

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER October, no. 10



Equal Rights

Dear members,

Several important conferences are being prepared for November/December.

IAW will be represented at the Climate Change Global Alliance by Soon Young Yoon and we hope that Mmabatho Ramagoshi can represent IAW at the AWID Conference in Cape Town.

The Doha Global Civil Society Forum in Qatar will be a serious one in this time of financial crisis.

There is good news about maternity leave in the EU and UNIFEM is busy campaigning against violence. There is sad news on trafficking of women and children across the borders of India. Sad news too on the arms trade, and its effect on the MDGs, in particular in Africa.

You will find many 'Events, Conferences and Reports' at the end of this newsletter.

IAW Board Meeting 2008

Dutch affiliate, Vrouwenbelangen, under the leadership of Lyda Verstegen, organised a smooth running and enjoyable time in the Netherlands. The two days of Board meeting were informative and constructive with the emphasis firmly on strengthening the work of the IAW at all levels – national, regional and international; broadening collaborative efforts with other organisations and becoming more visible in order to have greater impact on the issues facing women throughout the world. Plans for the International Meeting in Switzerland (June 2009) and Congress in South Africa (November 2010) were discussed.

A symposium on Human Rights Education held at the Peace Palace provided some thought provoking information and interesting discussion. We were given receptions by The Mayor of The Hague at City Hall and the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Aletta Jacobs Room at Parliament. The IIAV in Amsterdam, which holds IAW archives, warmly welcomed us, the Director and the Archivist gave us a lot of information as well as a tour of the Library. Finally we participated in a workshop on fund raising with Mama Cash.

UNITED NATIONS

Security Council - Membership in 2008

The Council is composed of five permanent members — [China](#), [France](#), [Russian Federation](#), [the United Kingdom](#) and [the United States](#) — and ten non-permanent members (with year of term's end)

The General Assembly elected **Austria, Japan, Mexico, Turkey and Uganda** to serve as non-permanent members of the Security Council for two-year terms, starting on 1 January 2009.

The newly elected countries will replace Belgium, Indonesia, Italy, Panama and South Africa.

UNIFEM - Stand Up Campaign - to end poverty and inequality

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been asking supporters around the world to sign an online petition between 17 October 2008 00:00 EDT and 19 October 2008 23:59 EDT, calling on world leaders to empower the women that power the global economy.

This is part of the [Stand Up](#) global mobilization to end poverty and inequality and for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Last year, 43.7 million people joined Stand Up worldwide, setting a new world record.

This year, UNIFEM has been asking people to Stand Up and Take Action on 17–19 October 2008, to ensure governments worldwide hear our demands to end poverty and inequality.

116 million people - a Guinness record

More than 116 million people – nearly two percent of the world population – mobilized at events in 131 countries on October 17-19 as part of “Stand Up and Take Action.”

The mobilization, which was ratified by Guinness as breaking the world record for the biggest mass mobilization on a single issue, sends a clear message to world leaders that citizens will not stay seated while promises to end poverty remain unfulfilled. At least 5 million additional people – many in Africa and Latin America -- Stood Up at events not submitted before the Guinness deadline.

More on: http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/stand_up_2008/

General Assembly President sets up task force to review global financial system

21 October 2008 – The President of the General Assembly has announced he is setting up a high-level task force to review the global financial system, including major bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in response to the current turmoil that is affecting all countries, large and small.

Miguel D'Escoto has appointed Economics Nobel Laureate and Professor, Joseph Stiglitz, to chair the panel, which will also suggest steps to be taken by Member States “to secure a more stable global economic order,” according to a news release.

The composition and terms of reference of the task force will be announced soon after the holding of the Assembly’s special meeting on global financial crisis, scheduled for 30 October at UN Headquarters.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28643&Cr=financial%20crisis&Cr1=>

TRAFFICKING - WILL IT NEVER END?

10,000 children trafficked into NE annually from Bangladesh, Nepal

SHILLONG: Not less than 10,000 people, mostly children, are trafficked into the Northeast with a good number smuggled in from Bangladesh, Nepal and other South East Asian countries, surveys by NGOs reveal.

Most of those trafficked are then engaged as cheap labour in coal mines of Meghalaya, tea gardens in Assam and prostitution.

