

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

Equal Rights—Equal Opportunities
Droits égaux—responsabilités égales



Newsletter April 2018 No 2

In this issue:

1. CSW 62
2. Peace Commission
3. Board Meeting in Berlin
4. Introduction of new member
5. EWL
6. Water and Pads
-incl article from Anjana

Dear members and subscribers.

In this Newsletter we have several reports from CSW62. There are official documents like the Oral Statement that IAW and CFUW were given the opportunity to deliver to the Commission on the Status of Women, and there are personal reports like the New Delegate's Report or Highlights etc.

This Newsletter does not include a proper evaluation of CSW as such or the Agreed Conclusions. This will follow later.

Deutscher Frauenring (DFR), our German affiliate, invites the IAW Board to come to Berlin for the Board Meeting.

The new convener of the Peace Commission reaches out to IAW members.

News about the Water and Pads project.

CSW 62

IAW at CSW62

- introductory remarks

Again this year, a big delegation of IAW members attended CSW. Among the delegates were a number of new faces.

CSW is the most important Commission of the UN on gender equality and women's human rights. It is the largest annual gathering of the international women's movement at the UN, a time for renewal of collective purpose and action. What happens in New York is very important for the international community and in particular for the more than 4000 feminists and women who come to New York hoping that they can contribute to changes in international policies that have to do with women's human rights and organize parallel events. This year there were more than 400 parallel events with many interesting speakers.

IAW had nominated Sizani Ngubane, founder of Rural Women's Movement of South Africa for the NGO CSW Woman of Distinction Award. Out of 80 candidates from different parts of the world Sizani was chosen as this year's awardee. This gave a lot of visibility to both Sizani and her organisation and to IAW. Read more about Sizani [on the IAW website](#).

The Belinda and Bill Gates Foundation has made a documentary of Sizani and 5 other women. Hopefully we shall get to see it at some point.

**Agreed conclusions
were adopted**

[See Press Release](#)



Sizani Ngubane's speech on Consultation Day March 11

As is the tradition at CSW, the awardee of the year is the keynote speaker on Consultation Day. This was also the case this year. Sizani Ngubane delivered the following speech:

I cannot believe I am here. I am so humble and grateful. It is a privilege, honour, joy, and mainly a RESPONSIBILITY to receive the NGOCSW Woman of Distinction Award.

Who am I, a poor, rural, Zulu woman who did not have an opportunity to get formal education but made it her responsibility to educate herself, to be receiving such an honour and speaking to such prominent and very powerful women?

I guess the answer is that, in spite of what appears to be our differences, I am you...and you are me. And each of us, in our own way, in our respective countries, has been fighting for the same thing: the inalienable rights of women and girls living in the rural areas, of indigenous girls and women and gender equality.

[Read the rest of Sizani's moving speech](#)

CSW Consultation Day

CSW 62 Consultation Day March 11, 2018

by Cheryl Hayles, VP North America and Gail Crawford, CFUW

Sponsored by the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) which is currently in contact with more than 20,000 women from 189 countries, the opening session was held at the City of Manhattan Community College. The priority theme of the UN sessions addressed the "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and empowerment of rural women and girls".

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, was one of three opening speakers on the topic of "Advancing Towards Leaving No One Behind". A remarkable woman in her own right, she has devoted her life to issues around human rights, equality and social justice. Involved in the struggle to end apartheid in her home country of South Africa, she was an MP in South Africa's first democratic government. She painted a grim picture for the 400-million women African farm workers who experience gender inequality, few rights, little or no wages and inability to own the land they farm. Governments have to take responsibility for improving conditions for working women, she says, and although they may pay lip service to the issue, in remote communities this has no effect. Dr. Mlambo-Ngcuka advised delegates to resist the normalization of bad behaviour by using resilience, conviction and assertiveness.

Here are some quotes from her very inspirational speech for further reflection:

- *Labour laws for rural women are necessary.*
- *They (women in rural areas) feed us but they are invisible.*



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka



Cheryl Hayles

- *Girls become child labour due to lack of sanitation, water and transportation infrastructure.*
- *A 7 year old has to make up for policy failure by carrying water for miles.*
- *Make sure we do not have a disconnect with urban based women as they have similar challenges as women in rural areas.*
- *Direct engagement with the women in the local context is key.*
- *Nigeria created safe homes for women who have suffered violence. This is also a “Me Too” moment. This is psychological support.*
- *Women need the benefit of being validated even when they are not doing ground breaking stuff.*
- *Encouragement. The power of lifting as you climb. Even when you don’t like someone encourage and validate when they do the right thing.*
- *Nothing about us without us.*

H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland) also delivered an address. She talked about the moral challenge of gender inequality being gender inequality. Participation and the ability for women to address these issues themselves are important pieces of the work. In Ireland something as simple as giving washing machines to rural women allowed them a free evening to organize themselves for advocacy. I felt her most important statement was, “People who assume local leadership are versed in Human rights”. In her final comment, she quoted Beckett, “Resiliency means to fail, fail again, fail better”.

