

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER - October 1999



Dear IAW members,

A short letter this time with news from the IAW Congress in New York. The IAW Action Program 1999-2002 has gained in strength. It has been streamlined and a new article has been added about Environment and Habitat. A new Board was installed, consisting of 24 Board members. Among them: 15 members with an e-mail address! Future IAW meetings are: 1) in 2000 an IAW Board meeting in Israel; 2) in 2001 an International Meeting in Vienna, Austria (which incorporates a meeting of the Board); 3) in 2002 the XXXII Triennial Congress in Sri Lanka. The Danish Women's Society has invited the IAW for a European Regional Conference on: "The Implementation of the CEDAW Convention", in October 2001, Odense, Denmark. The Board recommended and Congress approved some new Affiliate and Associate organisations. Pat Richardson collected at least 25 new e-mail addresses, including members of Croatia, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. Also, an IAW website will be installed soon and its base will be Australia! In this letter you will find more Congress information including a list of IAW Board members and Commission Convenors, a follow-up of the preparation of Beijing +5 and of the fight against 'Honour Killings', some ideas of the Editorial Committee of Electronic Communication (us!) about: "networking" and last but not least: news from IAW Affiliates.

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COMMISSION CONVENORS

Civil & Political Rights

Anna-Karin Sjöstrand *

Resource Members: Horeya MEGABED, Hessa AL-SHAHEEN, Michelle COHEN, Indrani IRIYAGOLLE

Education

Kunti PAUL

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Elimination of Poverty

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Resource Member: Odette Goncet.

**All Forms of Violence/
Trafficking in Women**

Rosy WEISS *

Resource Members: Hana ELROY, Clementine OUEDRAOGO *,

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Health

Resource Members: Sachiko Okumura *, Jacqueline TAPSOBA

Environment & Habitat

Ida KURTH *

Resource Members: Prisca MOLOTSI, Meena PIMPALAPURE *, Francine HEINRICH *

**Committee on the CEDAW
Convention**

Padmini Casinader CHRISTIANSEN *

Resource Members: Kay FRALEIGH-POTTS *, Janine FROSSARD, Michelle COHEN, Lene Piwaa *

**Ad Hoc Committee on
Ageing**

Monika PLAIL (Convenor), Sigrid STADLER, Linde RÜDINGER *, Judith GORDON *, Jacqueline WOLFROM, Manel ABEYSEKERA, Ursula KELLER-KUHLMANN, Sachiko OKUMURA *

Electronic communication, networking

Have a close look at this list because every member with an asterisk * behind her name has an e-mail address.

If you are an IAW member and if you would like to contact one of the members mentioned above with an e-mail address, just sent a request to HYPERLINK mailto: <sebus.gj@inter.nl.net> and we will 'forward' the request to her, so you both can start your electronic communication.

At the moment 15 of the 24 Board members have an e-mail address and some of the others will follow soon. An electronic network of Board members is within our grasp. And: the Secretary, Priscilla Todd, will be very pleased with this because it will ease her workload.

Now this is a restricted e-mail list. The EC has to ask permission of the owner before giving others an e-mail address of the list. We (the EC) would like to ask Board members with e-mail if Priscilla can use their e-mail addresses for a restricted IAW Board list, to be used within the network of Board members only.

IAW Congress Action

Resolutions and Recommendations adopted at the XXXI IAW Congress, New York, September 1999:

* CEDAW - Congress decided to write a letter to President Clinton to seek his support for the ratification of the optional protocol to CEDAW.

* Beijing +5 - A resolution was adopted about the way the IAW will enter the debate about Beijing +5.

* Action Program 1999-2000 - The new Action Program was updated by Congress and was sent by e-mail to many of the Board members. In addition it will be printed and distributed in the first edition of International Women's News in 2000. Meanwhile, if you are a member of the IAW and you like to have a look at it now, just sent a request to HYPERLINK mailto: <sebus.gj@inter.nl.net> and we will try to e-mail it to you.

A new article - Environment and Habitat - has been added to the Action Program as follows.

ENVIRONMENT AND HABITAT

The deterioration of natural resources results in detrimental effects on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of the population at large. Women's role as environmentalists is essential because, as consumers and producers, caretakers of their families and educators, women play an important role in promoting sustainable development. Women have been natural resource managers for centuries, yet remain largely absent from decision-making and training and too often have their experience and skills marginalised.

- a) The IAW recognises the importance of the protection of the environment and threatened eco-systems for survival and asks its members to urge their governments to take immediate action at all levels to deal with the following problems:
 - pollution of air, water and soil;
 - transport and disposal of toxic and nuclear waste;
 - biopiracy;
 - land acquisition for negative development purposes;
 - noise, sight and light pollution;
 - by concentrating on programs for:
 - sustainable rural and urban development;
 - biodiversity;
 - renewable energy sources;
 - water conservation and management.

- b) The IAW urges member organisations to monitor the enforcement of treaty obligations that refer to the environment and implement the following UN instruments:
 - Agenda 21 of UNCED
 - the Beijing Platform for Action K regarding Women and Environment;
 - Habitat Agenda;
 - World Plan on Ageing regarding Housing and Environment;
 - environmental health programs of WHO.

