

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Equal Rights—Equal Opportunities
Droits égaux—responsabilités égales



Newsletter February 2018 No 1

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Dear members and subscribers.

We have designated our representatives to the UN and other international bodies.

CSW is close, and we have information about IAW events in New York during CSW.

In the December Newsletter we asked readers to send reports about the #MeToo movement. Thank you for sending your contributions.

In Iceland a new standard has been set for equal pay. We have a very interesting article about this on the website. There is a reference to this article in this Newsletter.

IAW International Representatives

A new year has begun, and once again IAW has appointed our representatives to international organizations and bodies.

The following members are the main representatives at the different places. The total number of IAW women who work on a voluntary and unpaid basis is much larger.

UN New York: Soon-Young Yoon (USA) - yooncsw@aol.com

UN Geneva: Lyda Verstegen (Netherlands) - iawlyda@gmail.com

WHO: Ursula Nakamura (Switzerland) - ursula.nakamura@bluewin.ch

UN Vienna: Rosy Weiss (Austria) - rosy.weiss@gmx.at

UNESCO: Monique Bouaziz (France) - monique.bouaziz4@orange.fr

FAO: Jessica Kehl-Lauff (Switzerland) - ojekehl@bluewin.ch

Council of Europe: Heleen Jansen (Netherlands) - heleen.jansen@orange.fr

EWL: Arina Angerman (Netherlands) - arina.angerman@gmail.com

EWL Observatory: Jocelyne Scutt— jocelyne.scutt@cantab.net

African Union: Rita Mbatha (Zimbabwe) - wccf.trust@outlook.com

Arab League: Horeya Megahed (Egypt) - horeyamegahed@hotmail.com

International Criminal Court: Deirdre Pirro (Italy) - ddpirro@gmail.com



Sizani Ngubane

The NGO CSW Forum Woman of Distinction is [Sizani Ngubane](#)

Sizani Ngubane is a member of IAW. She is a South African activist who works for rural women's rights. She is the founder of the Rural Women's Movement in 1990 which later became the National Movement of Rural Women.

Congratulations, Sizani!

Every year NGO CSW/NY presents the Women of Distinction Award to a woman in recognition of her leadership in the struggle for gender equality, human rights and women's empowerment. The awardee gives the Keynote Address at the Consultation Day, the launch of the CSW62 Forum. The award is presented at the NGO CSW/NY Reception.

IAW nominated her for the award.

Sizani will be the keynote speaker at the IAW Parallel event (see below)



Sizani Ngubane

IAW at the Commission on the Status of Women 62 (CSW62)

A delegation of 20 IAW members will attend the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

IAW will be holding a parallel event:

Rural women's empowerment – Strategies and challenges of women's NGOs The case of South-Africa and India

Speakers will be:

Sizani Ngubane, Rural Women's Movement of South Africa

Rakesh Dhawan, President of All India Women's Conference

Bhavna Joshipura All India Women's Conference

March 16, 12.30 at the Armenian Convention Center, Guild Hall

[Read more](#)

Canadian Federation of University Woman (CFUW), a recent affiliate of IAW will be holding the following parallel event:

Opportunities and Challenges for Rural Women in the Global Community

March 13, 10.30 am, Armenian Convention Center, Vartan Hall



New members:

Feminine Association Songmanegre for Development (AFD), Burkina Faso, was admitted as a member of IAW at Congress in Cyprus.

The Songmanegre Women's Development Association was established in 2000

Our mission is:

Promotion of women's rights by:

- The fight against circumcision and the repair of the after effects of circumcision
- The promotion of family planning
- Literacy and schooling of women
- The fight against women's poverty
- The fight against forced and early marriage of girls
- The fight against the expropriation and exclusion of women
- Combating the other worst forms of violence against women
- Advocacy with customary authorities and land chiefs that culminated in the public declaration of abandonment of the practice of excision, collective marriage, the acquisition of portions of arable land, the reintegration of girl mothers into their family etc.

Our approach is participatory. This allows us to mobilize our community to achieve positive change.



WHO Ad-hoc Technical
Advisory Group

Soon-Young Yoon, IAW main representative to New York, reports:

IAW representative, Soon-Young Yoon spoke about “Harnessing civil society to safeguard progress and promote accountability” at the meeting of the WHO Ad Hoc Technical Advisory Group on Health Promotion in the SDGs” held in Berlin 11 to 12 December 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to mobilize “bold political action” to promote health in the SDGs. Yoon emphasized the importance of putting women’s human rights and leadership at the center of health promotion. “The secret to scale-up and speed-up implementation of health in the SDGs is to engage the feminist and women’s movements,” she said. Participants included mayors, ministers of health, media and grass-roots groups as well as health experts. All pledged to work harder for a successful UN General Assembly discussion to take place on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in 2018.