Keynote speaker was Sizani Ngubane, Founder of Rural Women’s Movement South Africa and this year’s recipient of CSW’s Woman of Distinction Award. Sizani was nominated by the International Alliance of Women for her remarkable work. She stated her “Me Too” moment began 64 years ago when she was 6 years old, hiding under her mother’s bed listening to free radio from Zimbabwe, former Rhodesia. She heard “Smith is killing people every day at 7 p.m.” and that compelled her to make a difference in the world!

[Read Sizani’s speech](#)

The afternoon session “Technology and Media in the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls”, provided some practical strategies to be effective communicators in the struggle for equality and empowerment. First, know your audience. Most people are not driven by facts but by human experiences; since we live in an age of story telling, tailor your messages accordingly. Speak or write with love and speak to the heart; negative messaging is not effective. Work with trusted voices and pick your spokespeople carefully. It is not what is said but who is saying it. Conversations, not content, drive discussion. Create a “surround sound” and radio is the best medium for this approach. If content is king, then distribution is the kingdom. Think about what partnerships we need to get our messages across.

These “Seven Golden Rules for Storytellers” were highlighted in documentaries and national campaigns on women’s issues, created and directed by women in media.

To end the day, Mayor Garacetti was given the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Award” and a posthumous award to San Francisco Mayor Lee, which was accepted by his daughter.



Sizani Ngubane, Cheryl Hayles

IAW Parallel Event at CSW62

-Rural Women’s Empowerment—Strategies and Challenges of Women’s NGOs - report from Soon-Young Yoon

On 16 March 2018 during CSW 62, Joanna Mangara, President of IAW opened a parallel event, “Rural Women’s Empowerment—Strategies and Challenges of Women’s NGOs” at the Armenian Convention Center. Sizani Ngubane, spoke about her childhood. “I heard banging and crying every night—and I knew my aunt was getting a beating from her husband”, she said. Violence against women is one of the many issues facing rural women in Africa. Her mother was evicted from her lands when she was widowed because women cannot own land in her community. Other speakers from AIWC and the CFUW spoke of their own personal stories related to their commitment to work for women’s rights.

Soon-Young Yoon, the moderator, concluded that all speakers had travelled a difficult journey, but are now empowered to use their difficult experiences to make them leaders on a global stage.

A new delegate’s perspective

A New Delegate’s Perspective

By Gail Neff, CFUW

It was an amazing experience to hear about the conditions of women in countries all over the world. To get an overview of this huge conference with 4,000 delegates*, I attended about five 90 min. panel discussions per day for 6 days! I heard presentations from ambassadors, ministers, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and civil society (citizen activists) on a variety of topics including rural women in agriculture, land rights, inheritance rights, politics, education, access to internet and radio to reduce isolation and increase knowledge, child marriage, and violence to name just a few. It produced a whirlwind of information that I am still struggling to organize and communicate in a way that does justice to the issues.

[Read the rest of her lively story](#)



Gail Neff and Sizani Ngubane

***Oral Statement delivered to
the Commission on the Status
of Women***



*Amanda Keeling preparing to
deliver the oral statement*

Oral Statement at CSW

IAW and CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women) were shortlisted to make an oral statement to the Commission on the Status of Women. The statement was delivered by Amanda Keeling, Women's Electoral Lobby, a member of IAW in Australia:

Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ministers, and civil society members

I am speaking here today on behalf of the Canadian Federation of University Women and the International Alliance of Women. We welcome the opportunity to address this assembly and we acknowledge the privilege that we have to do so.

Rural women and girls are among the world's most marginalized populations. They have consistently been at the bottom of development measures, and are still facing overwhelming gender inequalities and discrimination.

At this point in history there is an urgency for member states, in collaboration with civil society, to make gender equality comprehensive. Rural women can no longer be excluded from the conversation, particularly racialized women, Indigenous women, migrant women, women from gender and sexual minorities, and women with disabilities.

