

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 2011, no. 10



Equal Rights

Dear members,

In this newsletter a look at the IAW Board Meeting held in the beautiful country of Iceland when Board members evaluated 2011 and prepared for 2012. See also the inquiry of the IAW Commission on Health on the IAW website.

This month the world will welcome its 7 billionth baby, probably born in the Asia and Pacific Region. If it is a girl, will there still be a Commission on the Status of Women when she is twenty? Anyway, the main topic of CSW, the position of rural women, is momentarily discussed worldwide by many women organisations. Registration will be opened soon.

We were pleasantly surprised this month when three women activists received the Nobel Peace Prize. The position of women in the Middle East has improved, but there is still a long way to go. There is also improvement in acknowledging the important role of women in food production, in guarding the environment and in fighting desertification, but will women get the necessary tools, such as the right to own land and to be educated?

Still, there are opportunities. In Papua New Guinea women are calling the shots on a big Copper Mine - no opening without preserving human rights, social cohesion, environment and culture.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

IAW Board Meeting 2011 in Reykjavik, Iceland

An invitation was accepted by IAW Affiliate Kvenrettindafelag Islands (Icelandic Women's Rights Association) to their beautiful country, full of mysterious volcano phenomena and icy glaciers.

Iceland ranks first on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2010, to be found on: <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap>

We met the director of the Human Rights Council of the City of Reykjavik, attended a seminar on transnational dialogue and learning, visited the 'Hjallastefna' kindergarten with segregated girls and boys in pre-school classes, and listened and learned about their work and their mission on gender equality. We enjoyed hearing the story of the Women's Strike on October 25 2010, when 100,000 people with banners filled the streets of Reykjavik. Demanding Equal Pay for Equal Work and No Violence against Women.

*A woman earns 65.65% of a man's salary
The normal working day is from 0900 to 1700 hours
Therefore a woman is paid only from 0900 to 1425 hours
After that it is voluntary work
Why should women do that?*

We met the President of Iceland, had dinner at the home of Helga Gudrun, President of the Icelandic Women's Rights Association, and took a dip in the Blue Lagoon with its volcanic warm water. On the last evening we dined, talked and networked at the Opera House, a beautiful new glass building at the Reykjavik harbour.

Our warmest thanks to IAW members of the Kvenrettindafelag Islands for your hospitality!

IAW Board Meeting

The Board adopted the minutes from Congress in South Africa and the decisions made by the Executive including: the appointment of a new web provider and a new web mistress, with many thanks to former webcaster Trevor Bennett. New members to the UN and new representatives in Geneva and in the Council of Europe were welcomed and appointed.

Membership of IAW activists in political parties was discussed. There was consensus that it is important to be active and that every IAW member is expected to distinguish between her role as a party member and as an NGO representative.

Progress on the resolutions of Congress in South Africa

It was agreed that ongoing work on the resolutions is worthwhile and represents a translation of IAW principles into policy and action. Examples are:

* **Violence** - The IAW Human Rights Commission made a proposal through RENATA from Cameroon to act through CEDAW and the Committee of the Convention of the Child to draft a new general joint recommendation on harmful practices.

A European Observatory of murdered women will be set up as soon as possible by the Council of Europe. The European Convention against Trafficking on Human Beings is also open for ratification for non-European member states. The same applies to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

* **Women and Children in the Middle East**: This resolution is very useful and several people are working on it.

* The resolution on **Social Rights** has been followed up by many member organisations.

* **Women, Growth and Economic Crisis** - the European Women's Lobby is mainstreaming this resolution into the main papers of the Lobby. Joanna Manganara recommends that we should aim for a new economic order centred on the human rights of women. She complains about and regrets the disconnection of social and economic sectors. It was felt that this knowledge should be made available widely. How can we use CEDAW to this effect?

Fifth Women World Conference should be an NGO Conference

There is not enough support for a fifth women's conference of governments. Instead, we should aim at having an NGO Conference. We should initiate this approach and collaborate with UN Women and other women's organisations.

Future IAW meetings

The Board received and accepted an invitation from its Australian member organisations for the 2012 International Meeting to be held in Melbourne, October/early November 2012, in the year of the 40th anniversary of the Women's Electoral Lobby.

More discussions and decisions taken

Reports from executive members, regional vice-presidents and coordinators, representatives of international bodies, commission conveners and praise for the 'booklet' by IAW secretary Lene Pind. Reports of working groups on CSW 2012, fund raising, communications, mentoring, new members.

