

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

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

IAW NEWSLETTER - February 2001, nr. 1



Dear IAW members,
Rights

Equal

We urgently request that you give your attention to the Commission on the Status of Women, which will meet to discuss one of the most serious health problems of the 21st century, HIV/AIDS. It's a topic that has to be discussed at the next World Conference on Women. And at CSW, it is the time to seek more effective means and ways to improve the gender mainstreaming in the implementation of all major world conferences. One of the first acts of brand new USA president Bush was to deny US aid to pro-choice groups. Read the comments of IAW president, Patricia Giles, in our chapter AROUND THE WORLD. IAW held a wonderful workshop in Nicosia, Cyprus on Violence against Women; just read the resolution. And please read what is happening in France at the moment, for women in politics!

UNITED NATIONS

The 45th session of CSW will be held 6-16 March 2001.

At its 45th session the Commission will focus on the following thematic issues:

1. Women, the girl child and human immune-deficiency virus/acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).
2. Gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Commission will also adopt its new multi-year work programme for the period 2002-2005 (see also the article: A Fifth World Conference on Women in 2005).

Two expert meetings have been held in preparation for the 45th session:

- Expert Group Meeting on the HIV/AIDS Pandemic and its Gender Implications, 13 -17 November 2000;
- Expert Group Meeting on gender and racial discrimination, 21 to 24 November 2000, Zagreb, Croatia.

HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Since the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic 15 years ago, the virus has infected more than 47 million people in the world. With more than 2.2 million deaths in 1998, HIV/AIDS has now become the fourth leading cause of mortality and its impact is going to increase. Over 95% of all cases and 95% of AIDS deaths occur in the developing world, mostly among young adults and increasingly in women.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

An estimated 340 million new cases of curable Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in adults occurred throughout the world in 1995. STIs and their complications rank in the top five disease categories for which adults seek health care. The long-term consequences of untreated STIs can be very serious. In addition, there is a strong link between STIs and increased transmission of HIV.

Surveillance

Monitoring the global spread of HIV, AIDS and STIs is a joint effort of WHO and UNAIDS, co-ordinated by the UNAIDS/WHO Working Group on Global HIV/AIDS/STI Surveillance. The Working Group develops surveillance guidelines, regularly updates the global database and prepares Epidemiological Fact Sheets and Global Reports on HIV/AIDS. WHO works extensively with its Regional Offices and WHO Country Representatives and with other working partners outside the Organisation.

WHO Report on Global Surveillance of Epidemic-prone Infectious Diseases - HIV/AIDS. This report focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data collected by WHO on the surveillance of infectious epidemic-prone diseases, the strengths and weaknesses of the data and how the data can be used and interpreted. The chapter on HIV/AIDS contains a background of the disease including a brief history, a short description of the transmission process, clinical features, and other characteristics of HIV/AIDS that are important for surveillance. The available data are described, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the surveillance system. This is followed by a summary of HIV/AIDS trends and a concluding section. A list of reference documents and web pages is also

This information is copied from <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/hivaids/hivegmaide.htm>>

Gender and Racial Discrimination

Without gender analysis of racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, violation of the human rights of women escapes detection. Remedies to address racism may also fail to meet the needs of women and girls, and accordingly the effects of racism for them may persist.

Topics

The topics to be considered at the meeting will include:

- the identification of specific forms of racial discrimination directed towards women and girls :
- ethnic/gender based violence against women, including sexual violence, in situations of armed conflict or perpetrated against women refugees and those who are internally displaced;
- traffic in women and girls and the exploitation of prostitution;
- the situation of migrant and indigenous women workers in the labour market, including in the informal sector;
- the determination of the disadvantages, obstacles and difficulties women face in the enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights as a result of the intersection of racial and sex discrimination both in public and private domain;
- measures to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and their specific effects on women and girls at the national, regional and national levels in such areas as: education, economy, health, decision-making;
- provision of remedies and redress, including compensation for women as the result of racism;
- access to justice, including the complaint mechanisms;
- recommendation to ensure a gender perspective to be integrated into the work and decisions of the World Conference on Racism.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the expert group meeting will be directed to Governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental and regional bodies and civil society. They will aim to refine and expand the "actions to be taken" at both international and national levels outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the further actions identified by the special session of the General Assembly on Beijing+5.

See also <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/geniac/report.htm>>

A fifth World Conference on Women in 2005

The 45th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, CSW, will be held in New York 6-16 March 2001 (NGO-day on March 5th) and will be an important event from the point of view of working for a fifth World Conference on Women in 2005. A group of women, headed by Annette Lawson from the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO), UK and Hilikka Petielä from the NGO Coalition in Helsinki, Finland have been promoting a different kind of World Conference on Women (WCW). They gave a workshop during the Special Session Beijing + 5, June 2000 called: "a Meta Conference in 2005", which was very well attended.