Based on the research we have conducted among rural women and community organizations, the transportation gap and the lack of available public services are undeniable challenges that clearly influence a woman's experience in rural settings. Rural women are challenged with reduced access to training, education, employment, child care services as well as health and mental health services; all essential determinants in women's empowerment. Moreover, the isolation, the limited access to safe transportation and support services also increases women's vulnerability to violence.

Strategies to reduce or remove the barriers and to increase the availability of resources and services for women and girls must be prioritized when developing public policy and programs targeting rural and remote areas.

We urge member states to adopt the following recommendations:

- Address mobility barriers by improving public transportation infrastructure and technology infrastructure to increase access
- Create incentives for professional workers to work in rural regions and increase the presence of community based solutions to challenges
- Increase funding to ensure comprehensive, accessible health and mental health services; including sexual and reproductive health
- Ensure that women and girls in rural and remote areas are legally protected, with fair laws, from any form of violence
- Guarantee core-funding for shelters and affordable housing
- Ensure access to quality public education at all levels, including early learning and affordable childcare services to enable rural women to access education opportunities, re-training and employment.

We stay attentive to the outcome of this meeting in generating concerted actions within member states, and we salute the dedication of country representatives, but especially the relentless work of women's organizations across the world in advancing rural women's rights.



Watch Amanda delivering the statement:

<https://vimeo.com/261339519>

Reflections on CSW62 NGO Statement

11am Wednesday 21st March UN Headquarters, New York
Amanda Keeling, Women's Electoral Lobby Australia

I was honoured to be asked by IAW VP North America, Cheryl Hayles, to deliver the Canadian Federation of University Women and International Alliance of Women's NGO Statement during CSW62 at UN Headquarters in New York.

There were about 20 other women - activists, change-makers and members of civil society of diverse backgrounds and ages - who were preparing to speak to the UN on behalf of their organisations, and on behalf women and girls living rural areas across the globe.

I felt both nervous, and excited. What a wonderful opportunity to speak on the rights of women and girls who have been left behind on so many indicators of equality, including education, health, employment, property rights and wellbeing.

As I began to read the Statement, I was calmed by the fact that I was speaking on behalf of so many women from so many countries. It was their voices that were raised in our Statement and it was an honour to carry those voices to the floor of the UN. It was also fabulous to be the only Australian voice delivering an NGO Statement. Afterwards, women took time to comment, telling me that they found our statement well informed, relevant and constructive.

Thank you to those from IAW and CFUW who conducted the research, prepared the statement, and conferred on me the opportunity to speak on behalf of our organisations, and the women we represent.



Natalie Kostus

Highlights from CSW 62

by Natalie Kostus, Executive Vice President, IAW

Most exciting CSW 62 event I was a speaker at, was on climate justice and just transition from a gender lens. I thank the organizers: Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON), Beyond Copenhagen Collective (BCPH) and Public Advocacy Initiatives for Rights and Values in India (PAIRVI).

Highlight from the CSW 62 IAW meeting at the Greek Mission, was my report on the work of the Commission on Climate Change, I chair, on the progress to date on implementation of the IAW Action Programme and activities at CSW 62. I invite all interested IAW members to participate in our work on climate change and women's rights.

Promising future step for IAW from our meetings at the CSW 62, in my role as Vice President, is a conference call I will be organizing together with Cheryl Hayles Vice President North America, for IAW members in North America region, to update on our work at the CSW 62 and meet our members. I hope to replicate this idea and have conference calls with IAW regions. More details to come.



Babies at the UN

Unusual sight ahead of CSW 62, were hundreds of babies and their moms and dads at the UN for the Women's Day event to make it more acceptable for women, mothers of young children, to bring their babies to meetings, not to be excluded from public life. H.E. Ambassador Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria and UN Gender Champion had his baby on his arms during his address.



Reunion Dinner

Once again, Soon-Young Yoon, main IAW representative to the UN New York, hosted a dinner for all IAW delegates. As always it was a happy occasion for meeting old friends and making new.

MANY, MANY THANKS, SOON-YOUNG!



Delegates with ambassador

Meeting at the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations

The delegates of CFUW and IAW met for a "Meet and Greet" session. This was followed by a business session of IAW members

IAW Peace Commission

Peace Commission

– outreach and invitation to all IAW members from Heide Schuetz, Convener of Peace Commission

In Nicosia I was kindly appointed convenor of the IAW Peace Commission for the next three years.

