

**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 2011, no. 5**



**Equal Rights**

*Dear members,*

*Good news: Rwanda is planning to start a nationwide campaign to eliminate the transmission of HIV from a mother to her child. Excellent also is the breakthrough on the risk of transmitting the HIV virus to an uninfected sexual partner. Other good news is the decision by the British government to cut emissions by 50% ; it puts Britain well ahead of the 27-member EU bloc. And Soon-Young Yoon, IAW Chief Representative to the UN in New York, mailed us the URL of an excellent newsletter, which can assist us on the Road to Rio+20.*

*CEDAW notices with grave concern that there are continuing cultural, traditional and economic pressures which help to perpetuate harmful practices, such as female circumcision. Also in this newsletter Women and Politics, news of the Conference on Least Developed Countries, decent work for domestic workers and figures on young women marrying before 18.*

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

IAW Board Meeting, 20-25 September 2011. The invitation and registration papers arrived for Iceland, with the draft agenda and programme, all splendidly designed by IAW General Secretary Lene Pind.

The programme looks fine! As well as the usual Board Meeting there is a seminar on gender equality education (an Iceland speciality) and a preparatory meeting for the 56th session of Commission on the Status of Women on rural women - an important subject that has to do with everything from food security to climate change.

Please be so kind to send documents, reports, additional items for the agenda or comments to IAW General Secretary Lene Pind at <[iawsec@womenalliance.org](mailto:iawsec@womenalliance.org)> before August 1, 2011.

**UNITED NATIONS**

**Global population to pass 10 billion by 2100 - UN projections**

3 May 2011 – The world’s population is projected to surge past 9 billion before 2050 and then reach 10.1 billion by the end of the century if current fertility rates continue at expected levels, according to United Nations figures unveiled today.

**High fertility countries**

Most of the increase will come from so-called “high fertility countries,” mainly in sub-Saharan Africa but also in some nations in Asia, Oceania and Latin America, the figures reveal.

*More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38253&Cr=population&Cr1=>*

**Higher Education among Girls link to Declining Fertility Rates**

April 14 - Higher levels of education, particularly among girls, had a strong correlation to declining fertility and better development outcomes, delegates and experts said today as the Commission on Population and Development continued its forty-fourth session.

“More education translates into better health outcomes in all societies,” said Abulkalam Abdul Momen ( Bangladesh), Vice-President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

He added that educated women were better able to plan their families and more aware of employment, schooling and health opportunities for themselves and their children.

On a wider level, fewer children in a society meant that more resources were available to every individual child, he said.

More on: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/pop994.doc.htm>

*Editors comment: Where has the honourable speaker been for the last 30 years? This has been known and talked about for decades! It's the old story of nobody looking back at what was said or what happened before they came on the scene and wanting to re-invent their own wheel. We want to hear about action and outcomes, not more research and findings.*

### **2011 ECOSOC High Level Segment, Geneva, 4-7 July on Education 2011**

The Annual Ministerial Review of the 2011 High Level Segment of the Council will focus on implementing the internationally-agreed goals and commitments in regard to Education.

Organizations in general and special consultative status are encouraged to make oral presentations to the Council, as well as to submit written statements.

More on: <http://esango.un.org/irene/?page=static&content=statements2011>

### **General Assembly High-Level Meeting 25-26 July 2011 on Youth**

The high-level meeting will have as its overarching theme “Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding”. The high-level meeting will comprise two consecutive informal interactive round tables on 25 July 2011 and two plenary meetings on 26 July 2011. The round tables will be chaired by Member States at the invitation of the President of the General Assembly.

<http://social.un.org/youthyear/> <http://social.un.org/youthyear/>

## **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

### **CEDAW - Female circumcision - FGM - Genital Mutilation**

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, concerned about the continuation of the practice of female circumcision and other traditional practices harmful to the health of women, notes with grave concern that there are continuing cultural, traditional and economic pressures which help to perpetuate harmful practices, such as female circumcision.

Taking note with interest the study of the Special Rapporteur on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, and of the study of the Special Working Group on Traditional Practices, CEDAW recommends that States parties take appropriate and effective measures with a view to eradicating the practice of female circumcision.