Agenda and documents

The appropriate items on the CSW agenda for this issue are: a) the Follow-up to the Fourth WCW and to the Special Session (item 3); b) Consideration of the multi-year work programme and the working methods of the CSW; c) Discussions on the follow-up to ECOSOC resolutions and decisions.

The most important documents are:

- the Resolutions of the 23rd Special Session (A/RES/S-23/2 and 3)
- the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 2000/2 (included in the ECOSOC Report 2000, A/55/3)
- and the Report of the Secretary General to the same ECOSOC session (E/200/57).

Means of improving major conferences

The special session of ECOSOC in summer 2000 made the first assessment of progress in the integrated and co-ordinated implementation of all the major UN conferences in the economic and social fields of 1990s. The Governments put forward four options about how to promote this kind of implementation in the forthcoming +10 review and appraisal processes of these conferences.

The Council has not yet decided how to do this but has invited its functional commissions (including the CSW) to examine the following "and other possible" means of improving conference follow-up at intergovernmental level:

- (a) - to hold a single "10-year event" to review the conferences in a sequential manner, be it an international conference or a special session of the General Assembly;

- (b) - to cluster the review of the implementation of several programmes of action found to be closely related at a special session of the General Assembly or other event. (For example the reviews of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women);
 - (c) - to stagger the follow-up processes so that there would be only one conference review in any given year (for instance to avoid the 10-year reviews of the WS on Social Development and the Beijing Conference to take place in the same year);
 - (d) - as a fourth option, 5-year conference reviews and appraisals could in the future be carried out by the functional commissions themselves, ECOSOC and the General Assembly while special sessions of the Assembly or conferences would take place only for 10-year reviews.
- (Note, that "other possible options" are not excluded!)*

Cross-cutting issues

The above mentioned SG's report (E/2000/57) also identified certain issues as cross-cutting issues and recognised that such issues as enabling national and international environments for development, basic social services for all, poverty and employment, human rights and gender equality were dealt with in five-year reviews. "Some issues, albeit cross-cutting, have been lead themes of a particular conference, such as gender and poverty eradication, and thus it would be appropriate for all conference reviews to reflect the outcomes of that lead conference, i.e. Beijing and Copenhagen or of their five year reviews".

The Council noted also with dissatisfaction that "gender has not been consistently mainstreamed in the five-year reviews thus far".

This gives us additional justification to seek more effective means and ways to improve the follow-up to gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the other world conferences.

What kind of a World Conference in 2005?

We think we do not need a replica of the Beijing, but a high level, thoroughly prepared world conference to reflect the new challenges posed by the economic globalisation and trade, new information technologies, armed conflicts and the threats by HIV/AIDs. It should review and appraise the further implementation of the Beijing PFA as well as the gender mainstreaming in the implementation of all other world conferences. And last but not least **it should provide a wide NGO Forum** for the world's women to bring their views and aspirations into the proceedings of the Global Agenda in the future.

Documents are available at the following Internet addresses:

- the Resolutions of UNGASS 23: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/reports.htm>>
- the ECOSOC document: <<http://www.un.org/ga/55/lista55.htm>>
- a more comprehensive paper is available directly from: <hilkka.petiela@pp.inet.fi>

IAW NEWS AND EVENTS

Violence in the Family, an IAW Workshop

The workshop was held at the International Conference: A Plan of Action for the 21st Century 26-30 November 2000, Nicosia, Cyprus.

IAW speakers were:

- Patricia Giles, IAW: Health and violence in the family;
- Hana Elroy, Israel: NGOs' contributions in eradicating violence in the family;
- Mmabatho Ramgoshi, South Africa: Creating and managing vibrant networks to end family violence.

Declaration

We the participants at the International Conference Violence in the Family, Plan of Action for the 21st Century held in Nicosia, Cyprus from 26th – 30th November 2000 have recognised that violence in the family is a global problem affecting families of all classes and cultures.

We affirm that violence in the family is a violation of the human rights of victims who most often happen to be women and children.

We also recognise that violence in the family is harmful to individuals, communities and societies and adversely affects the social, economic and political development of a country.

We appreciate that any meaningful change to this global reality must be addressed through a multidisciplinary and comprehensive framework that builds on partnerships between governmental organisations and NGOs in collaboration with international, intergovernmental and regional agencies.

