

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

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER September 2011, no. 9



Equal Rights

Dear members,

Next month the world's population will top 7 billion people and the UN is looking at all of its vast implications. For example, a new risk report and index 2011 helps identify vulnerable women. In Pakistan that index will be needed. Floods are (again) spreading, with 230 people killed, more than 300,000 others displaced and 1.1 million homes destroyed or damaged. In the region of Europe, 53 countries altogether are tackling TB, Alcohol, HIV/AIDS, Antibiotic Resistance and other Non Communicable Diseases or NCDs. Shelters for children can be cold, loveless and violent places. As in Mumbai, India. In Papua New Guinea a reserved seats bill for women in Parliament was accepted and in the USA feminists are wondering if they will vote for a woman like Michelle Bachmann as US President. In Kenya a law was passed against FGM - Female Genital Mutilation - and there are still nine countries to go!

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Three new items on the IAW website

1. Reports for the IAW Board Meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, 20-25 September 2011

A collection of reports from hard working IAW Board Members and representatives has been collated by general secretary Lene Pind and put on the IAW website. They are all very interesting to read.
On the IAW website on: <http://www.womenalliance.org/pdf/Reports2011.pdf>

2. No Sustainable Development and/or Good Governance without the respect of Women's Rights and Dignity, a presentation by former IAW President Rosy Weiss.

Rosy Weiss gave her presentation in Bonn, Germany, on 5 September 2011 at the “Sustainable Societies: Responsive citizens” 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference in the Workshop “Rio+20 - A Window of Opportunity for a Multi-Stakeholder Partnership on Global Commons Growth”.
On the IAW website on: <http://www.womenalliance.org/issues.html>

3. The Book Nook - Social Media for Social Good

A How-To Guide for Non-profits, by [Heather Mansfield](#)
Based on more than 15 years of experience in non-profit communications and 15,000+ hours spent utilizing social and mobile media, this book is a comprehensive 256-page hard cover book packed with more than 100 best practices covering Web 1.0, Web 2.0, and Web 3.0 non-profit communications and fund-raising.

From building an e-newsletter list to finding a “Twitter voice”, to launching a mobile website and texting campaign on a small budget, this guide presents a step-by-step strategic plan for launching and maintaining successful social media and mobile marketing campaigns.

On the IAW website on: <http://www.womenalliance.org/worth.html>

UNITED NATIONS

Global population nears 7 billion

14 September - With the world's population projected to top 7 billion next month, the United Nations today launched a global initiative – [7 Billion Actions](#) – bringing together governments, businesses, the media and individuals to confront the challenges and seize the opportunities offered by the milestone. “We are not here simply to acknowledge that milestone. We are here to address all of its vast implications,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a panel discussion at the launch ceremony at UN

Headquarters in New York.

A world of contradictions

“The seven billionth citizen will be born into a world of contradictions. We have plenty of food yet millions are still starving. We see luxurious lifestyles yet millions are impoverished. We have great opportunities for progress but also great obstacles,” he said.

Among challenges beyond grinding poverty and inequality, he cited discrimination, human rights abuses, lack of democracy, violence against women, maternal mortality, climate change and the degradation of the environment.

The UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)), the agency responsible for 7 Billion Actions, noted the implications of the new milestone for sustainability, urbanization and migration in a world where conflicts and weather disasters are driving people from their homes and climate change is exacerbating food and water shortages. At the same time, new media technology is enabling direct communications between people around the world, creating an unprecedented opportunity to build greater communities and share ideas across borders.

Worst-case scenario

Asked what would happen if action was not taken now, UNFPA Executive Director Babatunde Osotimehin said that the human spirit seeks to survive and he believes we will do our best to survive.

“But if indeed the worst-case scenario is what gets played out, and we have a population that suffers the great inequities that the Secretary-General talks about and continues to have those inequities, then we have this crisis around the world, the population, the food crisis, the water crisis, issues around migration, issues that deal with land, issues that deal with conflict,” he said.

According to the latest UN figures, the world’s population is projected to reach 7 billion on 31 October, surge past 9 billion before 2050 and then reach 10.1 billion by the end of the century if current fertility rates continue at expected levels.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39549&Cr=unfpa&Cr1=>

UN joins China in launching new small-business fund to empower women

14 September 2011 - The United Nations joined Chinese groups today in launching a new small-business fund that seeks to further empower women in the world’s most populous country.