NGOs are trying to help

"The region, besides being a transit point of human trafficking, has also emerged as a destination point. We have rescued a number of children hailing from Nepal and Bangladesh in Assam and Meghalaya who were trafficked and to work as cheap labour," says Hasina Kharbhii, Team Leader of Impulse NGO. "Cross border trafficking is very much relevant in NE, with the region sharing borders with five countries. Some large international trafficking gangs are operation in the region," she says.

Children should be repatriated home

While trafficked children are often booked under the Illegal Migration Act, Impulse feels the Juvenile Justice Act or the proposals of the SAARC Convention on Trafficking could be applied to repatriate the victims to their homes, the NGOs say. Many of these children are trafficked in connivance with their parents.

Prostitution

It is estimated that Nepalese children constitute 20 per cent (40,000) of the estimated 200,000 Nepalese prostitutes in India. "It is estimated that some 6,000 to 10,000 girls are trafficked annually from Nepal to Indian brothels and a similar number are trafficked from Bangladesh. 27,000 Bangladeshi women and children have been forced into prostitution in Indian brothels," a Childline India Foundation report says.

The average age of girls trafficked from Bangladesh and Nepal into India has fallen over the past decade from 16-18 to 10-15 years.

19 Sep 2008 on http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/10000_children_trafficked_into_N-East/articleshow/3501668.cms

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

Convenor of the IAW Commission against Violence: Mmabatho Ramagoshi

GENDER EQUALITY WORLDWIDE

The United Nations Climate Change Conference

The Conference in Poznań, Poland, 1-12 December 2008, provides the opportunity to draw together the advances made in 2008 and move from discussion to negotiation mode in 2009.

The outcome at Poznań can build momentum towards an agreed outcome at Copenhagen, Denmark. In Poznań, parties are expected to:

- * Agree on a plan of action and programmes of work for the final year of negotiations.
- * Make significant progress on a number of ongoing issues required to enhance further the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, etc. etc.

On website http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php

A gender perspective - the Climate Change Global Alliance

IAW has joined the Climate Change Global Alliance (CCGA), and will be represented by Soon Young Yoon. The Alliance joins all UN agencies (UNEP, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, etc.) with the IUCN and the Heinrich Boll Foundation for a UN-NGO coalition on Climate Change.

The focus of her involvement will be to ensure that a gender perspective is included in the next Climate Change protocol due to be negotiated in Poland in December, 2008 and in Denmark, end 2009. The CCGA is preparing the following items:

- * Recommendations of government delegates to participate in orientation at COP-14
- * Institutional materials on gender and climate change for GGCA exhibit at COP-14 and other international meetings
- * Recommendations or self-nominations of women leaders who could represent the GGCA at COP-14
- * Edits on UNFCCC language suggestion documents
- * Participant or speaker suggestions for finance workshop
- * Suggestions of other institutions to invite as GGCA members.

The CCGA will have **monthly teleconferences** to discuss specific activities and to suggest agenda items. Notes will be distributed after every call.

Next teleconference is Tuesday, November 4th at 10am New York time, and for those members who are in New York around the finance workshop there will be a GGCA meeting on November 21st at UNDP.

A workshop will be led by WEDO and GGCA-AWID plenary on gender and climate change, in the AWID Forum in Capetown in November.

IAW representative Soon Young Yoon writes: this will be an exciting area of work for us!

Editors: an excellent programme - we wish you all the best!

AWID - Association for Women's Rights in Development

From November 14-17, 2008 up to 1,500 women's rights leaders and activists from around the world will converge on **Cape Town, South Africa** at the [11th AWID International Forum](#) to discuss the power of movements.

On: <http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/11th-International-Forum-on-Women-s-Rights-and-Development>

Australia - 2 Day Gender Analysis Workshops on gender analysis and gender budgeting. Perth, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart and Alice Springs, November - December 2008.

On: <http://www.awid.org/eng/Women-in-Action/Events-around-the-world/Workshops>

Treaty to empower women - Government plans midday meals to keep girls in school

India, Brazil and South Africa are set to join hands to battle discrimination against women.

The countries — the bloc is known as Ibsa — are scheduled to sign a memorandum of understanding for co-operation on gender equality at the end of a two-day conference that started here today.

Last October, the three countries had set up an Ibsa women's forum — an idea backed by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, sources said.

