

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER - November 2003, nr. 8



Equal Rights

Dear IAW members,

This newsletter starts with the warm welcome of the IAW Board by IAW Affiliate ADDEM in the Dominican Republic and it describes in short the decisions taken at a successful Board meeting. ADDEM earns our heartfelt thanks for ten very special days! We wish them all the best with their difficult work, empowering women who have suffered domestic violence.

This time we selected a few outstanding women who were in the news, and we notice with pride their accomplishments, their perseverance and their courage. We also go around the world with important events and conferences, with reports and books to read and interesting websites to look up.

News about the UN, CSW, CEDAW, WISIS, ITC, HIV/AIDS, Media, Peace, a threatening food shortage, and in particular: news about women's rights!

IAW BOARD MEETING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The warmth of the climate and the warmth of the reception from Reyna Cohen, President of ADDEM, her daughters, Michelle and Massiel, and all their willing helpers set the tone for a most successful Board meeting. Despite recent back surgery, Pat Giles was able to preside while Rosy Weiss chaired the proceedings with efficiency and good humour. Her ability to not only keep us on track through a busy agenda but to also type notes on her laptop computer was most impressive.

Pat Giles reported on the 2003 session of the Commission on the Status of Women and outlined the focus of the 2004 session (see International Events in this newsletter). Lyda Versteegen lead discussion on the draft constitution and the document was approved, with some amendments, for distribution to members for comment. The final version will be considered at the pre-Congress Board meeting and a recommendation will go forward to Congress for its approval. Lyda's tireless work on this document and the work of her committee was commended.

The IAW Centenary Celebration was the major item for discussion. Plans for the Jubilee Congress in Freiburg (15-19 September 2004) together with cost estimates were presented by the German delegation. Proposals for a Centenary Conference in Berlin (13-14 September 2004) were put forward. The two events are seen as complementary and joint publicity is planned.

After Freiburg, a tour of Strasbourg is offered which will include visits to the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and the EU Parliament.

IAW is encouraging women from all over the world to come and join in the celebrations that mark the start of the feminist movement in the early 20th century. Watch out for more information in future newsletters, International Women's News and on the IAW website.

An informative and well attended Seminar followed the Board meeting. The Seminar theme was "Domestic Violence: Its Socio-economic Impact".

Board members were privileged to attend the National Congress where they met the President and women members of parliament; City Hall and the Mayor's Office; the First University of the Americas and the final evening was spent with the First Lady and the President of the Republic at the National Palace. Various media coverage was given to the presence of the Alliance in the Dominican Republic and all opportunities were taken to publicise ADDEM and its work to establish the first women's refuge.

from Priscilla Todd

ADDEM and the World Health Organisation

Gudrun Haupter writes: At the convenor's request WHO sent posters on Violence and Health for the Seminar on Domestic Violence organised by ADDEM. Some of the participants of the Board meeting will order the posters for events in their countries.

WHO also provided a selection of Spanish and English documents on reproductive health issues which ADDEM distributes to students, teachers, universities and local institutions.

In countries like the Dominican Republic there is a great need for pertinent well-researched information material. Hence ADDEM would like to receive documents in Spanish on HIV/AIDs within the context of successful efforts to combat violence against women.

They hope to soon open the first shelter in the country and are very conscious of the connections between violence, health and human rights. ADDEM needs initial technical help on how to run such shelters in order to make them a sustainable project for the benefit of women and their children.

On behalf of the Health Commission, related information was distributed during the meeting:

* A resolution from Colombo on "Changing of traditional patterns and behaviours especially in medical training and in medical care and treatment of women" and on "The Taboo of Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development - no connection between population issues and environmental issues".

* The statement on "Strategy of Child and Adolescent Health and Development" May 2003, World Health Assembly.

* A WHO press release on "Young girls using tobacco almost as much as boys in many regions of the world".

WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Shirin Ebady - Nobel Prize Winner

Noted for promoting the rights of women and children by seeking changes in Iran's divorce and inheritance laws, she is the first Muslim woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Thousands of people have greeted Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi in extraordinary scenes at Tehran's city airport on her return to the Iranian capital. Human rights groups and non-governmental organisations, swelled by crowds of local people, gathered at the city airport to give her a hero's welcome. The human rights activist, who has already used her elevated profile to urge the Iranian Government to allow greater freedom of speech, called for political prisoners to be released as she stepped off the plane.

Iran's President Mohammad Khatami has urged Mrs Ebadi, the country's first Nobel Peace Prize winner, to use her award for the good of Iran and world peace. He has also played down the significance of the award, saying it was "not very important" and was awarded on the basis of "totally political criteria".

