

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER –November 2004, nr. 8



Equal Rights

Dear IAW members,

In this newsletter you will find the input of four of the seven IAW commissions: CEDAW – Health – Environment and, as an attachment, Violence and Trafficking. They are all well worth reading. But let's start first with IAW's 8th Commission: the revival of the IAW Commission on Peace! Please join the online discussion on the Platform for Action of Beijing + 10. It is a preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women in February/March 2005. It is meant for women worldwide. As usual you will find interesting reports, events and URLs of websites at the end of this newsletter.

IAW COMMISSIONS

Revival of the IAW Commission on Peace

at the IAW Congress in Berlin/Freiburg 2004

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OPEN FORUM, BERLIN

Before the debate on Women & War took place at the Open Forum during the IAW Centenary in Berlin, September 2004, we prepared some notes asking that this debate be widened to include a whole range of issues dealing with democracy, social & economic justice, governance, peacekeeping, international law and the United Nations. We are, therefore, very pleased that one of the outcomes of the 2004 Congress is that the IAW Commission on Peace has been revived. The Centenary gave us the opportunity to revisit the work of the various Peace Commissions. Throughout the first fifty years of IAW's existence, its Peace Commissions advised the IAW Board and identified IAW to the rest of the women's movement as an anti-war movement (from 1914 up to the end of WWII). The Second World War - the first to use an Atomic Bomb - was to be "the war to end all wars". This, as we all know did not happen. Wars of independence, civil wars joined now by pre-emptive wars have continued non-stop.

Campaigning!

Now, in 2004, we must not only mount a campaign against nuclear war but also a campaign against pre-emptive war. War is all around us. What we hear on the radio, read in the media, see on TV are tales and scenes of war and conflict. Warmongering in a time in which there is much talk of "peacekeeping". There is an urgent need for a Women's democratic vision for Peace, based upon social and economic justice. We would like to offer our congratulations to the participants of the Open Forum for their recommendation to revive the IAW Peace Commission. In support of the Peace Commission, we hope in the near future to organise a Peace, Social & Economic Justice Seminar in the Mediterranean Region.

Sent to us by IAW Board member Bettina Corke

IAW Commission on Peace: Convenor: Heide Schütz

IAW CEDAW Commission –

Report to IAW Congress in Berlin/Freiburg 2004 on activities since the 2003 Board Meeting.

At the Board meeting in Santo Domingo (2003) I distributed some new material on CEDAW, the most important new publication being "*The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol – Handbook for Parliamentarians*", published by the UN. As Convenor of the CEDAW Commission I paid special attention to our affiliates from Germany and Kuwait as their countries were due to turn in country reports to the CEDAW Committee. Material on how to write shadow reports etc was handed out to representatives from countries whose country reports were going to come up for examination by the CEDAW Committee at its next sessions.

As part of our activities in the Commission we have sent letters to affiliates in The Dominican Republic, Bangladesh and again, Germany, drawing attention to the fact that their country reports were available on the UN website: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/> and that it was time to produce a shadow report. We have had no response except from one affiliate who passed on our information to their international co-ordinator.

SKILLS for using the CEDAW Convention as an NGO

The Commission on CEDAW sees it as our most important job to help the affiliates of the IAW work with CEDAW as an instrument in the efforts of NGOs to promote women's issues. In co-operation with the Danish Women's Society we therefore offer to organise seminars on

Contact us

This offer has been published in the newsletter and a note been made in IWN. The offer still stands, so if any of our member organisations are interested, please contact us: lene.pind@galnet.dk

The IAW Commission on CEDAW very much urges affiliates and associates of the IAW to explore the possibilities of the CEDAW Convention as a national instrument, a very important instrument to be used in all countries that have ratified the Convention for the advancement of women. We are prepared to assist you in any way we can.

September 2004, Leslie Larsen, Pernille Bischoff, Lene Pind – Convenor

IAW COMMISSION ON HEALTH 2002-2004

Report to IAW Congress in Berlin/Freiburg 2004

Attendance of WHO meetings

- Committee Meeting of the African Region 2002, Harare, Zimbabwe: Josephine B. Matare (report available)
- Committee Meeting of the Western Pacific Region 2002, Kyoto, Japan: Sachiko Okumura (report available)
- WHO Executive board meetings January 03, Hélène Sackstein; January 2004 Mala Pal, H. Sackstein
- World Health G.A. (World Health Assembly 2003 and 2004: H. Sackstein, M. Pal, G. Haupter.