BEIJING +5, Government Responses

As of 7 September 1999, 94 Governments and two Observer States had responded to the UN's questionnaire on implementation of the Plan of Action (PFA). Responses to the questionnaire are considered a key information component in the overall global assessment being undertaken by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). This assessment will be submitted to the Preparatory Committee in March 2000.

Governments that have not yet prepared a national plan of action (Beijing PFA paragraph 297) for implementing recommendations in the PFA are still encouraged to do so. As of June 1999, 112 Governments and one Observer State had prepared such plans and submitted them to DAW. A list of those countries can be found on-line at [HYPERLINK http://www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/national/natplans.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/national/natplans.htm) together with a useful list of summaries of national plans arranged by region/country, on [HYPERLINK http://www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/national/africum.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/national/africum.htm)

For an excellent global update of the activities of UNDP, particularly at the regional level, see the new electronic bulletin "UNDP Beijing+5".

For a copy, visit [HYPERLINK http://www.undp.org/gender/gb/bjbullet.html](http://www.undp.org/gender/gb/bjbullet.html)

REGIONAL MEETINGS FOR BEIJING +5

AFRICA, ECA

Sixth African Regional Conference on Women to assess progress in the implementation of the Beijing and African Platforms for Action, 22-27 November, 1999 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).

For details, visit [HYPERLINK www.undp.org/gender/gb/bjbullet/region_info.html#africa](http://www.undp.org/gender/gb/bjbullet/region_info.html#africa)

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, ESCAP

High-level meeting to Review the Implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action and Regional Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and PFA, 26-29 October, 1999 (Bangkok, Thailand). Themes for the working papers are: women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment, a rights-based approach to the empowerment of women, and strategies for the empowerment of women.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA, ECE

Expert Meeting at the intergovernmental level to review economic issues, problems and policies relating to women in the ECE countries, 19 - 21 January, 2000 (Geneva, Switzerland). Main areas of focus will be: (1) women and the economy; (2) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; (3) women and violence; (4) women in power and decision-making.

WESTERN ASIA, ESCWA

Arab Conference on Integrated Follow-up to Global Conferences, 27 November – 1 December, 1999 (Beirut, Lebanon).

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, ECLAC

Eighth Regional Conference, January/February 2000 (Lima, Peru). Interesting is a new publication of particular relevance to Beijing +5: "Gender Indicators for Follow-up and Evaluation of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean 1995-2001, and the Platform for Action". It is a recent publication issued by ECLAC based on their work to produce a system of indicators that can be used to follow up and evaluate regional and international agreements pertaining to women's advancement and promotion of gender equity. The publication can be obtained by contacting: Women and Development Unit, Edificio Naciones Unidas, Avenida Dag Hammarskjold, Casilla 179-D, Santiago de Chile or on line at HYPERLINK <http://www.eclac.cl/English/research/women/indicators/genderind.htm>

CEDAW

On 6 October the United Nations General Assembly approved the optional protocol to CEDAW and opened it for signature, calling on all States party to the Convention to become party to the new instrument as soon as possible.

See also HYPERLINK <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19991006.ga9628.doc.html>

By ratifying the Optional Protocol, a State would recognise the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – the body that monitors States' compliance with the Convention - to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups of individuals within its jurisdiction.

**The protocol will enter into force once 10 States parties have ratified it.
It will then enter into force for individual States parties three months
after the date of their ratification.**

Padmini Casinader Christiansen, IAW Convenor on the CEDAW Convention, writes in her report for the IAW Congress 1999 in New York: "All the organisations in the IAW are aware of the importance of the CEDAW Convention in our work in achieving equality between women and men. The Platform for Action deals very extensively with the Convention and encourages us to use this instrument in the business of lobbying Governments to implement the articles of the Convention which they have ratified".

Padmini Casinader has asked our Regional Co-ordinators and some of our European Affiliates to send her information on the implementation of the Convention. Up to now she is very pleased with answers from Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Austria, Germany and Ireland. Well, we are urging other Affiliates to join those eight!

CONGO

Padmini would also like to draw our attention to a project of Kay Fraleigh. Some IAW members of CONGO were interested in having comments on country reports and also on how far countries had implemented the CEDAW Convention. Kay has already received replies from Gudrun Haupter from Germany and Alice Marangopoulos from Greece. More replies are on their way and maybe you can send your comments too. We just received from Jessica Kehl the report of Switzerland. It is in French and comprises 12 pages!

If you are an IAW member and if you like to read it, send a request to HYPERLINK <mailto:sebus.gj@inter.nl.net>

For new IAW members: CONGO stands for NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. Kay Fraleigh and Padmini Casinader Christiansen are both representing the IAW at UN level.