“Investing in women and girls is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing to do from a social and economics point of view,” Rebecca Grynspan said at the launch in Beijing of the new partnership between the All-China Women’s Federation, Mary Kay China, and UNDP.

Millennium Development Goals

“All studies clearly suggest that one of the main accelerators to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is investing in women and girls and through the political and economic empowering of women. There is no country in the world that has achieved gender equality and, as in China, we find all around the globe women being disadvantaged with respect to salary differentials, labour force participation, access to social protection, access to property rights, political representation and the challenge of gender-based violence,” she added.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39553&Cr=gender&Cr1=>

Toll from Pakistani rains mounts as flooding spreads, UN reports

14 September - The toll from torrential rains in Pakistan is mounting, with 230 people killed, more than 300,000 others displaced and 1.1 million homes destroyed or damaged as flooding has inundated 4.5 million acres, cutting major roads and polluting water, the United Nations reported today.

UN agencies

UN agencies have already ramped up their support, with the World Food Programme (WFP) set to feed 500,000 people and the World Health Organization (WHO) distributing 18 emergency health kits, each covering 6,000 people with complete essential medical care drugs for a month, and 40 diarrhoea kits, each for 1,000 people a month. WHO also has a pre-positioned stock of medications to cover the needs of 1.2 million people.

Government services

OCHA (Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) noted that the Government has prioritized shelter,

with most of those displaced currently living along roadsides, embankments and other areas of higher ground, as well as in public buildings including schools. Resource mobilization is a major constraint, with aid organizations using contingency stocks and diverting resources from recovery programmes to meet life-saving needs.

Last year's floods killed some 2,000 people and submerged about a fifth of the land, affecting 20 million people, as torrential rains sent swollen rivers cascading across the country from the mountainous north, inundating successive regions until they reached the sea.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39541&Cr=Pakistan&Cr1=>

IAW Executive Vice President and Chair of the All Pakistan Women's Association, UK, Bashan Rafique.

AROUND THE WORLD

Should feminists back Michele Bachmann?

Michele Bachman is known for her conservative, anti-feminist views, but her presence in the presidential race in the USA means greater female participation in politics.

As the usual line-up of white, senior, well-off men declare their candidacies for the Republican nomination in 2012 US presidential race, the question for [women in politics](#) advocates is whether to support the only officially declared female candidate, [Michele Bachmann](#).

Dilemma

For those familiar with Bachmann's politics, this may not seem a vexing question at all. Her fundamentalist Christian view of women's social role, her [anti-abortion activism](#), her belief that [wives should submit to – ahem, respect – their husband's wishes](#) and her belief that [homosexuality is a curable choice](#) make for an evangelical world-view many would consider bad for women.

But for those concerned that the world's top political office is consistently a male-only domain – both the actual office and, with few exceptions, the race for it – Bachmann is the only horse to back to redress that inequality. Bachmann's politics may make her an undesirable standard-bearer for feminist principles, but if her presence in the race means greater female participation in politics, should women back Bachmann?

The answer must be a contingent yes.

Whatever Bachmann's politics, her presence as a serious presidential contender helps American society see women as potential political leaders. This, in turn, enhances the democratic legitimacy of a group historically excluded from high office – women.

Poverty of choice ?

But the reason why Bachmann poses a dilemma for feminists is the poverty of choice, with only one female candidate in the race.

So, of course, it would be better if, for every Bachmann and Palin, we had a Hillary Clinton on a ticket. But rejecting the sole female candidate on the basis that she is not the right sort of feminist is losing the war to win a battle. Women are better represented in politics with Bachmann in the race, no matter how unpalatable her views.

More on: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/aug/25/michele-bachmann-feminism-republican/print>

Sent to us by IAW member Helen Self.

Papua New Guinea Government to push for Women's Equality & Participation Bill

September 6th 2011 - The much awaited Equality and Participation Bill will be tabled in Papua New Guinea's parliament today.

Prime Minister Peter O'Neill said the reserved seats bill was a priority agenda item of government. He told a National Council of Women gathering at the Sir John Guise Stadium in Port Moresby that it was imperative the reserved seats bill was presented in parliament for debate and voted on as soon as possible.

O'Neill said the participation of women in parliament was an important issue that had remained outstanding.

"We are rated as 136 out of 144 countries for having less than 1% of women in parliament.