Water and Pads for School Girls –Empowerment for Life Gudrun Haupter and Ursula Nakamura report:

As mentioned in the December Newsletter, the IAW member organizations in developing countries are presently writing about their specific needs for menstruating school-girls. We are hoping to get many answers.

In the meantime we want to share with you some news from two African members.

Claire Gyebéré from Burkina Faso, points out that among the population of 12 million inhabitants 30% have no access to drinking water and 70% are lacking toilets. The women are also often affected by extreme poverty. The consequences are particularly dramatic for school-girls. Claire Gyebéré has a longstanding record of promoting the education of girls regarding their health rights. Because of the lack of water and proper toilets in the majority of schools the parents want to protect their daughters from shame. Therefore they prefer to keep them at home during their menstruation. Even if there are separate toilets for girls and boys, very often the manually operated water pumps yield no water. So besides of providing affordable pads to all school-girls a better water-supply and sanitary installations are urgently needed for improving the precarious situation of menstruating girls.



Claire Gyebéré

Just at the end of 2017 **Rita Marque Mbatha from Zimbabwe** sent us an alarming mail about toxic water in her country. Bernhard Manyenyeni, mayor of Harare, is presently warning all residents not to drink any tap water. Due to a shortage of foreign currency the local authorities could not buy the required chemicals for the necessary water purification...

Because many people cannot afford to buy bottled water, they resort to drinking contaminated water even by drilling private boreholes. This is very risky for the health.

As Rita mentions "...the current problem is huge and needs government intervention and there has been a huge outcry concerning the toxic water..."



Rita Marque Mbatha

This situation shows us how precarious everyday-life is in many IAW member countries. It is also clear that our IAW project cannot solve all these heavy problems, but hopefully we can at least alleviate the situation by our helping the interested IAW member organizations, by our public advocacy on the national and international level and eventually by supporting a small business producing pads or a sanitary installations in a school.

UN 09.01.2018

Read also

Breaking social taboos, tribal girl applies for sanitary napkin vending machine in her village :

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/breaking-social-taboos-tribal-girl-applies-for-sanitary-vending-machine-in-her-village/articleshow/62602740.cms>

*Sustainable development
- a comment on the IAW Action Programme*

Population Growth and Sustainable Development —a comment by Ida Kurth, IAW representative at UNESCO for Sustainable Development and Climate Change

Population control has been ignored in MDG programs for Sustainable Development and Climate Change and the battle cry "Women's Empowerment" of the IAW has a hollow ring when women still do not have control of their

own reproductive system and this in the 21st Century. There has been no feedback from Affiliates and Associates on birth control management, the same with the WHO. Dr Nafis Sadik former Executive Director of the UN Population Fund UNFPA said it is disappointing that in Agenda 21 family planning was not mentioned. Progress of women is free decision making i.e. responsible planning of family size which leads not only to maternal health and the wellbeing of the family but also of society.

Dr. Reiner Klingholz, Director of the Institute for Population and Development in Berlin has, together with other authors, evaluated the ambitious projects of the United Nations - The UN Development Agenda. The Programme embraces 8 millennium development goals as well as 21 further targets up to the year 2015.

He comes to the conclusion that the rapid rise of global population is counterproductive to sustainable development. The poorest countries have the highest population rate and are notorious troublespots where civil war, terror and dysfunctional governments are in power. The young grown-ups, living in poverty and hunger and with no perspectives whatsoever, find their way to the terror camps where they are received with open arms. Young women, according to Rashid Manju from Cape Town South Africa, are enslaved, raped if virgins and sold.

Overpopulation is an environmental danger and would lead to a sustainability crisis. A more balanced population growth has a sustainable future.

From Soon-Young Yoon, IAW main representative to the UN at New York



Introducing new members of IAW (and a few veterans). From left to right: Zahra Nazvi, Rahima Sajid, Denise Scotto, Azadhi Khalili, and Johanna Sterbin. Azadhi is the new UN representative in New York. She is the founding (former) Executive Director of the Commission for Gender Equity for New York City and CEDAW activist from Iran. We are proud to have this group in New York!

#HerNetHerRights: useful information in Times of #MeToo and #CSW62

European Women's Lobby

By Arina Angerman, representing IAW in Board of European Women's Lobby

"The Istanbul Convention states that violence against women can never be justified in the name of culture, custom, religion, tradition nor so-called



#MeToo—Person of the Year

'honour'". Cyprus became the 27th member state of the Council of Europe to ratify the Convention and Switzerland the 28th!