HONOUR KILLINGS

On August 2 1999, the Upper House of the Pakistani Parliament rejected a resolution that would have condemned the practice of honour killings - the killing of women in the name of family honour. After several weeks of pressure from human rights activists including Asma Jahangir, Chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, the Pakistan People's Party introduced the resolution in the Senate. Though it appeared that the resolution had the support of various parties, in the end the Senate failed to pass the resolution. Human rights advocates had hoped that a Senate resolution condemning the practice of honour killing would quell such incidents and send a

message that women's human rights are to be protected in Pakistan. On Friday, August 6, 1999, a group of about 200 activists, mostly women, protested the Senate's decision outside the Parliament building in Islamabad.

Editorial Comment:

It is to be hoped that further lobbying to the new military regime in Pakistan will help to reverse these abuses.

A report of Amnesty International, the fourth of its kind in a series on the rights of women in Pakistan, is to be found at HYPERLINK <http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aipub/1999/ASA/33301899.htm>. It is also the first to look at abuses of women's rights by private actors. Here is a quotation from the report:

"Every year hundreds of women are known to die as a result of honour killings. Many more cases go unreported and almost all go unpunished. The isolation and fear of women living under such threats are compounded by state indifference to and complicity in women's oppression. Police almost invariably take the man's side in honour killings or domestic murders, and rarely prosecute the killers. Even when the men are convicted, the judiciary ensures that they usually receive a light sentence, reinforcing the view that men can kill their female relatives with virtual impunity. Specific laws hamper redress as they discriminate against women. The isolation of women is completed by the almost total absence of anywhere to hide. There are few women's shelters, and any woman attempting to travel on her own is a target for abuse by police, strangers or male relatives hunting for her. For some women suicide appears the only means of escape".

See also HYPERLINK <http://www.omct.org/> OMCT, the World Organisation Against Torture. This is the World's largest network of human rights organisations fighting against all forms of torture, cruel inhuman or degrading treatment, forced disappearances, summary execution or other more subtle forms of violent repression. OMCT has consultative status with the UN, The ILO and the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights.

IAW Affiliates, Egypt

Reading through the reports the Affiliates have presented at Congress, we discovered some unexpected 'jewels' of information. The content of these reports is certainly enough to fill several newsletters. For the moment we like to highlight one country.

Egypt has sent in two reports. The first one gives us a review in 15 points of the current situation. We will quote the first five points, so you can get an impression.

1. The new draft of the Egyptian Family Law is now in parliament with a few important changes in favour of the wife.
 - i. Special courts are to be established for all matters concerning marriage, family disputes, divorce, child custody, alimony etc. to shorten court procedures to a period of 6 months to a maximum of one year.
 - ii. The judge will grant the wife her divorce immediately if she gives up her legal rights (khola' in Islam).
 - iii. The district attorney will facilitate the court procedures by undertaking the preparation of the case. (Article 16 CEDAW).
2. UNICEF is undertaking a big awareness project where members of local councils in Egypt will receive a training course to be gender oriented.
3. Although Egyptian women are still not judges, the first woman in Egypt to be appointed head of the Administrative Prosecution is Hind Tantawy.
4. Five Egyptian women lawyers were chosen by the Minister of Justice to become international arbitrators.
5. On March 16, 1999, Women's Day was celebrated at the Opera House in Cairo this year. The Minister of Social Affairs, Mrs. Talawy, for the first time supported the Quota System of representation of women in parliament and local councils. She also encouraged women organisations and female lawyers in Egypt to work to regain their allocated seats in parliament, which were abolished in 1984.

The second report is called: Urban poor women at Mokattam's Al Hadaba Al Wosta. It is a study conducted by the Ford Foundation. It is a tale of two ghettos, Al Hadaba Al Wosta, a state-sponsored creation of the 90's and Garbage City, which has, with the help of NGOs, turning what is still regarded as one of the most degrading forms of employment –garbage collecting- into an interdisciplinary industry providing a livelihood for all concerned. This report is very different from the first one, both have the women's movement at heart and both are good to read.

International Women's University "Technology and Culture", Germany

Surfing on the net, we got interested in the website of the International Women's University (ifu) in Germany. They offer 900 female students from all over the world the opportunity to participate in a post graduate research and study program in English. Deadline: November 30, 1999. Applicants who are not native English speakers must hand in certain certificates.

The ifu is a serious project in conjunction with 6 fully accredited and internationally renowned German Research Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences. The ifu is probably the first and, so far, the only gender-specific university of its kind in Europe. Many of the subject-matters deserve the label feminist and the instructors come from all corners of the world.

See HYPERLINK <http://www.Int-Frauenuni.de>

Attachments

Most of the time we sent the Newsletter twice, in the **body of the e-mail** and also as an attachment, for example as a Word document. The reason is: we can give a Word document a better lay-out, which makes it a) easy to read and b) also easy to copy it for other IAW members who don't have e-mail. The attachment of the October Newsletter is saved in Word 6.0/95.

Some time ago the EC received an article written by Pat Nichol, Canada, called: "Stamping out Violence". We are sending it to you as an attachment. As a kind of TEST we will save the article in two ways: in Word 6.0/95 and also in RTF. Please try to open it.

NB: We invite you to redistribute this Newsletter to IAW members without an e-mail address. Also, please advise us if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address, and in that case: please be so kind to contact Pat Richardson.

International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

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