CEDAW, Rural Women and Climate Change

The *International Alliance of Women*, Global Gender Climate Alliance, Co-sponsored by the International Council of Women (ICW-CIF) submitted an Observerpaper on CEDAW, Rural Women and Climate Change.

In collaboration with Women's Environment and Development Organization, WEDO.

On: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/IAW-OP-1-EGM-RW-Sep%202011.pdf>

A Father's responsibility for all his children

IAW website, Issues & Actions

The International Alliance of Women is launching an inquiry into the status of a father's responsibility for the welfare of all his children and the situation of the children's mother in the nations of its member organisations.

The IAW, through the Commission on Health, requests its members to fill out the three page questionnaire ([in English](#)) and return it to the address indicated before the 15th of November 2011.

To be found on the IAW website in English and French on:

http://www.womenalliance.org/pdf/Que_Child-maintenance_complete.pdf

Convenor of the IAW Commission on Health: Gudrun Haupter

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Pre-registration

UN Women has announced that Pre-registration for the UN Commission on the Status of Women meeting (27 February to 9 March 2012) will open in early November. All invitations will be sent to

the official e-mail address of ECOSOC accredited organizations on CSO net.

User names and passwords for CSO net were given to official contacts of your NGO.

* The number of pre-registered representatives may not exceed 20 individuals per organization.

* Participants will need a secondary pass to gain access to the UN North Lawn Building.

* Please check to make sure that the email contact information for your organization in the iCSO database is up to date: <http://esango.un.org/civilsociety/Login.do> . Otherwise, your organization may not receive an invitation.

* Note that the NGO/CSW/NY is NOT responsible for UN registration. Please direct all questions to civil.society@unwomen.org. Registration for the UN CSW56 will open early November. See the UN website for more information: <http://www.unwomen.org/csw/csw56> .

By Soon-Young Yoon, chair of NGO/CSW/NY in New York

Expert group meeting on the 56th Commission on the Status of Women

Enabling rural women's economic empowerment: institutions, opportunities and participation was organised from 20-23 September 2011 in Accra, Ghana. With Background Papers, Experts Papers and in particular an Observer Paper. More on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm.htm>

WOMEN IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Asia-Pacific reaches demographic milestone as world population hits 7 billion

At some point this month, October 2011, a child will be born and the world's population will have reached seven billion.

There is a good chance that this birth will take place in our region, home to 61% of the World's population," said Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) at the launch of ESCAP's flagship statistics publication. "If the child is born in the Asia-Pacific region, it will most likely be a boy."

Estimates in the Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2011 show that in 2010, among children below the age of five, there were 110 boys for every 100 girls which is much higher than the natural sex ratio, and higher than any other region of the world.

Gender inequalities in the Asia-Pacific region

Gender inequalities in the Asia-Pacific region are also evident in education, employment, property ownership and decision-making.

Women account for 65 per cent of the 518 million illiterate people in the region, and only eight girls are enrolled in secondary school for every ten boys.

Female participation in the labour force in the region has remained unchanged for almost 20 years with 65 employed women per 100 employed men.

Women have very limited access to land ownership in at least eight Asia-Pacific countries. In all but two countries in the region, women hold less than 30 per cent of national level political positions.

More on: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/syb2011/>

IAW representatives to ESCAP: Regional Vice President South Asia, Asha Deshpande and Regional Coordinator of the Pacific, Sheila Byard.

On 31 October 2011 the World Population will reach 7 billion

As the United Nations agency responsible for marking this milestone, the [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#) is leading an innovative global campaign—7 Billion Actions—to build awareness around the opportunities and challenges of a world of seven billion people. UNFPA has enlisted a wide group of corporations, organizations, and individuals to deliver this unique initiative, using online, mobile and offline actions to tell the story of the people behind the number.

A campaign will build awareness around seven key issues, then count the activities the campaign stimulates to address them. The issues are:

- Poverty and inequality
- Women and girls empowerment
- Reproductive health and rights
- Young people
- Ageing population
- Environment

□ Urbanization.

A special event will take place as the world population reaches the 7 billion mark, to raise awareness around global issues related to women and girls, unleash their potential and empower them to bring social change.

24 October: Start of the Countdown to 7 Billion events, including a series of individual events organized by UNFPA's partner organizations to mark the countdown to 7 Billion Day

26 October: Worldwide launch of The State of World Population 2011 report, entitled "People and Possibilities in a World of 7 Billion".