In November 2017 the European Women's Lobby (EWL) published the Report **#HerNetHerRights** and Resource Pack mapping the state of online violence against women and girls in times where we have entered the second wave of the digital age. In Europe, 9 million girls have experienced some kind of cyber violence by the time they are 15 years old! Globally, women are 27 times more likely to be harassed online. [In this Report you can read an Executive Summary of 1 page](#) (page 4).

One nice to know action: *"Tech companies have agreed to a Code of Conduct with the European Commission."*

From April to November 2017 the EWL led this six-month project.

Marion Boeker and I (and IAW expert Jocelyne Scutt in EWL's Observatory) contributed to this EWL project by email in September 2017.

Why is this #HerNetHerRights Report so important? Because of the #MeToo movement in 2017 and the #CSW62 in 2018. The review theme of CSW 62 is 'Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies'. The Swedish Women's Lobby submitted a [statement](#) including, *"Women taking on a public role are more exposed to hateful speech and outright threats. This is a democratic problem which needs to be addressed."* This statement was co-signed by EWL and including IAW.

IAW at website of EWL

Did you know how IAW and our new logo is at the website of EWL? [You can find the updated information by opening this link!](#)



India

#MeToo

#METOO AND BEYOND

by Anjana Basu, India

The Harvey Weinstein exposure burst on the world in a shower of hashtags. Women were encouraged to speak up about the issue of sexual abuse and every day there was something in the paper about a Hollywood actor or rock star or politician being accused. The #MeToo campaign that was evolved out of sympathy to create a global sisterhood was seen in India too.

The fact that Bollywood had its own casting couch was never a secret and many actresses like Swara Bhaskar and Tisca Chopra spoke up about what they had suffered at the hands of directors. However, in most cases the names of the offenders remained secret. Some pointed out that while accepting the fact of abuse was brave, once the names were out in the open, their careers were under threat especially in a patriarchal society like India where men had right of way and where the Bollywood circle could only be described as vicious.

Feminists protested on social media at this refusal to name and shame but for the most part, the names were kept under wraps and remain so. #MeToo also provoked a great deal of sympathetic hashtagging by women who admitted



Anjana Basu

they had never been abused but wished to stand in solidarity with the women who had.

As with many social media initiatives in India, it was pointed out that the #MeToo initiative started trending because it began in the US. That India had other abuse issues to deal with that went beyond movie moguls and had actually started attracting attention earlier.

Sexual abuse in the family coupled with domestic violence is more prevalent in this country and various NGOs have been dealing with the issue for quite a while. The Indian press is now increasingly filled with cases of other types of sexual abuse which actually started before #MeToo but which now, de-linked from the hashtag, seem to be taking pride of place. Sexual harassment in the office space had been highlighted pre #MeToo and there were two prominent cases making headlines which named Rajendra Pachauri who worked on climate change with Al Gore and noted journalist and author Tarun Tejpal as violators – the cases still have to reach any conclusion and are being dragged through the courts.

There has been a spate of assaults on 4 and 5 year olds by teachers and physical trainers leading to the sacking of male staff by schools and in one case the dismissal of a headmistress. Harvey Weinstein's name lingers in some tabloids but the #MeToo issue has gone back to being overshadowed by the greater issue of abuse in a society dominated by patriarchs with a communal mindset.

Netherlands

'The way I dress is not a yes'

By Lyda Verstegen , The Netherlands

#MeToo was almost chosen as word of the year. It was one of five words on the shortlist for the election by linguists and volunteers in the Netherlands.

#MeToo helps to break the taboo on sexual violence. Even a 49 year old woman, who felt guilty and dirty because a grown man had exposed himself to her and a friend when they were six, talked to a newspaper and felt relieved. Years of therapy had not achieved that. Women felt freer to talk about violence to men who are harassing them. Men feel uncertain and don't know how to react. Where before this hashtag people would doubt a story of sexual violence, now they are more inclined to believe it.

Slowly it becomes more accepted that if a woman says 'no' she means 'no'. 'It is a change that has been long in the coming' says Prof. Renee Romkens (the director of Atria and professor gender related violence at the University of Amsterdam): In the years 70 and 80 we saw the Witches nights, where women 'took back the streets'.

The phone calls to the Centre Sexual Violence have doubled in recent months. And very often they are tales of long ago. It goes to show how harrowing such experiences can be. MP Kirsten van de Hul had a motion accepted to make sexual resilience and safety part of the school curriculum. Kirsten, now an MP, called herself a change maker when she was chosen as representative of the Dutch women to address the United Nations; now she proves it.