Two topics are on my mind that the Peace Commission should start with. Both gain considerable impact if dealt with on an international level. Therefore the Peace Commission of IAW is a great chance to share information and visions and make a rich contribution to these peace issues. One is the UNSEC Resolution 1325 and additional resolutions since the year 2000, the other is the topic of the culture of peace that we already started to discuss in Nicosia during breaks. The culture of peace is deeply rooted in every culture, but very often hidden, ruled out, forgotten or simply neglected. There is a great variety and diversity as well as there are common roots and traditions. This is where we can all contribute and learn from each other. I strongly believe that the culture of peace is a cornerstone to peace after all.



Heide Schuetz

The UN Resolution 1325 was supposed to bring women to the peace negotiating table, including grassroot peace women from areas of –armed – conflict. A relatively great number of states have even passed National Action Plans for its implementation, but the profound change has not taken place at all, only some examples of shuttle diplomacy are to be found. Right now there is an international move by the UN Working Group on 1325 to gain the attention of the international community to this disastrous deficit, since the resolution is binding. (IAW was also asked to give support) This is not a new topic for the Peace Commission but as far as I am concerned we should not let it go but link to the international women and peace community while having a close eye on the policy of one's own country. Here we can also share information and bring together best practices and lessons learnt.

Please feel invited to participate in this commission if you are interested in

peace issues and especially in these two topics and if you have some time to spend on some research and communication tasks. Other topics may come up later .

Please send an email to heide.schuetz@t-online.de

IAW Meeting in Berlin

October 23—29 2018

Business sessions for the

Board: 26th –28th



Deutscher Frauenring, German affiliate of IAW, has kindly invited IAW to hold the 2018 Board Meeting in Berlin.

The IAW Board meeting will take place in Berlin on the 23rd to 29th October 2018, the business session will be on the 26th to 28th October.

In addition to the Board meeting, the Deutscher Frauenring as the hostess of the board meeting is planning a conference of 2 days which is open to the public and aligned NGO alliances (1325 alliance, alliance for CEDAW, National German Women's Council...) too.

The preliminary programme of the International Seminar "Squaring the circle for women, peace and security" deals with following issues: UNSCR 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" and the German and other National Action Plans UNSCR 1325, a Panel "Extending Space for Women Peacemakers"; The Human Right of Peace, The Culture of Peace;

On Friday evening, the President of the Berlin House of Representatives and Members of the Berlin Land Parliament will hold a reception on the occasion of "100 Years of Women's Vote" for IAW and DFR in the Berlin House of Representatives, to which the DFR will invite some more NGO partners.

[The invitation with information about programme, accommodation etc is available here](#)

Ntengwe for Community Development was admitted to IAW as an affiliate at Congress 2017



Ntengwe for Community Development - new affiliate

[Ntengwe for Community Development \(Ntengwe\)](#) is a not for profit organization with over 20 years of experience dedicated to working with communities to reach their full potential. Ntengwe's mission is to work with communities to support rights, end poverty and protect the environment. The organization develops strategic partnerships and linkages among grassroots women's organizations, advancing their capacity to collectively influence political spaces on behalf of their communities and enhance their sustainable, resilient community development practices. The four thematic areas of the organization are:

Health: to address any type of health issues, especially disability

Livelihoods: to invest in livelihoods for sustainable solutions that enable women to transform their lives

Rights: to promote equality for women and girls and prevent Gender-Based Violence

Environment: to promote environment as a Disaster Risk Reduction solution.

The organization aims to strengthen marginalized communities' capacity, especially women, youth and children to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the grassroots level. Ntengwe champions inclusive development that centre-stages grassroots women as decision-makers, and supports grassroots women with tools to expand their leadership capacity, as well as platforms to share their voices, strategies, and successes with other grassroots women globally.

Read more in [*IWNews - Women's Organisation Corner – Vol 112 No 1 2017*](#)

European Women's Lobby

Arina Angerman, IAW representative on the Board of the European Women's Lobby, writes:



IAW has in her beautiful logo Jus Suffragii, which is Latin for 'The Right of Suffrage'. As IAW representative I am a member of the EWL Women in Politics Working Group, whose purpose is "To position women at the heart of political participation and decision-making i.a. develop a campaign strategy to achieve parity democracy - meaning 50% women in the European Parliament in the 2019 elections and 50% women in the new European Commission." Our first 'online' meeting in 2018 is planned and will be facilitated by Daniela Picher, new Policy and Campaigns Director at EWL. She (like me and other feminists) fiercely believes in feminist leadership and women's power as an active agent of change!

[Read her full report](#)

Water and Pads Project - status of project In English and French

"Water and Pads project" – badly needed in IAW countries By Signe Vahlun

In order to find out the needs for a "water and pads" project, a questionnaire has been sent out to all IAW member organisations in Asia and Africa. The responses have been excellent and for most parts very detailed, confirming the necessity for such a project.