More on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom14>

### **A Rite of Torture for Girls**

May 11 2011, by Nicholas D. Kristof, New York Times

People usually torture those whom they fear or despise. But one of the most common forms of torture in the modern world, incomparably more widespread than water boarding or electric shocks, is inflicted by mothers on daughters they love.

It's female genital mutilation — sometimes called female circumcision — and it is prevalent across a broad swathe of Africa and chunks of Asia as well.

Mothers take their daughters at about age 10 to cutters like Maryan Hirsi Ibrahim, a middle-aged Somali woman who says she wields her razor blade on up to a dozen girls a day.

More on: <http://www.ippf.org/en/News/Intl+news/A+rite+of+torture+for+girls.htm>

*Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu.*

*Editors comment: We quote only a few sentences of the article of Nicholas D. Kristof, because the description of this traditional practice is too cruel for words. Also, most of our members are familiar with FGM and are fighting against it when ever they can.*

*There is another torture mothers can inflict on girls for one reason or another: breast ironing . IAW member Georgette Arrey Taku from Cameroon brought information about this traditional practice to the Commission on the Status of Women this year.*

## HIV/AIDS

### **UN agencies hail trial results showing anti-HIV drugs prevent transmission**

May 12 2011 - United Nations agencies fighting HIV/AIDS today lauded the results of an international study that shows that if an HIV-positive person immediately follows an appropriate treatment of anti-retroviral drugs, the risk of transmitting the virus to an uninfected sexual partner is nearly entirely eliminated.

The trial, conducted by the HIV Prevention Trials Network, tracked more than 1,700 couples across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States and found that the risk of infection fell by 96 per cent. The reduction in risk was so large that the trial was stopped some three to four years ahead of schedule.

#### **Protecting partners - a breakthrough**

“This breakthrough is a serious game changer,” [said](#) Michel Sidibé, the Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)), who added that “now we need to make sure that couples have the option to choose treatment for prevention and have access to it.”

Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), described the results of the study as “a crucial development, because we know that sexual transmission accounts for about 80 per cent of all new infections.”

#### **UNAIDS**

UNAIDS said it will convene a meeting with other key organizations tackling the scourge of AIDS to discuss the trial and its implications for the response to the disease. In July, WHO is also releasing new guidance to assist HIV-positive people to protect their partners.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38360&Cr=hiv/aids&Cr1=>

### **UNICEF welcomes Rwandan plan to reduce mother-child transmission of HIV**

May 14 2011 - The United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has welcomed Rwanda's announcement that it is starting a nationwide campaign to eliminate the transmission of HIV from a mother to her child.

Rwandan authorities launched the HIV/AIDS campaign on Thursday, with the aim of reducing the transmission rate among children born to women living with HIV to below 2 per cent.

HIV-positive women will receive the best available anti-retroviral regimens as part of the campaign, while the Government also hopes to ensure that all women have access to family planning and to information on HIV prevention.

Rwandan has one of the lowest HIV infection rates for pregnant women in its region, with a national average of 4.3 per cent, but the rate in the capital, Kigali, is between 16 en 34 per cent.

At least 20,000 children under the age of 15 live with HIV, and more than 90 per cent were infected by their mother, either during pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38384&Cr=HIV/AIDS&Cr1=>

## THE ROAD TO RIO + 20

### **Rio+20: Making it Happen**

17 May 2011 The latest issue of the newsletter, Volume 2, Issue 9, features a Nordic Council side-event held at CSD-19, which focused on the role of women in the economy and the importance of engaging civil society and to create a sustainable future.

Among other issues, reports and events, it also highlights the upcoming 2 June thematic debate of the UN General Assembly on the “green economy” and the 31 May to 3 June Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Amazon, Congo, and Borneo-Mekong Forest Basins to be held in the Republic of Congo. View issue at <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=40>

*Sent to us by Soon-Young Yoon, IAW Chief Representative to the UN in New York*

More on: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=40>

### **UK decision to cut emissions by 50 percent**

The British government has announced plans to halve carbon dioxide emissions by 2025, winning strong praise from EU climate chief Connie Hedegaard.