31 October: Birth of the 7th billion baby.

More on: www.7billionactions.org/ and on: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/sitemap/7Billion>

Shanti Tigga becomes first woman jawan

New Delhi - Another barrier has been broken in the Army with a mother of two becoming the first woman jawan. Outperforming her male counterparts in the physical tests, 35-year-old Sapper Shanti Tigga joined the 969 Railway Engineer Regiment of Territorial Army (TA).

"Women are allowed to join the armed forces only as officers in the non-combat units. But Tigga has earned the unique distinction of being the first lady jawan in the 1.3 million strong defence forces," a senior Army officer said.

"She performed exceedingly well in all the physical tests. She took five seconds less than her male counterparts to complete an 1.5-km run. She completed the 50 metre run in 12 seconds which is rated as excellent," he said. "With her overall performance in the RTC including physical test, drill and firing, she was adjudged the best trainee," an official said.

Employed with the Railways as a points-man and posted at Chalsa station in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district, Tigga volunteered for the TA last year.

"I joined Railways in 2005, on compensatory grounds after my husband passed away. Last year, I learnt about TA Railways and I volunteered for it. At that time, I was not aware that no woman has ever joined the Army as personnel below officer rank. But that was hardly a deterrent," she said.

"Some of my relatives were in the armed forces and I was always motivated by them to become a part of the Army. I prepared hard to clear the physical tests. I know I have made my family proud by becoming the first woman Army jawan," she said. More on:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2506617.ece>

Mailed to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Nobel Peace Prize for three Women Activists - Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Tawakkul Karman, and Leymah Gbowee

October 7 2011 - United Nations officials have hailed today's awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to three women's activists, saying the recipients demonstrate the vital role that women play in advancing peace and security, boosting development and securing human rights around the globe.

Meeting Ban Ki-moon

October 19 2011 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with Ms. Tawakkul Karman, 2011 Nobel Peace Laureate from Yemen. The Secretary-General congratulated Ms. Karman on her award and paid tribute to her efforts to promote, peace, justice and human rights for all in Yemen. More on <http://www.un.org/news/>

Voting rights for women in Saudi Arabia

September 24 2011 - Saudi King Abdullah announced today he was giving women the right to vote and run in municipal elections, the only public polls in the ultra-conservative Gulf kingdom.

In an address opening a new term of the council he also announced that women would have the right to join the all-appointed Shura (consultative) Council.

"Starting with the next term, women will have the right to run in municipal elections and to choose candidates, according to Islamic principles," he said.

Women will take part in elections held in four years time

This means that women will be able to take part in the elections that will be held in four years as the next vote is already due to take place and nominations for those polls are already in. "We have decided that women will participate in the Shura Council as members starting the next term," the king also said in an unexpected move to enfranchise women in the kingdom.

Women rights activists have long fought to gain the right to vote in the kingdom that applies a strict version of Sunni Islam and bans women from driving or travelling without the consent of a male guardian. More than 5,000 men will compete in Thursday's municipal elections, only the second in Saudi Arabia's history, to fill half the seats in the kingdom's 285 municipal councils. The other half are appointed by the government.

More than 60 Saudi intellectuals and activists have called for a boycott of the ballot for excluding women.

More on: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-15052030>

IAW Regional Vice President Arab Countries, Horeya Megahed

Women play major role in building Liberia's peace

Nearly 1.7 million Liberians, almost half of them women, will have a chance to vote in the October elections, the first organized nationally since the end of the country's civil conflict in 2003.

More on: www.un.org/womenwatch/

AROUND THE WORLD

Human Rights Committee opens one hundred and third session

17 Oct - 4 Nov. 2011 - The Human Rights Committee opened its one hundred and third session, adopting its agenda and programme of work.

The Human Rights Committee convenes three times a year for sessions of three weeks' duration, normally in March at United Nations headquarters in New York and in July and November at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

In 28/29 September 2011 several resolutions were adopted (most of them without vote). For example on: The human right to safe drinking water; Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity; Human rights and indigenous peoples; Human rights in the administration of justice, in particular juvenile justice; etc. To be found on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/18session/resolutions.htm>

The Committee will consider the following reports and country situations during this session:

[Jamaica, Kuwait, Norway, Iran, Malawi \(in the absence of a report\)](#)

[Armenia, Lithuania, Kenya, Cape Verde \(in the absence of a report\)](#)

[Uruguay, Cameroon, Monaco, Denmark, Moldova](#)

Particulars of those countries on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs103.htm>

Chief Representative to the UN in Geneva, Hélène Sackstein

Women Call the Shots on Mega Copper Mine

Buka, Bougainville, Oct 17, 2011 - Whether the world's largest open-cut mine on this island territory of Papua New Guinea (PNG) will resume copper and gold production, after being mothballed for 22 years, will depend on how satisfied matrilineal landowners are with the proposals.