Statements

Several statements were presented and distributed during the period 2002-2004 by IAW itself or together with other NGOs. Facilitating NGO statements and collecting reports on the *Joint Programme of Work with WHO* is crucial for keeping our status at WHO.

On Global Funding 2002

For the IAW Congress in 2002 the Commission prepared a resolution on 'The 10/90 Gap'. Less than 10 % of current global funding for health research is spent on diseases that afflict more than 90 % of the population, including the world's poor and in particular, the world's women. We also prepared suggestions on how national NGOs can work with the two IAW resolutions accepted at the IAW Board meeting in Colombo, 2002.

On Tobacco - 2003

The WHO Frame Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the Tobacco-free Initiative (TFI): Commission member Soon-Young Yoon chaired a panel on "Masculinity, Femininity and *Tobacco Use*", in Geneva, February 2003.

For the CEDAW-sessions in January and July 2004 Soon-Young Yoon prepared a shadow report on 'Women and Tobacco'. The Commission asked countries which have been reviewed by the CEDAW Committee to follow the issue up with their government and relevant groups. January: Germany and Kuwait; July Bangladesh and the Dominican Republic.

Child's Right to Health - 2003

As co-convenor of the Geneva Subgroup on 'The child's right to health' founded in 2003, Hélène Sackstein, responsible for adolescents, has established contacts with the relevant WHO department and other UN agencies inter alia to emphasize the rights-based approach and the gender dimension of the issue. In the name of IAW and on behalf of a broad network of concerned NGOs she also organised a

panel discussion during the Commission on Human Rights in March 2004, in order to mainstream health issues beyond WHO and raise consciousness about the potentially negative impact of the privatisation of health services on women, children and minorities. The recommendations at the end of the discussion will be followed up.

On the 57th World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, 17 to 22 May 2004

where IAW was represented by Gudrun Haupter, Mala Pal and H el ene Sackstein.

HIV/AIDS

This year's World Health Report with the bold motto "*Changing History*" refers to very energetic efforts and new approaches implemented by WHO, UNAIDS and partners through a comprehensive HIV/AIDS strategy to reverse the current trend of fast rising HIV infection rates and deaths from AIDS in numerous countries. Of particular worry are the rates of newly infected women as well as their age of infection (12 years and earlier) in many of the most affected African countries.

We attended 2 NGO events on WHO's initiative. Discussion points were *inter alia*: What is needed to make the goal of having 3 Million AIDS patients on anti-retroviral treatment by 2005? What is already being done since the start of the initiative in 2002? How is the truly Herculean task which links prevention, treatment, care and support for those living with the virus, supported by civil society including NGOs? A resolution on Comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS was adopted by the WHA.

Other agenda items of particular relevance to us:

- a) Family and health (10 years after the International Year of the Family)
- b) Reproductive health (10 years after the Cairo Conference)
- c) Health systems including primary health care
- d) Health promotion and healthy lifestyles
- e) Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health
- f) WHO's Policy for relations with NGOs.

a) and b) Resolutions on Family and health and on Reproductive health were discussed together, the latter calling for adoption of a Strategy to accelerate progress towards the attainment of international development goals and targets. It has a focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to reduce maternal mortality and under-five mortality by two thirds until 2015. The world faces the challenges of 1.2 billion young people, with no reversion of the demographic trend so far in sight in a number of Sub Saharan countries.

The resolutions were adopted by consensus in spite of the well-known reservations expressed by the US. The polarisation between reproductive health and reproductive rights continues to be a problem. The statement I had prepared for IAW addressed, among other, the unfinished agenda of maternal mortality with an estimated 70 million deaths due to unsafe abortion and the need to secure the funds necessary to improve IEC and access to affordable contraception for women and men, including adolescents.

c) The NGO community was noticeably relieved that WHO and member states renewed their commitment to the Alma Ata principles. An International Conference on Primary Health Care will be held in Bangkok in 2005. PHC dispensed through efficient health systems is considered as one of the pillars of equity in health. In this context the drain of health personnel from developing countries to those offering better working conditions is a big concern. A resolution how to better cope with this situation was adopted. Another concern is the growing number of public-private partnerships and inherent dangers for the equity agenda.