Mrs Ebadi, 56, was said to be visibly emotional as she returned from a short trip to France, where she heard news of her award on Friday. "My message for Iranians is a message of love, friendship, peace and justice", she said. "This prize is not only for me, but for all those in favour of peace, democracy, human rights and legality. The world recognises the fight of Muslim women, and this is my political message."

Yakin Ertürk - Special Rapporteur Violence Against Women

Ms Yakin Ertürk (Turkey) has been appointed as Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Ms Ertürk is Chair of the Gender and Women's Study Programme at the Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

Previously Ms Ertürk was Director of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), New York, 1999 - 2001 and Director of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Santo Domingo, 1997-1999.

Morocco's King Grants More Rights to Women

Morocco's king, Muhammed VI, announced plans granting women more rights in marriage and divorce. According to the Associated Press, these reforms would "place families under the joint

responsibility of both spouses". The king called for a raise in the legal marriage age from 15 to 18 and the expansion of women's rights to file for divorce. The king's plan will also make polygamy nearly impossible, reports the Guardian. Copied from Femina News <http://www.femina.com/>

Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life 2003

On Wednesday 15 October 2003 at a special ceremony in Geneva moderated by Elly Pradervand, Executive Director of Women's World Summit Foundation, and Ilse Moser, WWSF-Prize Program Co-ordinator, five women laureates were honoured for their contributions to sustainable development, household food security and peace : Betty Makoni (Zimbabwe) for her work on behalf of children's rights in the village of hope; Marta Benavides (El Salvador) for her work in creating a culture of peace; Byatshandaa Jargal (Mongolia) for her efforts to combat malnutrition; Theresa Secord Hoffman (USA) for her work to revive native Indian basketry; and the Association of Austrian Mountain Farmers, for their presentation of a cabaret on rural development. The 5 Laureates were selected from amongst 33 Prize winners in 2003. See also: <http://www.woman.ch/women/1-award.asp>

Awards to Anne Walker

Following her return home to Australia in December 2002, IWTC's former Executive Director Dr. Anne S. Walker has received a Human Rights Award from the Australian Commission for Overseas Aid and the Helen Leonard Award for Service to the Women's Movement from Women's Electoral Lobby Victoria.

Anne began her advocacy activities on behalf of women's human rights with the YWCA in Fiji during the 1960s. In 1976, on completion of a doctorate in education and in anticipation of returning to the South Pacific to continue her work there, Anne was invited to New York to assess the possibility of establishing a follow-up to the 1975 International Women's Year World Conference and parallel NGO gathering, the IWY Tribune. The one-week consultancy transformed into a 27-year career as Executive Director of the International Women's Tribune Centre. In addition to her responsibilities with IWTC, Anne has served on the Board of numerous organizations. More on: http://www.acfoa.asn.au/publications&media/2003_releases/Anne%20Walker_Sep03.htm>

Africa Prize for Leadership.

Two outstanding African women leaders have been awarded the 2003 Africa Prize for Leadership. This annual award of The Hunger Project recognises the "vital importance of emerging women's leadership for a new future for Africa".

The two women are Meaza Asenafi of Ethiopia and Sara Longwe of Zambia. Meaza Ashenafi drafted the articles of the new Ethiopian Constitution on the rights of women and children and, in 1995, established the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), which has handled literally thousands of court cases, many involving violence against women, women's education and women's political participation. Among its many other activities, EWLA broadcasts twice a week on women's issues and policy reform.

Sarah Longwe, the six-year chair of FEMNET, the African Women's Development and Communications Network, has spearheaded the use of international human rights laws in Zambia's domestic courts and became a prime mover of her country's ratification of CEDAW during the early 1980s as a founding member of the Zambia Association for Research and Development.

For further information, see: <http://www.thp.org/prize/03/index.html>

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter was ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and by a majority of other signatories. United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 October each year.

All the news about the UN General Assembly on website <http://www.un.org/ga/58/>

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), 48th session

New York, 1 - 12 March 2004, United Nations Headquarters, USA, UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW).

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will hold its forty-eighth session, tentatively scheduled to take place during the first two weeks of March 2004, at New York Headquarters. The Commission will focus on two thematic issues as outlined in its multi-year programme of work:

- (1) the role of men and boys in gender equality;
- (2) women's equal participation in conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building.

Website: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/48sess.htm>

Address: DAW, DC2, UN, New York, NY 10017, USA. Email: <daw@un.org>. Fax: (212) 963-3463

**Expert Group Meeting on: "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality"
Brazil, 21 to 24 October 2003**

The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) is organising, in co-operation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), an Expert Group Meeting on "the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" which will take place in Brasilia, Brazil from 21 to 24 October 2003. The Expert Group Meeting will form part of the Division's preparation for the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which will address this topic as one of its thematic issues.