#MeToo and 16 days of Activism Campaign Ruhi, Sayid, Pakistan

All Pakistan Women Association (APWA), joined the international community for the global campaign, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence from November 25 (International End Violence against Women Day)

until December 10 (International Human Rights Day),

Continuing the efforts for the advocacy of women rights, we launched a campaign under the overarching theme “Zero Tolerance – End Violence against women and girls” reflecting the core principle of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our WORK TO PREVENT GBV, in more than 42 Districts of Pakistan. In the past APWA supported interventions to combat gender-based violence including confidential medical care, counseling, legal assistance and community-based action and awareness programs.



In collaboration with a number of civil society organizations, the association initiated a number of events to create awareness about violence against women. The activities included theatre performances, videos and speeches by survivors of violence, training and provision of legal aid, support for survivors of violence, distribution of pro-women laws booklets.

A social media campaign “agents of social change” involving men and children was the important intervention.

The campaign used the orange colour designated by the UNiTE campaign to symbolize a brighter future without violence.

It is worth mentioning, in a set-up where women are faced with harsh criticism for having experienced instances of unwanted sexual advances, the movement has, in fact, brought out the magnitude and universality of the matter. Thousands of women across the world, including Pakistan, have put up a brave front against sexual assault and workplace harassment set by a powerful hash tag on social media.

Unlike previous instances when campaigns against sexual assault had little impact in Pakistan, the “#MeToo” lobby gained an alarmingly high traction in the country. Women from all walks of life took to social media to admit they had suffered too.

[Beware the #MeToo Backlash—It Masks Ugly Lies About Women](#)

Read this article in WeNews

Equal Pay on Iceland

Companies In Iceland Now Required To Demonstrate They Pay Men, Women Fairly

[Read more on the IAW website](#)

Women's March 2018

The Movement continues

2nd Women's March - January 20, 2018

by Cheryl Hayles, VP North America

1st Women's March January 20, 2017 to protest Mysogyny in the highest political office in the world.

Five Top Reasons for Marching on January 20th 2018:

1. Send a clear political message that women want fairness in the electoral process
2. Gender based violence will not be tolerated
3. Women have a powerful voice
4. Women have strong associations ready to engage
5. It's a new day and women are claiming their rights with confidence

If you know anyone who marched on January 20th, ask them what inspired them to march. In Canada 38 communities had organized marches. Even the introverts came out! Whether you are an introvert or an extravert the march has a place for you. Contact your local women's organizations, volunteer to help organize for next year and most importantly keep your policy makers accountable every day of the year. I do believe there is a connection between the women's march and the resignation, one week later, of 3 prominent Canadian male politicians charged with harassment. When women's voices are heard it changes the atmosphere in very real ways.

Women's March in New York, Indianapolis and Stockholm



*Soon-Young Yoon with
Adama Diop from Senegal,
(Immediate Past-Chair of
CoNGO).*

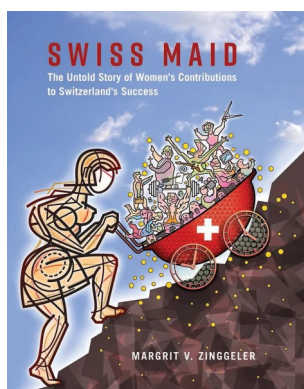


*Alison Brown in
Indianapolis*



The march was held on the 21st of January, one of the coldest days so far this winter. Despite the cold, people gathered on Norrmalmstorg in central Stockholm and the Fredrika Bremer association joined the march. The Stockholm march was arranged by Women's March Stockholm and Metoo Sweden and was a joint event focusing both on the global backlash for women's rights and the last months #metoo revolution in Sweden.

Books



It is a great pleasure to announce the publication of:

SWISS MAID—THE UNTOLD STORY OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SWITZERLAND'S SUCCESS (Peter Lang 2017)

It is in essence an answer to R. James Breiding's Book: Swiss Made. The untold story behind Switzerland's success

More information: [Margrit Zinggeler](#), the author

A graphic novel—a brilliant communication tool

Telling Our Stories: Immigrant Women's Resilience".

The use of the graphic novel as a communication tool is a brilliant idea. The combination of visuals and short text ensures the graphic novel is easy to read. This medium alleviates language barriers that a text rich document might present for non native English speakers.

Four women; Kose, Magali, Amal and Manuela share their personal stories as survivors of gender based violence. In a very brave way the heroines invite the reader into their lives and unveil the challenges they faced in their adopted country.

Though the stories are laced with violence, they are so gripping that one is compelled to read all four at once. The common message of each story is that it takes much courage to face the destructive nature of violence but, with support, women can rebuild their lives by connecting with a network of advocates. The network of women who supported Kose, Magali, Amal and Manuela proved to be ingenious problem solvers, counsellors, and protectors.

This review of the novel is written by Cheryl Hayles, VP North America

[Read the whole article](#)

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