We recommend a plan of action to take into consideration the following:

1. The need for a public education campaign to create greater awareness and understanding of all forms of

2. The need for training of professionals and volunteers in all human services including health, education, social service, legal, law enforcement and judicial systems.
3. The need for legislative reforms and implementation at the national level in accordance with international instruments (Convention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW], Declaration and the Action Program of the Vienna Conference of the Human Rights (section II para 38) and its Protocol, Convention on the Rights of the Child) to ensure that family and criminal legislation provides protection to victims of family violence.
4. The need to provide accessible, culturally sensitive and co-ordinated services for victims, perpetrators and children exposed to family violence.
5. The need to develop primary prevention programs for children of all ages in schools and communities to eliminate family and encourage healthy relationships and gender equality.
6. The need for gender-sensitive research and dissemination of user-friendly information on the prevalence of family violence and the evaluation of policies and programs.
7. The need to establish an international network on all aspects of family violence and encourage the sharing of experiences and strategies and promote reporting on progress of the plan of action from countries at the next conference in 2003.

From IAW Vice-President Rosy Weiss

IAW International Meeting - 6-9 November 2001 - Vienna, Austria

From the IAW Constitution: The purpose of such an International Meeting is to acquaint the Board with the work of member societies and act in an advisory capacity to the Board. The Presidents of Affiliate and Associate societies are invited to attend the International Meeting. The Honorary Presidents, Honorary Vice-Presidents, Honorary Members and the Representatives of the Alliance at the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies are entitled to attend the International Meeting in an advisory capacity. A member of the International Committee unable to attend a meeting may, with the approval of her Society, appoint a member of the Alliance, from the same country, as proxy.

Programme Planning is underway for an exciting and innovative programme besides the necessary business sessions of the IAW Board and the core International Meeting sessions.

An international workshop on "Women as Agents in the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence" will be held in co-operation with Vital Voices or Human Rights Watch.

In addition, the Frauentzirkel Austria, as the organiser of the International Meeting, is planning to hold sessions with high-level representatives of the United Nations secretariat in Vienna and the UN Specialized Agencies here such as UNIDO, the Atomic Energy Agency and the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. A special event will bring together the IAW members with the NGO community in Vienna, in particular the chairpersons of the NGO committees, members of CONGO, and the permanent representatives to the International Committee on the Status of Women in Vienna.

Venue - Vienna International Centre, the third headquarters of the United Nations besides New York and Geneva. It is located near the Danube and can easily be reached by the modern and secure Viennese underground. **Conference secretariat** will be at the Institute for Studies in Salzburg until October 31st, 2001, attention Ms. Sigrid Stadler, Johannes Filzer-Strasse 26/55, A-5020 Salzburg, Fax & Tel: +43 662 635382.

Congratulations!

Gudrun Haupter, our hard working Health Commission Convenor, was recently honoured by her Government with a Federal award - Verdienstmedaille des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. This is in recognition of Gudrun's years of work with Deutscher Frauenring including the working group on development policy and project work in Africa as well as her involvement with the IAW as a Board member and its representative at the World Health Organisation.

Specific Project for IAW from WHO - Young Girls and Smoking

The WHO Tobacco-Free Initiative is based on unrefutable grave health concerns. Here are some figures and facts related to women and to youth, especially young girls, from the Report on the WHO International Conference on Tobacco and Health, Kobe, Nov. 1999, Avoiding the Tobacco Epidemic in Women and Youth. See also: <www.who.int/toh/Otherlinks/tabacweb.htm>

There are already over 200 million women smokers. By the year 2025, the number of women smokers is expected to almost triple, with more than 200 million women dying prematurely from tobacco induced diseases. In developed and developing countries the smoking epidemic is increasing fastest among women, particularly young women. Even in countries with an overall decrease in smoking there is an increase among young women aged 18 to 24. In 1987 lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as a cause of death in American women. The risk of coronary heart disease is increased among women smokers who use oral contraceptives. Among postmenopausal women, current smokers have lower bone density than non-smokers which means increased risk of hip fracture. Generally women who smoke have markedly increased risks of heart disease, stroke, emphysema and tobacco-

related diseases lead to high morbidity rates worldwide. There are immeasurable personal, social and economic costs to women and children particularly those living in poverty in low-income countries and in rural settings. Nicotine is highly addictive. Physical dependence but also anxiety, irritability, restlessness, impatience, hunger, racing heart, sweating, headaches, weight gain and sleep disturbance are among the side-effects. Transnational tobacco companies have implemented well-formulated and deliberate strategies to expand tobacco markets among women and children, especially in populous and developing countries. Eastern Europe and Asia are currently considered highly lucrative new markets.

