

[View this email in your browser](#)

IAW • AIF NEWSLETTER

February 2021 #1

Congress 2020

All documents related to IAW 38th Congress are available on the [website](#) under Members Documents. You may use your email and password to log in.

Post-Congress Board Meeting #1 December 12 2020.

The participants in Post-Congress Board Meeting #1 were the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary General and the rest of the newly elected Board Members.

At the meeting the following appointments were made:

Executive Vice Presidents: Manju Kak VP1. Marion Boeker VP2.

The Executive Committee consists of the President, Treasurer, Secretary General and the two Executive Vice Presidents

Assistant Treasurer: Jessika Kehl-Lauff

Assistant Secretary General: Miranda Ruzario

Commission Conveners:

Commission on Health: Gudrun Haupter

Commission on Violence against Women: Signe Gissel Schmidt

Commission on Human Rights: Lyda Verstegen

Commission on Democracy: Anje Wiersinga/ Heleen Jansen

Commission on Peace: Heide Schütz/ Manju Kak/ Esther Suter

Commission on Financial/Economic Policies: Joanna Manganara

- - - Members of the Commission: Vivian Konditambe, Roshan Ara, Manu Kak, Meenakshi Kuma

Commission on Education: K.G. Vijayalakshmi

Admissions Committee: Secretary General, President, Treasurer. The SG is the contact.

Post-Congress Board Meeting #2

Post-Congress Board Meeting #2 was held on January 12 2021. Information will follow in the next Newsletter.

INVOICING 2021

In February the IAW Membership Secretary will begin sending out invoices concerning membership fees for 2021.

Please, note that as mentioned in IAW Newsletter December 2020, Congress decided to raise membership fees:

Affiliates 130 €

Associates 75€

Individual members may choose between the following options:

Basic Individual Member: 30 €

Contributing Member: 50 €

Supporting Member: 100 €

Gender Advisory Group

IAW representative, Soon-Young Yoon, serves on the Gender Advisory Group convened by the President of the General Assembly, H. E. Volkan Bozkir. She reports that gender equality is one of his three priorities. IAW recommendations included how gender equality could best be mainstreamed through many events in the 75th session, including CSW 65. These included sessions on COVID-19, water, desertification, land degradation and drought, middle-income countries, least-developed countries, culture, corruption and HIV/AIDS—all which he agreed are interlinked with gender equality.

See attached full report.

CSW 2021

All India Women's Conference is organising a Parallel Event on 17th March, 2021. The topic of the event is "**Women's Daily Lives under COVID-19: Violence at Home and Beyond**". The event will be held as per U.S and

will represent IAW on the panel.



Vienna Declaration 2020

Austrian feminists have the chance of like-minded senior officials in important ministries. At regular intervals they invite NGO representatives to briefings on gender issues at EU and international levels. From the last virtual meeting here are some references to documents and analyses mentioned that could also be of interest to IAW members.

Vienna Declaration

50 years of Women's suffrage in Switzerland: Why so late and why after all in 1971?

by Dr. Sibylle von Heydebrand,
Arlesheim



Switzerland is a young democracy

People like to think of Switzerland as one of the world's oldest democracies. But when it comes to one of democracy's core elements, the right to vote, the country was out of step for many years.

Women and men have only been equal under federal law in the country since 1971. Switzerland was the only country in the world to enact women's suffrage not through a top-down decision, but rather by nationwide referendum – a

On a canton level, women have only enjoyed equal rights across the country since 1990. The last canton to enact women's suffrage in 1990 was the canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden, by order of the Federal Supreme Court.

The long road to political equality

Swiss women are well-organized

Women in Switzerland are some of the best organized anywhere in Europe. At the turn of the 20th century, one in five women was active in a women's suffrage association or women's organization. In 1968 the figure was one in four.

Swiss women persevered

The origins of the Swiss women's movement and the fight for equality go all the way back to the 1860s, when middle-class women in particular began campaigning for civil rights and economic equality, although unsuccessfully at the time. Their focus in 1886 was on political equality. 139 women submitted a petition for the introduction of women's suffrage to parliament. It was unsuccessful, as were many other subsequent attempts.

The approval of women's suffrage in 1971 was preceded by around 70 votes at the municipal, canton and Swiss confederate level. These were accompanied by countless public interventions, petitions and campaigns by women's organizations, as well as parliamentary motions, postulates and interpellations from male sponsors at all three state levels.