More on: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1081014/jsp/nation/story_9965123.jsp

Sent to us by IAW Member Anjana Basu

EWL - New Maternity Leave Directive - EU

European Women's Lobby (EWL) calls for 24 weeks Paid Maternity Leave for **all women** in the European Union. The European Women's Lobby (EWL) welcomes the Commission's proposal to amend the current European Directive on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

Paid maternity leave for 24 weeks

The EWL is calling for up to 24 weeks paid maternity leave which would reflect a more accurate average of practices currently in place. Together with its member organisations, the EWL will seek to extend the number of weeks up to 24 in the process starting today, that will lead to the adoption of the amended Directive.

Sentenced for downloading a website on women's rights

In October 2007 Parwez Kambaksh downloaded a website on women's rights and it was said to be blasphemy. He was arrested, tried and convicted by a religious court to the death sentence, in what his friends and family say was a secret session without being allowed legal representation.

In January 2008 Afghanistan's President, Hamid Karzai, has been inundated with appeals to save the life of Parwez Kambaksh.

The United Nations, human rights groups, journalists' organisations and diplomats urged Mr Karzai's government to quash the death sentence and release him. Hundreds of people marched through the capital, Kabul, demanding Mr Kambaksh's release.

IAW President Rosy Weiss too urged her members to sign a petition of The Independent to save Kambaksh life.

This month the death sentence has been changed in 20 years of prison. Kambaksh (24) does not accept the judgement of the three judges. He says the sentence is 'unfair'.

NRC Handelsblad October the 22nd.

Ban concerned by treatment of women, juvenile executions in Iran

20 October 2008 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed his concern over the rights of women and minorities in Iran, as well as over the death penalty, including juvenile executions and stoning, in a new [report](#) to the General Assembly on the country's human rights situation.

Mr. Ban noted that though the Middle East nation has made strides in boosting women's education and health, along with progress in reviewing discriminatory laws, it "is faced with a number of challenges in gender equity and equality and empowerment of women".

He pointed to the limited employment outside of the agricultural sector for women and to "widespread" gender-based violence. Further, stepped-up crackdowns against the women's rights movement in Iran is also cause for concern.

Religious minorities

The country's constitution explicitly states Islam to be the State religion, but includes provisions for religious minorities.

The Secretary-General said that there continue to be reports of members of the Baha'i community facing arbitrary detention, false imprisonment, confiscation and destruction of property, denial of employment and Government benefits and denial of access to higher education.

More on: <http://www.un.org/ga/news/news.asp?NewsID=28639&Cr=iran&Cr1=>

THE ARMS TRADE

Unchecked Arms Trade is Fuelling Conflict, Poverty

With 1.3 trillion dollars spent every year on the world's militaries, countries enmeshed in conflict are often flooded by weapons which are then turned against helpless civilian populations, say human rights organisations pushing for an international treaty to closely regulate arms sales.

Mopping up the floor with the tap open

The U.N. peacekeeping force's former commander in the Democratic Republic of Congo, General Patrick Cammaert, saw firsthand the futility of disarmament without controlling the supply of arms at the same time. "You had the feeling," he said last year, "that you were mopping up the floor when the tap was open. One moment you disarm a group, and then a week later the same group has fresh arms and ammunition."

Oxfam - arms transfers undermine achieving the MDGs

A new report by Oxfam International reveals how irresponsible arms transfers undermine many developing countries' chances of achieving their development goals. Either these transfers are draining the governments' resources or fuelling armed conflict, or both.

The international arms trade is also considered to be one of the three most corrupt businesses in the world, according to Transparency International, the leading global organisation monitoring corruption.

"What is clear is that if you want to achieve the development goals, with poverty reduction, improved health care and education, you need to control arms transfers," said Katherine Nightingale, author of the Oxfam report.

Arms Trade Treaty

At least 22 of the 34 countries least likely to achieve the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals are in the midst of, or emerging from conflict, according to U.N. statistics.

Oxfam notes that between 1990 and 2005, 23 African countries together lost an estimated 284 billion dollars as a result of armed conflicts, fuelled by transfers of ammunition and arms -- 95 percent of which came from outside Africa.

According to the Oxfam report, a comprehensive and effective international arms trade treaty must be agreed to ensure more responsibility and transparency.

Existing international initiatives like the Geneva Declaration to address armed violence are simply insufficient, it says.