In her statement, H el ene pointed out the most obvious of these dangers. She also proposed measures to ensure an equitable and ethical approach and increased access to health care beyond those recommended by the Executive board in January 04. Both our statements were co-signed by like-minded NGOs.

d) A resolution was adopted on the basis of the Conference report and the World Health Report 2002. Important components: Promotion of mental health; including harmful use of alcohol in the list of life-style related risk factors; setting-up tobacco-cessation programmes.

e) In order to make the Strategy on diet, physical activity and health endorsed by the WHA a success it is vital to combat overweight and obesity as they predispose for non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and some forms of cancer. Children and adults are targeted in both

developed and developing countries. All interventions from countries of Southern Europe referred to the benefits of the “Mediterranean diet”(olive oil) while poor countries remarked that for them malnutrition including under-nutrition and nutritional deficiencies remained a big concern. NGOs demanded *inter alia* that aggressive marketing to children, e.g. for candy bars, should be reduced and that the strategy be linked to the tobacco issue.

f) The adoption of WHO’s Policy for relations with NGOs has been put off until 2005, for reasons, which were not discussed in the Committee. The *Civil Service Initiative* (CSI) established as the official link between WHO and NGOs was very helpful in facilitating the procedure for making an oral statement, on any item of the agenda. Right at the beginning of the WHA CSI arranged a briefing where some of the most important issues were presented and discussed.

Mental health, global networking

The spiritual dimension of health including mental health and human values and how to have these dimensions duly recognized at WHO is the mission of an NGO Committee, which met during the WHA. Mala Pal plays an active role in the Committee.

At the annual meeting of the NGO Forum for Health, a “Global Network committed to partnering to make health a reality”, Hélène Sackstein was appointed to serve as a member of the Steering Committee for one year. During that period the NGO FFH will focus on the health-related MDGs and on the rights-based approach to health.

Commission on Health: Clémentine Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso; Hélène Sackstein, France; Gudrun Haupter, Germany (convenor); Sachiko Okamura, Japan; Mala Pal, Switzerland; Soon-Young Yoon, USA; Bridget B. Matare, Zimbabwe.

IAW COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT 2002 - 2004

Report to IAW Congress in Berlin/Freiburg 2004

IAW Action Programme 1999

In 1999 at the Board Meeting in New York the Action Program was extended to include Environment and Habitat because of the complex interaction between poverty, health and environmental degradation and its adverse effects on economic growth and social development. More so because women remain invisible in decision-making despite their experiences and skills in natural resource conservation and management.

Precautionary Principle

The **UNCED** (Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit from Johannesburg in 2002 <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm>), the **UN-CSD** (Commission on Sustainable Development www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm), the **UNIDO** (Fighting Poverty and Marginalization through Sustainable Industrial Development Organisations www.unido.org) and numerous other UN policies on Environment, Health and Development are valuable tools to urge Governments to implement the binding agreements they have signed.

One such tool for example is the **Precautionary Principle**, which states that:

- When an activity raises the threat of harm to human health and the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not established with absolute scientific certainty.
- A shift is needed away from demanding scientific proof of human harm. We need instead to rely on the weight of evidence that exposure to toxic substances can and has harmed human health. Our reliance on scientific certainty of harm has prevented action to reduce the incidence of cancer because most cancers are made not born.
- Industry must prove that their manufacturing process, products and disposal do no harm. Governments must hold industry accountable following the precautionary principle.

Principles put in Practice

On this information a women's group from Manila, Philippines, working towards the prevention of breast cancer, asked for support because the local authorities insist on disposing toxic chemical wastes in the mountain regions around Manila.

The globalisation of pollutants is vividly described by “Toxic Link“ India.

As consumers and producers, caretakers of their families and educators, women play an important role in promoting sustainable development. So, to conform with the Agenda ‘21 on ecological, economical and social development, the action program was further extended in 2002 at the 32nd IAW Congress in Sri Lanka.

Act locally in order to think globally

The Agenda '21 Document with its 40 Chapters and signed by 178 countries makes State Governments accountable for environmentally sustainable economic development. It also stresses the need for local governments at city, town and village level to have their own action strategy, namely the Local Agenda '21 so that all citizens can participate and take responsibility for their behaviour. In other words, act locally in order to think globally.