After months of inter-cabinet wrangling, UK energy and climate secretary Chris Huhne outlined the 50 percent cut, compared with 1990 levels, to members of parliament late on Tuesday afternoon (17 May). The move puts Britain well ahead of an EU pledge to cut carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020, adding to pressure for the 27-member bloc to adopt a more ambitious target. More on: <http://euobserver.com/9/32350>

### **Will New Technologies and the “Green Economy” enable a new Earth Grab?**

May 10<sup>th</sup> 2011 - Workshop organized by Third World Network, ETC Group and La Via Campesina and hosted by UN NGLS.

Hope is running high that next year’s “Rio+20” summit could offer an opportunity to breathe new life into global governance and sustainable development.

But the nature and goal of a ‘Green Economy’ is poorly defined and also controversial, raising concerns from Southern governments, civil society and social movements.

<http://www.wedo.org/events/csd19-will-new-technologies-and-the-green-economy-enable-a-new-earth-grab>

*Convenor of the IAW Health Commission, Gudrun Haupter*

### **Sustainable Societies; Responsible Citizens, a major civil society contribution to the Rio+20 Conference**

Bonn, Germany, 3-5 September 2011

The 64th Annual DPI-NGO Conference aims to highlight effective ways in which citizens and civil society, in partnership with other stakeholders, can contribute to creating and maintaining sustainable societies – economical, cultural and environmental.

The 2011 edition, held in Bonn, Germany, could be considered as a major civil society contribution to the Rio+20 Conference taking place next year, and will provide valuable network-building opportunities for all participants.

More on: <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/dpingorelations/Confinf>

### **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), 4-6 June 2012**

Organized to mark - 1. the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), in Rio de Janeiro, and 2. the 10th anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg.

#### **Renewed political commitment**

The Conference will include Heads of State and Government to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges is being organized in pursuance of General Assembly Resolution 64/236 (A/RES/64/236).

The objective of the Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges. More on: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

## **WOMEN AND POLITICS**

### **International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics**

There is an interactive network of women in politics from around the world who share experiences, access resources and advisory services, and network and collaborate on issues of interest.

With twitters and tweets. Please have a look. On: <http://iknowpolitics.org/>

### **UN-backed conference on improving elections in West Africa opens**

18 May 2011 – In a year when many West African countries are preparing to stage critical elections, more than 100 delegates from across the region gathered today for the start of a three-day United Nations-backed conference aimed at helping to ensure that the polls consolidate peace and deter conflict.

The meeting in Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, will serve as an opportunity to evaluate the implementation of the Protocol on Democracy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and examine progress towards good governance a decade after the Protocol's adoption. Delegates will also analyse recent elections in the region.

The conference will consider critical issues such as the financing of elections, the functioning of the electoral commissions, the management of electoral disputes, the role of the media, and of the security sector, human rights and gender issues, as well as support by the UN and of the international community to electoral processes.

The conference was held under the auspices of the UN Office for West Africa ([UNOWA](#)), in partnership with Cape Verde, the UN Development Program ([UNDP](#)) and the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)).

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38424&Cr=West+Africa&Cr1=>

### **Least Developed Countries**

#### ***Will Benefit if Policies Address Needs of Women in Formal and Informal Trade***

Istanbul, May 11 2011 - Women's informal trade in LDCs remains a generally under-estimated and neglected issue in trade policies and processes, said UN Women Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director Ms. Michelle Bachelet at the event titled "Making Trade Work for Women," organized by UN Women and UNCTAD.

#### **Needs of women are ignored**

The main hurdles these women face, including lack of access to credit, services, transport, storage and marketing information, and their exposure to abuses, are ignored in the design of trade policies that only deal with the formal trade sector, she said.

This occurs despite the fact that "formal and informal trade are closely linked, through international production networks and global value chains designed to minimize production costs."

Vabah Gayflor, Minister of Gender Equality and Development of Liberia, noted 70 percent of women cross-border traders in her country are marketing agricultural products produced locally. Though the volumes of trade are relatively small, the resulting income is regularly reinvested and used to cover family expenses, she said.

