

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

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

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales

IAW NEWS FLASH – October 2005
Equal Rights



Dear IAW Members,

This message is important for us, members of the International Alliance of Women, so we are sending it as a FLASH. Our sisters who are living in poverty, are in need of the political will to help. Many of us have a political background. We can use the figures as arguments. At the moment our thoughts are also with the victims of the devastating earthquake in South Asia. With millions at risk from hunger and cold now the winter sets in. More in our next newsletter.

**TO REDUCE WORLD POVERTY UN POPULATION FUND URGES
FASTER PACE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY
TO REDUCE WORLD POVERTY**

New York, Oct 12 2005

Unless nations act now to end gender discrimination and provide equal social, cultural, economic and political rights to women, they will not be able to eradicate poverty, possibly for many generations to come, the United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA](#) said today.

"I am here today to say that world leaders will not make poverty history until they make gender discrimination history," UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid told a press briefing in London at the launch of the agency's new report, [The State of World Population 2005](#).

Investing in women and girls makes economic sense, says the report, because discrimination leads to lower productivity and higher health costs, results in higher death rates of women, and is a major threat to efforts to reduce poverty.

- * A lack of contraceptives, family planning support, and reproductive health assistance leads to 529,000 women dying every year from pregnancy-related causes, most of them preventable.
- * The world population is almost 6.5 billion today, and is expected to reach 9.1 billion by 2050 - and a lack of access to contraceptives is one of the primary causes of an estimated 76 million unwanted pregnancies, and 19 million unsafe abortions each year.
- * HIV/AIDS constitutes the leading cause of death and illness among women 15 to 44, and the study estimates that 250 million years of productive life are lost as a result.

"Investing in the political, economic and educational opportunities for women and girls, on the other hand, yields quick wins and high pay-offs," says the report, which in turn leads to "better economic prospects, smaller families, healthier and more literate children, lower HIV prevalence rates and reduced harmful traditional practices," all of which play a part in cutting poverty.

Violence against women is also a major concern, with one in three women likely to experience physical, sexual or other abuse in her lifetime, most of those committed by a family member. But change has been slow, says the report, including on the political front, where only 16 per cent of the world's parliamentary seats are held by women, up just 4 per cent from 1990.

"I can assure you that women all over the world are tired of promises, promises, promises," Ms. Obaid added. "The time has come; we have the means, we have the commitment. Now we need action."

At a separate meeting held at UN Headquarters yesterday, UN Development Fund for Women ([UNIFEM](#)) Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer also urged governments to take account of women's needs in policy-making.

Addressing the General Assembly's Social, Economic and Cultural (Third) Committee, she said

”women's growing role in migration, as heads of households, and in providing foreign remittances requires that nations incorporate gender equality in their implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed at reduce the global ills by 2015.”

For more details go to UN News Centre at <http://www.un.org/news> or at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=16186&Cr=populat&Cr1=>

IAW members in the European Union can find figures for argumentation in the 'Report on women and poverty in the European Union', rapporteur: Anna Záborská, on http://66.249.93.104/search?q=cache:uM-gJihXnd0J:europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2005/feb/gender_equality_2005_report_en.pdf+Report+on+women+and+poverty+in+the+European+Union&hl=en&lr=lang_en

Note

To avoid misunderstanding, we always send the IAW Newsletter twice: 1) in the body of the e-mail, and 2) as an attachment, saved in Word 97 (changed). 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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