A small step in this direction is the car-free day every year on 22 September in European towns that have signed the "European Charter" in order to give cities and towns choked with traffic a breathing space.

Public Participation

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental matters <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/> established by the Economic Commission for Europe gives ground for encouragement, if not optimism. The objective of this Convention is to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to their health and well-being and should be guaranteed the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions in this Convention.

Climate change

Women's role as environmentalists will be particularly important because of another ecological crises Climate Change. The United Nations Framework for the Convention on **Climate Change** - UNFCCC <http://unfccc.int/2860.php> held a workshop in Manila, Philippines together with UNDP, UNEP and various NGOs to investigate mechanisms to reduce air pollutants especially greenhouse gases and ozone in order to mitigate climate change. Further, Conferences in New Delhi, India and Bonn, Germany in June this year focused on renewable energies. The international trading in CO₂- Emissions in order to keep the CO₂ Emissions stable at the level of 1990 is a step in this direction.

Dirty Dozen – POPs

So-called persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are among the most dangerous of all man-made products or wastes, causing deaths, diseases and birth defects among humans and animals. The Stockholm Convention, signed in the Swedish capital in 2001, aims to ban or strictly control production, import, export, disposal and use of POPs. The 12 POPs are:

Aldrin – Chlordane – DDT – Dieldrin – Dioxins – Endrin – Furans – Heptachlor – Hexachlorobenzene (HCB) – Mirex – Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) – Toxaphene. See also <http://www.unep.org/> *Commission on Environment: Ida Kurth (convenor), Meena Pimpalapur*

ONLINE DISCUSSION - PREPARING FOR BEIJING + 10

During its forty-ninth session from 28 February to 11 March 2005 the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and of the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000). From Monday 8 November - Friday 3 December 2004, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and its website, WomenWatch, will host two simultaneous online discussions on Section I of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), women's human rights. This is part of a series of online discussions which will provide input into the review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and will focus on implementation at the national level of the Platform's critical areas of concern and other important issues. The discussions will be facilitated and moderated by members of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The discussions can be accessed at : <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/>. A summary of the discussions will be available at the CSW in February 2005 and posted on WomenWatch. Details of the two online discussions on women's human rights are as follows:

- 1) The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) will moderate online discussions focusing on the **elimination of discriminatory laws and practices**; ensuring women's effective access to justice, and enhancing women's utilization of international human rights instruments and mechanisms, among other activities. The discussions will be organized in the following manner:
 - Week 1: legislative and policy reform at the national level

- Week 2: access to justice
- Week 3: international human rights instruments and mechanisms
- Week 4: strategizing for the future

2) The United Nations fund for women (UNIFEM), will moderate online discussions focusing on **violence against women and the changing global environment**. The discussions will be organized in the following manner:

- Week 1: Responding to Emerging Challenges
- Week 2: Making Laws Work
- Week 3: Reducing Prevalence
- Week 4: Charting the Future Actions for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

CONFERENCES - REPORTS - URLS

* On the wings of a prayer: if Daud Sharifa Khanam has her way, Muslim women in Pudukottai (India) may soon have a **mosque to themselves** to worship in. Read more in an article that was mailed to us by IAW member Anjanan Basu: <http://www.telegraphindia.com/archives/archive.html>

* Follow-up to the outcome of the **Millennium Summit**: report of Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the high-level plenary meeting of the 60th session of the General Assembly (New York, September 2005). See for information: <http://www.un.org/News/oss/sg/report10-final.pdf>

* For more background information relating to the **Millennium Development Goals**, please visit the UN-NGLS MDG portal : <http://www.un-ngls.org/mdg.htm>

* As part of its global **trafficking awareness campaign**, the UNODC has joined forces with its partners in more than 45 countries to produce customized versions of its latest video spots, which target countries and victims from all stages of the trafficking process. The video spot can be viewed at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/multimedia.html

* Women remain overwhelmingly excluded from participating in **peace talks** and post-conflict reconstruction, and continue to suffer physical and sexual violence during war, Kofi Annan says in a report on women, peace and security <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/2004/814>

Note: we always send the IAW Newsletter twice: 1) in the body of the e-mail, and 2) as an attachment, so it will be easy for affiliates to copy it and send it to IAW members without e-mail. Please contact Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address.

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