This is a shocking indication of our lack of real action to the commitments we have stated to our people in the Constitution and various development goals".

More on http://www.wunrn.com/news/2011/09_11/09_05/090511_papua.htm

IAW Regional Coordinator Pacific, Sheila Byard

Disasters - new risk report & index 2011 helps identify vulnerable women

Johannesburg, 5 September 2011 - A new disaster risk index launched by the UN University Institute for Environment and Human Security in Bonn could help donors and aid organizations better understand why some countries are more at risk of calamity than others, and shape their responses when disaster strikes.

Four main components

World Risk Index (WRI) takes into account social, political, economic and ecological factors to determine the capacity of an affected community to respond. It looks at four main components, which in turn take into account at least 28 variables.

1. Exposure to a natural hazard (sudden as well as slow-onset of natural disasters like droughts).
2. Susceptibility, which is understood as the likelihood of society and ecosystems to be damaged should a natural hazard occur. Existing economic, infrastructure, nutrition and housing conditions are taken into account.

3. The capacity to cope, which looks at the state of governance, disaster preparedness and early warning systems, medical services, and social and material security levels.

"Governance is a critical issue as it is politically sensitive which is why it is overlooked by many similar indices, but the fact is you need a stable government that has the capacity to deliver to help people become resilient," said Birkmann.

He illustrated his point by contrasting the impact of the recent earthquakes in Haiti and Japan. "Owing to higher coping and adaptive capacities, such as building laws, there were significantly fewer victims in Japan."

4. Adaptation strategies - implying the capacities and strategies which help communities address the expected negative consequences of natural hazards and climate change.

"Information on coping capacities is relevant for short-term responses, but where long-term programmes and planning is concerned, it is useful for NGOs to know about the area's adaptation capacity," said Birkmann.

The five most vulnerable countries are: Afghanistan - Niger - Chad - Sierra Leone - Eritrea

More on: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article/read/worldriskreport-2011>

Shelterless at home

Three years ago, the [Mumbai police](#) plucked two school boys, aged 8 and 10, off the streets of Byculla and sent them to the Children's Observation Home in Dongri. The place where it stood was earlier a prison. For many children, it still feels like one.

Both the boys were picked up for begging, an allegation they flatly deny. It took their parents and school principal a month to get them out. The traumatized boys said they were beaten and bullied by older boys there. One was even hospitalized after he developed high fever.

Their story typifies a child's encounter with the juvenile justice system in India. Delhi-based social activist Harsh Mander, who is a member of the [National Advisory Council](#), says the situation is akin to telling a "woman who is being gang-raped that since we can't protect her or arrest her tormentors, we will, instead, lock her up for her own safety."

Cold, loveless and violent places

Mander has visited children's homes in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and Maharashtra and calls them cold, loveless and violent places. Vinod Raina, one of the architects of the Right to Education Act, who chaired a shelter home for Delhi's street children, says that [children](#) are often treated like cattle in many institutions and regularly beaten and abused.

Four years ago, when [Sunday Times](#) visited three orphaned sisters who had been rescued from child labour and were lodged in the Dongri children's home, the girls said that it was like going from the frying pan into the fire. They were dressed in tattered clothes, not given any underwear and had developed scabies and a glandular swelling there.

However, for Mumbai's shelter homes run by the Children's Aid Society (CAS), things are looking better as a recent government order restored the powers of the governing council, which was rendered toothless for over a decade due to political interference.

Mohua Nigudkar, a member of Mumbai's juvenile justice board, says that while the system of administering juvenile justice may be flawed, with custodial care robbing a child of his liberty and freedom, it doesn't mean these homes should be shut down, forcing the children back on to the streets. Instead, there is a need to improve the quality of care and protection these institutions offer, she says.

Two good examples

That's exactly what two homes in Delhi hope to achieve. Ummeed, run by Mander, has six children who have committed various crimes. "They are kept in a free and open space. While some have run away, some stayed back. This is a risk one has to take if one wants a child who is a better, happier human being," says Mander.

The other institution, Bal Sahyog in Connaught Place, was started by Indira Gandhi in 1954. When Raina took over as its chairperson in 2005, the institution was in a mess.

Raina got together a panel of child rights experts and introduced activities such as drama, music and sports. "It was a tricky situation as we didn't want it to be like a jail, and at the same time, we had to deal with children who went missing. We would take the children out on excursions so that they could have a good time," says Raina.

