigation by the ICC. The Court currently has cases relating to the conflicts in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Darfur, Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR).

In addition to the Legal Eye on the ICC we also produce Women's Voices, a monthly e-letter providing updates and analysis on political developments, strategies for the pursuit of justice, the status of peace talks, and reconciliation efforts from the perspective of women's rights activists from the four conflict situations.

On: http://www.iccwomen.org/news/docs/LegalEye_May09/index.html

Sent to us by IAW President Rosy Weiss

Note

We are sending this Newsletter as an attachment, saved in Word 97. Please be so kind to advise Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address, so we can mail them this Newsletter too.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash :	Joke Sebus	<iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>
International Women's News :	Priscilla Todd (English)	<iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org>
	Mathilde Duval (French)	<aifnfi@womenalliance.org>
Membership Officer :	Pat Richardson	<iaw.membership@womenalliance.org>
Treasurer :	Rakesh Dawan	<iaw.treas@womenalliance.org>