Continue reading: <https://www.frauenbasel.ch/50-years-of-women-s-suffrage-in-switzerland/>

“There is just one reason to be against women's suffrage – the fear of losing power”
Alois Grendelmeier (center-party politician), 1951

50 years of democracy in Switzerland!

by Ursula Nakamura and Annemarie Heiniger

On 7 February 1971 the women's voting rights were finally adopted. Switzerland was a male dominated country and now became a real democracy. Is it true, that the Swiss were more backward and conservative than people in

of direct democracy. This means that citizens not only elect the parliamentary and governing bodies, but they are also bound to vote on many public decisions, be it the rise of the gasoline-price, the rights of migrants, the promotion of maternity-leave etc.

Therefore the Swiss women's rights pioneers always had to convince their own male family members, friends and acquaintances about the advantages of the women's suffrage. This idea had to get accepted not only on the parliamentary and government level but most of all within countless small and large communities. No wonder that our pioneers tried to get involved wherever it was possible for them – church activities, welfare groups or advisory commissions on specific political topics!

But in 1928 the ADF-SVF ladies launched a hit: A coordination of women's organizations had organized SAFFA, a national exhibition on female life, mostly presenting the activities of the ideal housewives and mothers, but strictly excluding political issues. Well, Emilie Gourd from Geneva, who in 1920 already had successfully co-organized a Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance IAW (!) at Geneva, was angry and had an excellent idea. Together with her colleagues she built a huge snail in *papier maché*. When the prestigious SAFFA national exhibition opened in August 1928 the brave ADF-SVF ladies pulled this huge beast through the streets of the Swiss capital. Their slogan was "No more snail's pace with women's suffrage – we want it now!" - Unfortunately it still took many more years until the goal was finally reached on 7 February 1971!

ADF-SVF Suisse will celebrate this important jubilee on 12 June 2021 at Berne.



—a report from India

By Manju Kak

The world's biggest lockdown began in March 2020 due to the Global Pandemic caused by Covid 19. It brought with it tremendous challenges in human behaviour, economic and social challenges, educational freeze, trust issues, communal and family dissonance, health challenges, unemployment, mental health, agricultural and factory labour, etc. The rapid spread not only disrupted the global economy but also brought enhanced disparity amongst people. Homemakers faced an increasing burden of work catering to family members and making economic and other adjustments due to closure of schools. The pandemic also exposed and exploited gender inequality prevailing in society. Statistics will slowly emerge showing how employers evaluated the impact on the workforce during this period both of men and women. And certainly, these statistics will contribute in the future to a Global Preparedness Policy of all countries, developed and developing.

In response the **All India Women's Conference** immediately rose to the occasion. Members from its 500 branches distributed cooked food, groceries, vegetables and essentials goods without thought to religion, class and caste. They supported doctors, health workers, police, administrative staff and worked hand in hand with them and fed the stranded migrants returning to their villages. People came together to save lives, showing us the true meaning of 'united we stand, divided we fall'.

But one of the biggest challenges was keeping peace and harmony in our families, community and workplace due to these stresses. It was a challenge that AIWC took up as the lockdown lengthened, organizing **Webinars as 'Cause Partner' to India's National Foundation for Communal Harmony, Delhi**, an autonomous body under the umbrella of the Home Ministry.

When people in the spirit of humanity celebrate **India's diversity and rich heritage** it is inspiring. Unless we have harmony in family life, our neighbourhoods and in our societies, our objective of creating a just, equitable and sustainable world cannot be achieved. Therefore ensuring communal harmony is a primary objective of India's Directive Principles of State Policy and is also enshrined in the AIWC Constitution, Article no. 4, "To promote harmony, and to work towards national integration and unity". Since its inception in 1927, AIWC has always worked for this Cause through its 10 Zones and 500 branches spread all over India. Already at the beginning of 2020 NFCH had funded AIWC to organize 2 Symposiums in 2 National Universities in the states of (Rajkot) Gujarat and (Lucknow) Uttar Pradesh attended by more than 300 people, and a 3rd was slated in (Hyderabad) the state of Telengana.

But come March, 2020, due to the need to observe Social Distancing and other Health Safeguards, AIWC continued this work through Webinars addressed by senior government officers, professors, renowned social activists, doctors, journalists, psychologists, NGO heads etc., to an engaged audience digitally by

AIWC branches participated with one single objective to **sensitize people, reiterate mutual respect and mutual responsibility** as both Indian and Global citizens, reinforce solidarity through attitudinal change, peaceful co-existence by acceptance of diversity in all its forms: religion, caste and class, and respect all cultures and religion that would lead to communal harmony. The Indian folded palms - Namaste - became the source of greetings during pandemic while maintaining social distancing.