Information is necessary

Adults can choose for themselves, but poor women everywhere have less access to health information and services. 80 percent of smokers in many countries start before the age of 18, often at 14. What do children know about informed choice at that age! They succumb to the wrong messages carried by the media via advertising and also through an inaccurate and unbalanced image of tobacco in reporting of women's health issues. Advertising uses women's independence, stress relief, slimness, glamour and modernity. Watch out for tobacco companies sponsoring women's organisations, sports, arts and music events! Sharp rises in tobacco use occur after aggressive advertising campaigns which include film and tv-stars.

Women's right to health is a fundamental human right. International treaties such as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, FCTC, under discussion at WHO, should be seen in this light. The CEDAW Committee requires reporting by governments on Article 12 that includes tobacco.

What can the IAW do?

Spread the information and use all means of access we have to young women and girls. This is a task for IAW member organisations and individual members.

Suggestions - In our respective countries make correct information the focus of our *International Women's Day* celebrations. Or get involved in the development of local materials through contacts with women and environment groups, consumer and human rights groups. Our aims should clearly be to discourage girls and women from taking up smoking and from continuing to do so, to inform smokers where to look for cessation treatment. Just as false or biased information lures very young girls into smoking, correct information can prevent their initiation and encourage those who have started or are trying to quit the habit.

Those of you who feel the urge to act, who have ideas on how to act, or who are already involved, please contact the HEALTH COMMISSION

Gudrun Haupter, Haupter@t-online.de or Fax +49 6234 92 02 16.

It is wellknown that smokers not only put themselves in danger. Exposure to tobacco smoke has particularly severe consequences for the children of smoking mothers: they weigh less at birth, are more likely to be small through gestation. Women smokers are at greater risk of experiencing still-birth and neo-natal death.

Dealing with this *Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS)* is another long story. Healthy lifestyles for women means NO SMOKING.

AROUND THE WORLD

Bush Denies US Aid to pro-choice groups

On the 28th anniversary of Roe v Wade, President Bush signed an executive order prohibiting the donation of federal funds to international family planning groups that offer abortion support, either by performing the procedure, offering counselling, or lobbying donor governments.

This is an echo of the notorious ban announced by President Reagan at the 1984 Mexico Summit on Population and Development which was subsequently lifted by President Clinton in 1993. Apparently the Bush administration has been unimpressed by decisions of the 1994 Population and Development Summit which strongly supported reproductive rights and women's right to access to safe procedures and advice.

As was proven by the 1984 edict, commentators are as one that Bush's edict will not reduce the incidence of abortion, especially in the least developed countries, and is more likely to increase teen pregnancies, especially in Eastern Europe, and the spread of HIV-AIDS in Africa.

Women will not be deterred from seeking termination of unwanted and unplanned pregnancies, regardless of their own safety. To the contrary, the estimated current mortality rate of 80,000 women who die every year as a direct result of unsafe abortions will increase, as will the 500,000 women whose deaths are recorded as "maternal mortality", or death in or because of childbirth.

Hazards ...

Hazards for women and their children are exacerbated by frequent pregnancies, resulting too often in the premature death of the mother. For countless others, the poorer maternal health which results from frequent pregnancies starting in early adolescence, will add to the hazards of malnourishment, overcrowded housing and less access to education, especially for girls. Many, if not most, of these women will lose an important avenue

of controlling their fertility safely and in properly equipped centres, which have the capacity to introduce the mother to family planning and subsequent avoidance of the need for abortions.

European Union

Angered by President Bush's decision, senior European Union officials said that any shortfall in funding for European family planning groups could be bridged by EU money.

Strengthening the work of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the International Planned Parenthood Association is "definitely part of the solution, not part of the problem", according to EU Development Commissioner Paul Nielson, speaking to international parliamentarians in London recently.

More Women in Politics, France

CHATAULIN, France - Most of the 35 women who gathered here in a City Hall conference room recently had shown up for moral support, either because they had decided to run for local office in the Brittany region, or because they were mulling over a decision to enter a political race. Always before, these women - and millions of others across France - had remained at the fringe of politics, believing that they were not really welcome in an overwhelmingly male club. But all that changed this year. Political parties are wooing women as never before because a law was passed last year in France that appears to go further than any other in the world in attempting to share representation more evenly between men and women.

An equal number of male and female candidates

Starting with municipal elections scheduled in March, the new law obliges all political parties to field an equal number of male and female candidates in almost all elections. And so these 35 women - most of them mothers in their 40s who had led feminist groups, union delegations or parents' associations in Brittany - have found parties of all stripes urging them to run. "I know one woman who was asked by three different parties to be on their list," said Valerie Pau, who helped organise the meeting. "Every time she picked up the phone, it was someone asking her. She could sit back and take her pick."