Please see <http://www.unhchr.ch/women/focus-violence.html>

UN, Third Committee, CEDAW

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) met on the 15th of October 2003 to begin consideration of items related to the status and advancement of women. The Committee has before it reports addressing a number of issues, including discrimination against women, the situation of women in rural areas, the effects of traditional practices on the health of women and girls, violence against women migrant workers, and the status of women in the United Nations system.

A report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (document A/58/341) states that, as of 31 July 2003, 174 States parties had ratified, acceded or succeeded to the Convention, of which 62 had acceded to it and seven had succeeded to it. The most recent States to ratify or accede to the Convention were Afghanistan, Syria, East Timor, Sao Tome and Principe.

The report further states that, as of 31 July 2003, 75 States had signed the Optional Protocol and 54 had ratified or acceded to it. This represents an increase of 11 ratifications since the submission of the last report.

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

For further information on the role of Civil Society in plans and preparations see:

<http://www.geneva2003.org/> Site set up by Civil Society

<http://www.crisinfo.org> Site of the NGO Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS),

<http://www.genderit.org> Site set up by the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group

<http://www.genderwsis.org> Site of the multi-stakeholder WSIS Gender Caucus

<http://www.wsis.org> Official site for WSIS

<http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/gender/GenderWSIS> ITU website for ensuring gender issues are incorporated into WSIS.

International Women's Tribune Centre, December 10-13, 2003 in Geneva, <http://www.iwtc.org>

WORLD NEWS AND COMMENTS

Some 38 countries are facing serious food shortages

15 October – Some 38 countries worldwide are facing "serious food shortages" the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported today. In a survey released in Rome, FAO said 23 of the 38 countries are in Africa, 8 in Asia, 5 in Latin America and 2 in Europe. The figures duplicate the statistics released in August as part of the FAO's periodical review of food shortages.

Although the weather for planting and harvesting has improved in several areas, the report said, the problems of shortages are being compounded by wars, civil strife, and HIV/AIDS.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=8593&Cr=hiv&Cr1=aids>

Lowering Annual Costs on AIDS

24 October – United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan today welcomed an agreement between former President Bill Clinton's foundation and four pharmaceutical companies in developing countries to halve the price of anti-retroviral drugs used to treat HIV/AIDS and he said he hoped other drug [manufacturers](#) would follow suit.

According to the Clinton Foundation, the four manufacturers in the agreement are Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Ltd. of Johannesburg, South Africa, Cipla Ltd. of Mumbai, India, Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd. of Delhi, India, and Matrix Laboratories of Hyderabad, India. **The annual cost of drugs for each infected person is expected to fall to as little as \$140.**

Mr. Annan said he trusted that a synergy would be created between the initiative launched by the Clinton Foundation and such efforts as President Bush's Emergency AIDS Plan, the project by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNAIDS to treat 3 million people by 2005 and the work of a public-private partnership called the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

Dr. Charlie Gilks of WHO's anti-retroviral team said, "Treatment with anti-retrovirals works for everyone – rich and poor. Now the poor urgently need access to these drugs. We are determined to simplify treatments and to ensure that affordable, quality drugs reach those in need as quickly as possible". See website <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sgsm8962.doc.htm>

South Africa – Gender and Media

Research on gender and media in 12 South African countries has proven that women are not fairly represented - women NGOs have made an action plan to change that!

The new South African Gender and Media Network (SAGEM) has mounted a wide-ranging action plan for achieving gender balance in the media. The network consists of over twenty organisations that are involved in media training, analysis and advocacy as well as several gender-related NGOs.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) that advocates freedom of expression in the region and Gender Links, a southern African NGO that promotes gender equality in and through the media and the Media Monitoring Project conducted the South African study. This forms part of a broader study covering twelve countries in Southern Africa.

See <http://genderlinks.org.za/whatsnew/aug-sagem-new-plan.html> and <http://genderlinks.org.za>

Comments

** Beauty contestant, sex worker, homemaker. Those are the only subjects for which women serve as the dominant authorities in southern African newspapers. Two groups are trying to change that and to ensure more respect for women in news coverage. Read more on <http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/1525>*

** Read also the article in IWNews by Helene Sackstein, telling about words that can kill. The term "child sex worker" seems to give a sense of legitimacy to a criminal offence.
Sent to us by IAW member Tinne Stubbe*

European Union - Report on "Equality, Diversity and Enlargement"

In 2000 the Council adopted two Directives to combat discrimination on the basis of Article 13 of the Treaty. The deadline for transposition into national law for the Directive on equal treatment irrespective of race or ethnic origin was 19 July 2003; for equal treatment in employment and occupation (covering religion, belief, age, disability, sexual orientation) it is 2 December 2003 (and the possibility of extending that deadline to 2006 for the provisions on age and disability). Candidates must transpose the directives before the accession date of 1 May 2004.