It is clear that countries in the sub Saharan region have been keenly aware of local challenges for quite some time and they are pointing to some shared challenges. Generally, responses from African members highlight part of the problem as practical challenges such as a lack of clean water and toilet facilities in schools, as well as a basic lack of access to sanitary pads.

In addition, members have included other challenges such as stigma and misunderstandings surrounding menstruation. This especially in rural areas where basic hygiene and healthcare education are often lacking, both in schools but also within the local population.

Due to the difficulty for girls to access private and sanitary bathroom facilities in school during their period, and because of local beliefs and misconceptions surrounding menstruation, it is clear that far too many girls are being kept out of school for several days a month. A problem that is in indeed an equality issue.

The detailed answers IAW members provided in response to the questionnaire not only confirm a need for a project like "water and pads for schoolgirls" but also stress the importance to adapt it to different local contexts.

Given the high rate of response and the detailed quality of feedback, the interest and need for the "water and pads" project is very clear. However the needs expressed vary in different parts of the world. It is therefore important to develop the project in a way, which makes it adaptable and suitable for local needs.



A number of IAW members are more than ready to get started. Even before receiving the questionnaire, they scrutinized both the problems and solutions in their own country. Some have already created contacts with local stakeholders.

It is indeed the strength of the IAW to have a strong connection to grass root organisations. The ability to provide knowledge of cultural settings and local needs makes it possible to further develop the “water and pads” project, so that it can be adapted and modified to fit different local contexts.

The next steps for the project will be to take the answers of the questionnaire into account in developing the project and, most important, to find adequate funding.

It is clear that IAW members are anxiously awaiting the project.

French version

Afin de déterminer les besoins d’un projet “eau and tampons” un questionnaire a été envoyé à toutes les organisations membres de l’AIF en Asie et en Afrique. Les réponses fournies ont été excellentes et pour une large partie très détaillées. Elles ont confirmé la nécessité d’un tel projet.

Il n’y a pas de doute que les pays de la région Subsaharienne ont été visiblement conscients des défis sur le plan local durant un bon moment et soulignent que certains sont les mêmes dans toute la région. Généralement, les réponses des membres africains mettent en relief que certains aspects du problème sont d’ordre pratique comme l’absence d’eau propre et l’accès aux toilettes dans les écoles, ainsi que l’accès aux tampons.

A cela les membres ajoutent d’autres défis comme la stigmatisation et les malentendus concernant la menstruation des filles. Ceci touche principalement les zones rurales où l’hygiène de base et la formation sanitaire ne sont pas à la hauteur ni dans les écoles, ni parmi la population locale.

A cause de la difficulté des jeunes filles à avoir accès aux toilettes privées et propres à l’école et des opinions et préjugés de la population locale en ce qui concerne la menstruation, un nombre inacceptable de jeunes filles est privé de l’enseignement scolaire pendant plusieurs jours par mois. Un problème qui relève d’une inégalité sexuelle et une discrimination à l’égard des filles.

La réponse détaillée qui a été fournie par les membres de l’AIF au questionnaire ne confirme pas seulement le besoin d’un projet “eau et tampons” pour les écolières, mais souligne la nécessité de l’adapter aux différents contextes locaux. Etant donné le taux élevé de réponses et la qualité détaillée des réactions, l’intérêt et le besoin pour le projet semble claire. Cependant les besoins exprimés varient selon les différentes régions du monde. Pour cette raison, il est important de développer le projet dans une direction qui prenne en compte les besoins locaux.

Un nombre de membres de IAW expriment une réelle volonté d’entamer le projet. Avant même de recevoir le questionnaire, ils se sont penchés sur les problèmes et solutions dans leur propre pays. Certains ont déjà noué contact avec les parties prenantes.

De fait l’une des forces de l’AIF réside dans ses liens forts avec les organisations de base. La capacité de transmettre du savoir concernant les critères culturels et les besoins locaux permet de développer d’avantage le projet “eau et tampons” afin qu’il puisse être adapté et modifié pour garantir sa compatibilité avec les différents contextes locaux.

Les prochaines démarches à faire dans le cadre du projet consistent à prendre en compte les réponses du questionnaire afin de développer le projet, et en premier lieu de trouver les fonds adéquats. Il est clair que certains membres de l’AIF attendent anxieusement son début.



Newsletter Editorial group:

Lene Pind: lenepind@gmail.com

Cheryl Hayles: cherylhayles@sympatico.ca

Christina Knight: christina@uknight.se

Miriam Kollberg: miriam@fredrikabremer.se