Right now, 7% of France's mayors and almost 9% of its national legislators are women. That is roughly comparable with the United States, where 13% of senators are women, but far behind the 45% of Sweden's legislators who are women.

It is not proving easy to level the political playing field. "Everyone is being asked," said Ms. Pau, a 42-year-old secretary and union worker who is planning to make her first foray into politics running for office in the nearby town of Brest. "But in a lot of cases," she added, "they don't really know us. They don't want us to say anything. Really, they just want us to be quiet and sit on their lists."

Start and Struggle

The birth of the parity law was not easy. First seriously discussed in the early 1990s, it engendered fierce opposition, even from some feminists who said that quotas of any kind were demeaning to women. But since the passage of the law - championed by the Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, and his wife, Sylviane Agacinski, a professor - the idea has steadily grown in popularity. These days a majority of French citizens believe it to be a good thing. In one recent poll, 63 percent of those surveyed said that the parity law meant that French voters would get a better choice of candidates, and that the law would bring about better governance. Sixty-five percent said they wanted a woman elected mayor in their town in 2001.

Even as the parties struggle to find thousands of women to be candidates, and to smooth the ruffled feathers of the men who must step aside, the debate rages about whether France's new parity law amounts to too much, too fast. Some fear that the women swept into office will be mere figureheads or the wives of former officials, taking up space but offering little value. But others say that the law will not only bring justice but also the fresh faces that French politics desperately needs. For decades here, politics has been dominated by the same men, almost all of whom are graduates of the same college.

Other countries in the European Union

In addition to France, only Belgium currently has a quota for the candidate list; political parties there are required to fill one-third of their lists with women. In several countries including Spain, Austria, Germany and The Netherlands, however, political parties have put quotas on themselves.

Why Women?

One poll that asked what areas would be improved by the presence of more women in elected office found that more than 80 percent of people responding expected improvement in education for young children, social services and health issues. Those areas are traditionally considered to be of particular concern to women. But the survey also showed that the public had confidence in women in other areas as well. Nearly 60 percent thought women would bring improvement to the running of the economy, transportation systems and sports.

February 4, 2001, by Suzanne Daley, a selection

Equal Pay for Equal Work - something rotten in the state of Denmark?

The Danish Equal Pay for Equal Work Law is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, which sounds good. But don't believe all you hear about equal rights in Denmark. The law gives women all the rights, but attitudes and realities are a different story.

The difference between women's and men's pay/wages in the private sector is 18% and in the public sector it is 10%. Even after taking into consideration differences such as higher education and seniority etc. the inequality is still there. Admittedly it is less - about 2% in the public sector and 12% in the private sector - but it is still there. Another strange statistic - in 1996 women civil engineers received 98.5% of their male colleagues' pay but now it has dropped to 96.4%.

The Danish Labour Minister and the Equality Minister are reportedly in a state of shock and have now got together and had a hearing to discuss this question. It is difficult to understand why these facts should be so surprising to them when women's organisations have been fighting for equality, almost shouting about it from the housetops.

The trouble in Denmark is that there is a secretiveness about pay and you are not supposed to discuss it with anyone. The Equality Minister says transparency is necessary and that it is difficult to demand one's rights if one is not aware of what one's colleagues get paid. She thinks that a greater focus on the inequality will help and she aims at halving the difference in 5 years. Further, it is said that the Labour Minister is quite likely to introduce legislation on this issue.

From Padmini Casinader Christiansen, Convenor, IAW Committee on CEDAW. She makes a personal comment - I can't think how the Minister is going to handle the Old Boys of Industrial Denmark!!

Editor's questions: What is the situation in other countries that have equal pay legislation? Is this an issue that should be workshopped at the next Congress for inclusion in the IAW Action Programme?

From the EC

Maybe our readers have noticed a delay in sending you the newsletter. The reason: your editor got into serious trouble with her computer, but it is right again and as safe as possible.

We have to make a correction. The November/December Newsletter indicated that the Board in Tel Aviv did not have a quorum. Well, only at the start. Later another member arrived.

Note: to avoid misunderstanding, we always send the IAW Newsletter twice, 1) in the body of the e-mail, and 2) as an attachment, saved in Word 6.0/95. Both have exactly the same content. The only difference is, that the attachment has a better lay-out, so it will be easy for Affiliates to copy it and send it by post to IAW members without e-mail.

Please note too that the e-mail address of IAW Secretary Priscilla Todd has changed into toddsec@golocal.com.au

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.

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International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

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