COVID 19 gave us **a window of silence** to admire the beauty of our diverse cultural backgrounds, allowing us to revisit values and principles that in our busy lives we don't have time for but can give us the strength to fight back against COVID 19. We also learnt that though communal feeling is not determined by gender, women can play an extraordinary role in fostering this by being the local ambassadors for communal harmony and can play a key role in minimizing violence.

The Webinars also highlighted some policy issues such the prime importance of Care Workers, of insurance for labour both agricultural and industrial, our developmental needs, the role of psychology in nurturing non-violence etc. It also enhanced our respect for indigenous knowledge systems, a new understanding of how our mothers' and grandmothers' kitchens are enriched with medicinal values through use of spices that boost immunity. Through this awful pandemic we have learnt to live with our loneliness and to recover our sense of the wonderful world we live in. We have rediscovered the power of language and we have built verbal bridges through virtual means to stay connected, become more sensitive to the challenges of hitherto faceless groups such as migrant workers and front line health workers. Technology has advanced in one year as a mass revolution drawing in people from all ages and all backgrounds. Global team-work including scientists, laboratory workers, governments, regulatory agencies, financiers and volunteers has brought us vaccines in one year as against the average time span of a decade that is needed to produce a vaccine."



Justice à tête chercheuse English Translation

par Maître Paulette Oyane-Ondo

Avocate au Barreau du Gabon, présidente du Centre pour la promotion de la démocratie et la défense des droits de l'homme

Tout au long de l'année 2020, un nouveau phénomène politico-judiciaire s'est installé en Afrique francophone, en particulier dans les pays où l'alternance n'est pas encore entrée dans les mœurs : l'enfermement de leaders de l'opposition dans leur propre résidence. Du Togo au Cameroun en passant par le Gabon, la Côte d'Ivoire et la Guinée, les principaux opposants ont fait les frais de ce traitement juridiquement innommé, auquel les régimes qui le pratiquent ne donnent pas de nom non plus, et dont les victimes n'ont pas de statut juridique. Ils ne sont pas prisonniers.

En droit, pour être considéré comme tel, il faut avoir fait l'objet d'un mandat de dépôt et être écroué. Ils ne sont pas en résidence surveillée non plus. C'est une peine judiciaire relevant d'une décision de justice par laquelle un juge ordonne à une personne de vivre dans un périmètre donné, lequel peut se limiter à son domicile, avec une restriction des moyens de communication. Pour autant, les leaders politiques enfermés chez eux ne sont pas séquestrés : en droit pénal, un enfermement sans violence physique par une autorité légale n'est pas une séquestration. La figure de l'opposition enfermée dans sa maison se trouve ainsi dans une situation de non-droit. Alors que nulle autorité officielle ne le lui interdit formellement, elle ne peut pourtant quitter son domicile encerclé par les forces de l'ordre ; celui-ci est de fait en état de siège.

Bombardement

Jusqu'au XXe siècle, le traitement réservé aux chefs de file de l'opposition allait de l'emprisonnement à l'assassinat en passant par l'assignation à résidence dûment notifiée, sans oublier l'exil et le bombardement de biens immobiliers par des chars et des avions. Pour brutaux que fussent ces mécanismes punitifs, les opposants qui les subissaient avaient un statut juridique clairement identifié

imposant leur point de vue au niveau national à travers les médias d'État et en présentant des plaidoyers devant les instances internationales pour justifier de leurs actions –, les pouvoirs en place prenaient la précaution d'envelopper leurs châtiments du manteau du droit.

Les régimes actuels s'affranchissent de cette précaution minimale et font allègrement dysfonctionner la justice. Comme si c'était le moyen de s'assurer la longévité au pouvoir. En effet, les choses ont bien changé au fil des décennies. D'abord, depuis 1990, les assassinats politiques ne sont plus une option, sauf à vouloir s'attirer les foudres de la communauté internationale. Ensuite, emprisonner un leader politique peut contribuer à lui forger une stature de défenseur du peuple, à accroître son capital sympathie auprès des populations en donnant du régime, a contrario, une image désastreuse à l'international, alors même qu'il s'emploie à la soigner. Enfin, l'on ne peut nier le rôle des réseaux sociaux, qui ont libéré l'expression des populations de ces pays et apparaissent désormais comme un contrepoids aux médias d'État.