"The first thing, the government and the company, they have to pay that 10 billion kina, which is part of the (landowners') demands, then the killings and the damage has to be paid. Then we talk about the mining issue," said Panguna landowner Lynette Ona.

"The chemicals are still there in the river," she said. "No one drinks the water, there is no fish there, it is still the same," said Ona who promotes the participation of women in local politics and plans to be candidate in the 2012 Bougainville elections.

An environmental report on the Panguna mine by Applied Geology Associates (1998) spoke of thousands of tonnes of tailings including toxic metals such as mercury, lead and zinc. Tailings flowing into the nearby Jaba river decimated fish and contaminated water supplies and crops.

The women landowners are already raising issues about the potential impact on their land and communities if copper mining resumes at the site in the central mountainous district of Panguna.

"What sort of mining and with what process will it reopen?" asks Patricia Tapakau, president of the Panguna Women in Mining, an organisation which represents women in 13 mining affected villages.

"We need to know, because we don't want any more destruction. We have had enough of that."

What is clear is that the mine's future is in the hands of Bougainville people who want to see strategies of economic development that preserve human rights, social cohesion, environment and culture. *By Catherine Wilson, a selection.* On: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=105480>

Women and Desertification

Changwon, Oct 19, 2011 - Delegates to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification's (UNCCD) meeting in this South Korean city are convinced that women, though affected most by desertification, hold the key to addressing hunger through land regeneration.

No mention of gender in the drafts of the Changwon initiative?

But, walking the talk is another matter. Drafts of the Changwon Initiative do not mention gender, but seem to focus on the private sector.

In the light of the importance of the role of women to combat desertification, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) gender office has teamed up with the secretariat of the UNCCD mid-2011 to develop a Gender Policy Framework (GPF) for the UNCCD and its secretariat.

Recommendations GPF

Among other recommendations, the GPF says, "It is crucial to establish a set of institutional procedures (guidelines) to allow effective gender screening of policies, projects, initiatives, training packages and communication materials produced under the Convention."

By Manipadma Jena, a selection, more on: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=105520>

CONFERENCES - EVENTS - GUIDE

CEDAW 50th session

Geneva, 3 - 21 October 2011 on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws50.htm>

A handy guide to look up articles to CEDAW is the Handbook for Parliamentarians (125 pages).

On: http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/cedaw_en.pdf

[Human Rights Committee, 103rd Session](#)

17 October - 4 November, Geneva. The Human Rights Committee is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by its State parties. The Committee meets in Geneva or New York and normally holds three sessions per year.

More on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs103.htm>

[UNESCO, General Conference - 36th Session](#)

25 October - 10 November, Paris - The General Conference meet every two years. Each country has one vote, irrespective of its size or the extent of its contribution to the budget. More on:

[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/all-events/?](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/all-events/?tx_browser_pi1[showUid]=3463&cHash=46f03cba1b)

[tx_browser_pi1\[showUid\]=3463&cHash=46f03cba1b](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/all-events/?tx_browser_pi1[showUid]=3463&cHash=46f03cba1b)

[United Nations Climate Change Conference "Working Together, Saving Tomorrow Today"](#)

28 November - 9 December, Durban. The United Nations Climate Change Conference, Durban 2011, will bring together representatives of the world's governments, international organizations and civil society. The discussions will seek the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the Bali Action Plan, agreed in 2007, and the Cancun Agreements, reached last December.

More on: <http://www.cop17-cmp7durban.com/>

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.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash : Joke Sebus

<iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>

International Women's News : Priscilla Todd (English)

<iaw.iwnews@womenallince.org>

: Mathilde Duval (French)

<mathilde.duval@yahoo.fr>

Membership Officer

: Pat Richardson

<iaw.membership@womenalliance.org>

Treasurer

: Inga Thorbjorg

<iaw.treas@womenalliance.org>