A system is as good or bad as the people in it

But these are just drops in the ocean. While institutions in Mumbai and Delhi may leave much to be desired, the situation in other parts of the country is far worse, says [Suparna Gupta](#), founder of the Aangan trust, which works with the juvenile justice system in several states.

"In some states, children are taken to observation homes in handcuffs. In Punjab, there is a huge police presence inside children's homes," says Gupta. "In many places, those running children's homes didn't even know about of the Juvenile Justice Act."

What's more, in many homes there are inmates over 18 years who have fudged their ages, knowing full well that juveniles receive a less stringent sentence than adults. Also, as per law, the child's age is decided on the day the crime is committed. Often, delays in the judicial mechanism result in a child's case pending even after he turns 18.

But all is not bleak in children's homes. Nigudkar says that several children have also been given a new lease of life as they interacted with well-meaning officials who helped them turn their lives around.

But then, a system is a good or bad as the people in it.

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More on: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-toi/special-report/Shelterless-at-home/articleshow/9597626.cms>

Mailed to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

World Health Organisation Europe

In the European region 53 countries tackle killer diseases

Baku, September 2011, Azerbaijan on 12–15 September 2011

Health ministers and other policy-makers have been invited to discuss a new European regional policy for improving health in all 53 countries, Health 2020.

The five action plans address non-communicable diseases (NCDs), alcohol, HIV/AIDS, drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) and antibiotic resistance.

These account for most of the disease burden or are growing threats in the European Region.

Non Communicable Diseases - NCDs

NCDs – such as cancer, heart disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes – account for over 86% of deaths and 77% of the disease burden in the WHO European Region, and are responsible for many of the growing health inequalities that can be seen within and between countries.

This European debate follows intensive discussions at The First Global Ministerial Conference on Healthy Lifestyles and Non Communicable Disease Control in Moscow, Russian Federation on 28–29 April 2011.

It will take place on the eve of the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on NCD prevention and control diseases, set for 19–20 September.

Alcohol

Drinking in the WHO European Region is the heaviest in the world, with a prevalence of heavy episodic drinking of over 20% in adults.

While consumption varies greatly among countries, the average is 9.24 litres of pure alcohol per year. The European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2012–2020 gives a comprehensive view of the problem and provides policy options proven to reduce alcohol-related harm, such as targeting drink–driving and regulating alcohol pricing, marketing and availability.

HIV/AIDS

While the number of newly infected people is decreasing globally, in eastern Europe and central Asia the number of people living with HIV has more than tripled since 2000, constituting one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world.

New research this summer has indicated a breakthrough in “treatment as prevention”, which will help countries to reach the goal of cutting new infections by half by 2015.

TB

Although TB is an old disease, multidrug- and extensively drug-resistant TB (M/XDR-TB) is spreading at an alarming rate because of inadequate treatment and poor airborne infection control. XDR-TB is extremely difficult to treat, and the reported treatment failure rate in western European countries is high. The Action Plan focuses on seven areas of intervention that, if put into practice across the Region, could save 120 000 lives and US\$ 5 billion.

Antibiotic resistance

A growing phenomenon threatens the health of people in Europe: bacteria that cause common and life-threatening infections are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics, the medicines used to treat them. This urgent issue needs action now, before it is too late.

More on: <http://www.searo.who.int/EN/Section1430/Section1439/Section1638/Section2699.htm>

IAW Convenor for the Commission Health: Gudrun Haupter

Kenya passes law against FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

Kenya has become the latest African country to make female genital mutilation illegal. The practice is still widespread in Africa, despite African Union opposition

[Kenya](#) is the most recent African country to ban female genital mutilation, with the passing of a law making it illegal to practice or procure it or take somebody abroad for cutting. The law even prohibits derogatory remarks about women who have not undergone FGM. Offenders may be jailed or fined or both.

Kenya follows a number of African governments in outlawing the practice.

According to the Pan African news agency, at the time of the African Union summit in June, which proposed prohibition of FGM, Benin, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Central African Republic, Senegal, Chad, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda already had legislation against it.

In nine countries (including some of those where it is illegal) it is still widely practised. In Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan, 85% of women undergo mutilation.

More on: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/sarah-boseley-global-health/2011/sep/08/women-africa>

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>
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