Pas de privilèges

Ces petits arrangements avec la justice paraissent surprenants, la plupart des États africains ayant ratifié des textes internationaux censés garantir à tous les citoyens le droit à une justice équitable. Plusieurs pays ont d'ailleurs inscrit la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme dans leur Constitution. En réalité, seules les déclarations trouvent grâce aux yeux de ces États car, contrairement aux conventions, chartes et pactes internationaux, elles n'ont aucun pouvoir de coercition. C'est une norme morale dont la violation ne donne lieu à aucune sanction. Les pays africains ont donc une tendance à se désengager des instruments internationaux qui leur imposent le respect de leurs obligations. C'est ce qui se passe depuis un certain temps avec la Cour africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples. La seule solution reste la construction nationale d'un réel État de droit. Afin d'éviter l'arbitraire, la loi doit être la même pour tous : pas de privilèges, pas d'exceptions et tous les citoyens doivent être en mesure de dire si leurs actes sont légaux. Et pour éviter que malgré tout l'État n'abuse de son autorité, la séparation des pouvoirs doit être effective. Par la disposition des choses, le pouvoir doit arrêter le pouvoir.

Cet article a été publié dans Jeune Afrique le 30 décembre 2020

News from Cyprus.

by Irene Smeraidou, IAW Board Member

The Committee against Violence of the National Machinery for Women's Rights in Cyprus, created a series of TV spots with the participation of the Cypriot Women's Organisations and members of the Committee with a motto "You can change your life's scenario". The action was funded by the Cypriot Ministry of Justice and Public Order. Mrs Koulla Koumides, president of the Pancyprian Movement Equal Rights- Equal Responsibilities, participated in this campaign and stated that "*Violence against women occurs with different faces...You are*

Handling of Violence in the Family along with the Cyprus Police and the other active Women's Organisations in Cyprus. The Pancyprrian Movement Equal Rights – Equal Responsibilities is a supporter of all initiatives which are implemented at the local level for the prevention of violence against women.



Watch the video in the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR23EKQYn3NSJY6u0oAZM-0fUJ8gF_xpXqknmwyPQIO3O-OgzVfePX_agwg&v=XX25do6Xw6k&feature=youtu.be



Water and Pads Report from Women's Comfort Corner Foundation, Zimbabwe

for the occasion. With the written consent of the children's parents we targeted girls aged 9 – 15 years. The lockdown which took effect from the 05 January, 2021 has disturbed our programs. Our aim was to teach girls who had not started menstrual periods how to use pads and tampons and cascade the program to 6 different schools, travel to the rural areas where the need is greater. It was sad to hear that the children were aware of the use of pads but innocently suggested that money could be saved by using materials from old cloths. The proposal, though noble and wise, would be hindered by lack of clean water and failure to iron the materials due to persistent lack of electricity.

In our meeting we were joined by girls living with disabilities who averred that they were mostly shunned by society and were not invited to participate in any activities. A plethora of difficulties experienced by the girl child living with disabilities was highlighted, which will help us to have their problems addressed.

Women and girls continue to face unacceptable disparities in accessing personal safety. The water is toxic and as their vulnerability grows, women are at a higher risk because abusers prey on the most vulnerable, who will be unaccompanied as collection of water is deemed women's domain. The poor and marginalized women in the society do not have cars to ferry water.

Access to Justice – Judicial Educational Program

Women's Comfort Corner Foundation has embarked on a project to assist survivors and victims of rape to access justice in courts. The aim is to cascade the Judicial Educational Program to drastically reduce bias nakedly exhibited to survivors and victims of rape. The sad part is that bias is not unique to male presiding officers but to females too. A 13 year old child was raped by an elderly married tenant at her home. She had problems in having police record her statement and eventually when our organization intervened the matter was then taken to court. A female presiding officer sentenced the perpetrator to community services [picking up litter at a local school]. Women's Comfort Corner Foundation approached the office of the Prosecutor General with an application and demanded a review of the sentence. An application for review was lodged at the High Court. The application was successful and the perpetrator was sentenced to 10 years in jail and four years suspended. The incessant COVID-19 pandemic has seen violence against women spiking under lockdown and curfews. This current state of affairs is rolling back the strides which we had made. The isolation and lack of timely assistance due to reluctance of face to face meeting by organisations for fear of contracting COVID-19 have been debilitating. The impact of COVID-19 has been horrendous. Our advocates accompany rape survivors to court and have to wear masks and shields for protection against COVID-19. We are encouraged by the progress we have made. We are overwhelmed by the numbers of survivors wanting to speak out about their debilitating experience and requiring assistance in navigating the criminal justice system.

We are passionate and deeply committed to protecting women's physical security. We rely mostly on volunteers and provide assistance at no cost. We are exploring methods of assisting the girl child without compromising our

currently prevailing.