Website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/prog/studies_en.htm

Muslim and Non-Muslim countries - gaps in Literacy and Gender Ratio

A wide gap in literacy between the sexes (which invariably favours males) tends to keep women out of public life and politics. The consequences for democracy are momentous. Social and political psychologists have found that women are on the whole better at building consensus, less

comfortable with hierarchy and inequality in social relations, and more averse to extremism and violence in politics. The marginalisation of women, whether in the neighbourhood or in elective politics, means fewer anti-authoritarian voices. The average literacy gap between the sexes in non-Muslim countries is about 7%; in Muslim countries it is 17 %.

And things seem no better in countries with secular regimes than in those where religion is mandated. The gender literacy gap is 20 % in Iraq, 23 in Egypt and 28 in Syria. The gap in the more religiously repressive nations of Iran and Saudi Arabia is 15 % . Outside the Muslim world, differences of 15 % or more are rare. In El Salvador, the gap is 5%, in Thailand 3% and in South Africa 1%.

And then there's the ratio of men to women. In non-Muslim countries, the ratio is 98 to 100. In Muslim nations, sex ratios are dramatically imbalanced. The average number of males per 100 females is about 103. In some countries, like Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the ratio is even higher. A ratio in excess of 102 males to 100 females is a red flag: It usually reflects inferior nutrition and health care for girls and women and can point to an extensive practice of sex-selective abortion or infanticide.

By Steven Fish, associate professor of political science at UC Berkeley 2003. Read the whole article <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-op-fish12oct12,1,1472082,print.story>

Sent in by IAW member Anjana Basu

Handbook on “Selected practical recommendations for contraceptive use”

A recent comprehensive WHO publication for health personnel and all those involved in family planning services, ISBN 92 4 154566 6. The handbook is the outcome of collaboration of the department and a large number of international institutions and organisations acting in the field of politics and programmes for family planning.

Also available in French, title: " Une sélection de recommandations pratiques relatives à l'utilisation de méthodes contraceptives", ISBN 92 4 254566 X. A limited number of copies are available free of charge to developing countries, on special request, from the WHO Reproductive Health Documentation Centre, fax +41 22 791 4189. Also available from the web site of the Department of Reproductive Health and Research, www.who.int/reproductive-health.

From Gudrun Haupter, Convenor of the IAW Health Commission.

INTERESTING WEBSITES

Conflict Prevention - dealing with Scarcity and Violent Conflict

This is the beginning of an introduction by Leif Ohlsson from the Department of Peace and Development Research University of Göteborg

“First, I will argue that livelihoods, loss of livelihoods, and the inability to provide a sufficient amount of livelihood opportunities is, on the one hand,

i) somewhat of a missing link in conflict analyses; and, on the other hand,

ii) that this is strange, since it is a widely accepted fact that creating and safeguarding livelihoods is paramount for conflict prevention.”

Read more on http://www.padrigu.gu.se/ohlsson/files/Livelihoods_Haag.html

Sent to us by IAW member Tinne Stubbe

"TFF - getting to Peace with realism and passion."

Welcome to "TFF PeaceBrowser" , Sweden on <http://www.transnational.org>

Several sections about TFF - a website, but also a leading think-tank...All materials about Iraq in one place...FINDS and OFFERS to your left, THEMES, NEWS and TFF stuff to you right... Welcome!

From IAW member Heide Schutz

USA - [www://moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)

MoveOn is working to bring ordinary people back into politics. With a system that today revolves around big money and big media, most citizens are left out. When it becomes clear that our "representatives" don't represent the public, the foundations of democracy are in peril. MoveOn is a catalyst for a new kind of grassroots involvement, supporting busy but concerned citizens in finding their political voice. Our international network of more than 2,000,000 online activists is one of the most effective and responsive outlets for democratic participation available today.

ONLINEWOMEN Bulletin

This bulletin highlights Asia Pacific women's involvement in politics, governance, decision-making and transformative leadership. You will also find summaries of the data and information we have recently uploaded in our website <http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org> plus announcements of events and other women-focused news stories from around the world. If you do not have full internet access please contact: onlinewomeninpolitics@capwip.org and we will provide you with copies of the documents you want in TXT or MSWord format.

From OnLine Women, November 04, 2003

Note: to avoid misunderstanding, we always send the IAW Newsletter:

1) in the body of the e-mail, and 2) as an attachment, saved in Word 6.0/95. 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.

Contacts

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