"In parts of Africa there are strong regional agreements. But this is not enough. Arms trade is a global industry. International regulations are far behind.

Arms Trade Treaty at the UN

Worldwide support for a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was reflected when 153 states voted in favour during the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006. And later this month, U.N. member states will meet again to consider further steps to move towards negotiations on an ATT.

Blocking - delaying - watering down

In the run-up to these discussions, a few states, including China, India, Egypt, Pakistan, Russia and the United States, have been attempting to block, delay and water down proposals, advocates say.

This could kill the treaty before real negotiations even begin and allow continued unchecked trade in arms, human rights organisations fear.

Amnesty International, Oxfam, and others are now calling for the General Assembly to start a negotiating process during 2009 so that the international community can benefit from a legally-binding and universal Arms Trade Treaty by the end of 2010.

By Ida Karlsson, on: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44199>

Convenor of the IAW Commission on Peace, Susanne Riveles

EVENTS - CONFERENCES - REPORTS

The Global Gender Gap Report 2007

The five Nordic countries, which also perform consistently well in the World Economic Forum's competitiveness rankings, all continue to hold a place among the top 10, with Sweden (1), Norway (2), Finland (3), Iceland (4) and Denmark (8) in the same positions as last year.

While no country has yet achieved gender equality, Sweden, Norway and Finland have all closed over 80% of the gender gap and thus serve as a useful benchmark for international comparisons.

The Nordic countries are strong performers in all four areas of the Global Gender Gap Index: on economic participation and opportunity, on health, political empowerment and educational attainment. Read more on the position of the gender gap in most countries in the world on:

<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender%20Gap/Countries2007/index.htm>

Human Rights Council - UPR (Universal Periodic Review)

States to be considered at the 3rd session of the UPR working group (1-15 December 2008)

are: Botswana, Bahamas, Burundi, Luxembourg, Barbados, Montenegro, United Arab Emirates, Israel, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Tuvalu.

The timetable is to be found on: <http://www.upr-info.org/-Documents-.html> IAW Representative at the Human Rights Council: *Hélène Sackstein*.

WHO - UN World Health Organisation - The World Health Report 2008

Direct Link to Full Report: http://www.who.int/whr/2008/whr08_en.pdf

See also <http://www.who.int/whr/2008/en/index.html>

Convenor of the IAW Health Commission: *Gudrun Haupter*

The report, "The State of Africa's Children 2008," was launched on May 28 at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Japan. It looks at the successes and failures of governments regarding the health and survival of the children of Africa and is complementary to a broader UNICEF report on the health of the world's children.

The facts are shocking. Although Africa accounts for only 22 percent of births globally, half of the 10 million child deaths annually occur on the continent. Africa is the only continent that has seen rising numbers of deaths among children under five since the 1970s.

Preventable and curable diseases

Many of these children die of preventable and curable diseases. UNICEF's report says malaria is the cause of 18 percent of under-five deaths in Africa. Diarrhoeal diseases and pneumonia -- both illnesses that thrive in poor communities where sanitation is severely compromised, and where residents are often undernourished and exposed to pollution -- account for a further 40 percent of child deaths.

Another major killer is AIDS.

More on: <http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/soac08/>

Doha Global Civil Society Forum

The Qatari Government has informed the Financing for Development Office (FfDO) and NGLS that due to logistical concerns, **the date for the Doha Global Civil Society Forum had to be changed, to 26 - 27 November 2008.** . The venue will be the Ramada Plaza (<http://www.ramadaplazadoha.com/>). The Registration Form for 29 November – 2 December 2008 is now online.

CEDAW - Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 40th session (14 January - 1 February 2008). France Shadow CEDAW Report 2007 on:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/shadowCLEF.pdf>

The **UN General Assembly** elected 18 members to the Economic and Social Council to serve three-year terms beginning 1 January 2009. Those elected were Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, India, Japan, Lichtenstein, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Peru, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

More on: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2008/ga10770.doc.htm>

World Habitat Day

On the occasion of World Habitat Day , the *Non-Governmental Liaison Service* (NGLS) is launching an 'Online Focus Page' on the 4th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF IV), taking place in China from 3-6 November 2008.

The focus page offers information on WUF IV past Forums as well as links to various civil society organisations working on urban issues.

By visiting the focus page you can also read the latest NGLS [Roundup](#), which previews WUF IV as well. On: http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=578

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.

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