More on: <http://www.unwomen.org/2011/05/least-developed-countries-will-benefit-if-they-pay-attention-to-needs-of-women-in-formal-and-informal-trade/>

### **LDC - Inter-Parliamentary Union Forum in Istanbul**

#### ***IPU - The underlying problem is political. It is not economic.***

9 May 2011. Some 160 MPs from 55 countries participated in the Fourth United Nations Conference for the Least Developed Countries at the conclusion of a two-year consultation process, coordinated by the IPU, to help instil the concerns of parliaments into the outcome document of the conference - the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The debate at the Forum focused on the future implementation of the new Programme of Action and the practical ways and means in which parliaments can assist with that. Reporting back to the plenary of the conference, the IPU Secretary General stressed the importance of good governance as an underlying condition of development: "the problem has to do with who decides what, how and for whom. The underlying problem is political; it is not economic.

More on: <http://www.ipu.org/news-e/latest.htm>

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Geneva**

17 May 2011 - National human rights institutions play a key role in maintaining the rule of law, preventing abuses and assisting victims of violations, the United Nations rights chief Navi Pillay said today, citing the political unrest in North Africa and Middle East as an example of the need to ensure respect for people's liberties.

"The recent turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa has been a huge challenge for national human rights institutions," said Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the opening session of the annual conference of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Geneva.

The meeting is expected to focus on women's rights defenders, racism, and the relationship between human rights and business.

Representatives from more than 160 national institutions as well as Government and NGO observers are attending the conference. Also represented are regional coordinating bodies of national human rights institutions from Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Americas and Europe.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38415&Cr=Pillay&Cr1=>

### **Domestic Workers - European Union Votes to Support Decent Work**

Brussels - In an important development for legal recognition and against violations and abuses, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the draft ILO Convention and Recommendation on Domestic Workers. In significant part, the resolution states:

"The European Parliament supports the adoption of a new ILO Convention supplemented by a Recommendation on decent work for domestic workers.

The Parliament calls upon the 27 EU Member States to quickly ratify and implement this ILO Convention once adopted to ensure that the entire spectrum of labour and social rights of domestic workers will be respected."

If adopted in June by the International Labour Conference, the instruments would provide a global framework of minimum standards for extending labour and social protection to domestic workers.

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

### **47% of young Indian women marry before 18**

May 10, 2011, Mumbai, May 10: That India marries off its daughters in such a hurry that they have little time to grow out of their teens is a fact that no longer raises eyebrows. But what should come as a shock to a country that preens itself over its growing economic prowess is that we fare worse than sub-Saharan Africa, or for that matter, all of Africa put together, when it comes to child marriage.

If that's not bad enough, sample this.

The degree to which child marriage is practised in India is more than double the figure for Pakistan, a country we don't quite look up to as a role model.

While India would like to believe that it will one day break into the league of countries such as the US and UK, we can take solace from the fact that a worldwide scorecard on child marriage shows that we're better off than Bangladesh, Mali and Burkina Faso.

A 2011 data sheet called 'The World's Women and Girls', released by the Washington-based Population Reference Bureau, shows that 47% of women in India between the ages of 20 and 24 were married by 18. This is higher than the average for South Central Asia (45%), of which India is a part. The average for Africa as a continent works out to 34%.

Most African countries fare better than India, including Ghana, Sudan and Nigeria. While Pakistan's score works out to 24%, even Afghanistan, with a pathetic score of 43%, does a better job than India when it comes to curbing child marriage.

#### **Low status of women in India, and culture**

Pointing to the health consequences of child marriage, P Arokiasamy of the International Institute of Population Science, Mumbai, says child marriage has much to do with the low status of women in India. Arokiasamy says the practice has more to do with culture than development.

Anahita Mukherji, TNN. More on:

[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-10/india/29527428\\_1\\_child-marriage-ssa-icds](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-10/india/29527428_1_child-marriage-ssa-icds)

*Send to us by IAW member Anjana Basu*

#### **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@womenallince.org>

: Mathilde Duval (French)

<mathilde.duval@yahoo.fr>

Membership Officer

: Pat Richardson

<iaw.membership@womenalliance.org>