Newly elected Peace Commission: Heide Schütz, Esther Suter, Manju Kak. Marion Boeker (top, right) was moderator of the session

Peace Commission's Conveners drafting preliminary work plan and measures –

Invitation to IAW members to join - Questionnaire on issues of special interest in the making

On January 8 the conveners of the IAW Peace Commission Manju Kak (India), Heide Schütz (Germany), and Dr. Esther Suter (Switzerland) met for the first time via Zoom. They agreed to work in close cooperation but specialize in different fields of the numerous peace issues, because each of those needs thorough expertise. According to the guidelines for Commission Conveners a questionnaire will be elaborated soon and sent out to all IAW member organizations and individual members as a friendly invitation to contribute actively to the Commission's work and raise issues the Commission should be enabled to work on to support those prior issues. Moreover, the three conveners invite interested women to join the IAW Peace Commission as a member.

It was agreed to have regular virtual meetings, e.g. once a month in order to organize the work flow, exchange visions, project plans etc. and make decisions. [1]

The next Zoom meeting will be on Friday, February 5, at 15.30 CET (Berlin, Bonn, Swiss) , 20.00 IST- Indian Standard Time.

Among other items of interest two topics will be discussed then with priority: nuclear

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

follow up on The Human Right to Peace. More will be decided and reported after the questionnaire has been evaluated: we are looking forward to your critical contributions.

If you are interested in participating in the next virtual meeting on February 5 please contact [heide.schuetz\(at\)t-online.de](mailto:heide.schuetz(at)t-online.de). We welcome you cordially.

focal points is today understood as a person or more responsible as contact person for an issue as we have focal points WPS 1325.....



Young feminists F/M

by Arina Angerman representing
IAW on the European Women's
Lobby (EWL) Board

Orange the World

The UN campaign started on the 25th of November during IAWCongress2020. Many participants were wearing some orange. [At the website of European Women's Lobby](#) you can read about all kinds of events and actions during the 16 Days to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

IAW is a member of the European coalition to end violence against women and girls, a network of more than 25 European - wide social and human rights NGOs. [This EU coalition](#) joined forces to ensure that the EU signs and ratifies the Istanbul Convention. As we know 1 in 3 in Europe have experienced violence since the age of 15.

She Decides movement

Recently I have read an autobiography *The door to power* (in dutch *De deur naar de macht*) by Lilianne Ploumen who as minister initiated the She Decides Fund on 25 January 2017 to counter Donald Trump's Global Gag Rule. Lilianne Ploumen herself is a strong supporter of women's rights = human rights. The [She Decides Fund](#) generated more than 450 million euro. As a feminist from the Netherlands I strongly support the She Decides movement which has as its vision: 'A world where every girl and woman can decide what to do with her body, with her life and with her future'. In last IAW's Newsletter in 2019 I wrote about 25 young feminists F/M - women and men who were born in 1994 - who celebrated the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population

Young Feminist Weekend

The affiliate of IAW in the Netherlands is Vrouwenbelangen, which is a member of the Dutch Council of Women. I want to share with you the content I received from Marion Minis who represents the Netherlands in the Board of the European Women's Lobby: *'The Dutch Council of Women organised the 2nd edition of the Young Feminist Weekend, to bring 30 young feminists together and as such strengthen the Dutch feminist movement. Due to COVID the training was transformed into a hybrid edition. Filmmaker Georgiana Barcan made this (English spoken) (short) video:*

<https://www.nederlandsevroutenraad.nl/html/index.php?paginaID=385>

Do you support young #feminists F/M too and as such reinforce the feminist movement?



Sizani Ngubane Vale

1946 - 2020

Human Rights Defender

Founder of Rural Women's Movement of South Africa

Member of IAW

Awards:

- NGO CSW/NY Woman of Distinction Awardee.2018
- African Women Innovation & Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF) Award 2019
- Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders 2019

An exceptional woman and IAW was proud to support her.

Memorial Service for Sizani Ngubane

January 30 2021

Rural Women's Movement had invited women and men from many parts of the world to meet virtually to celebrate and remember

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Lene Pind attended.



Joanna Maganara, Honourable President writes:

I am very happy to announce that a new day has come for Greece and women's human rights. We now have in Greece the #Me Too Movement.

A very well known Greek athlete and Olympic gold medallist, Sophiia/Sophia Becatorou has denounced a man, holding a high position and a lot of power in the hierarchy of the Greek Confederation of Athletes, for rape and sexual harassment 23 years ago. for.

This has encouraged a number of Greek women athletes, who had the same experiences, to speak up. What is fantastic is that Sophiia/Sophia has been very strongly supported by many people in Greece, by political parties, journalists, the Prime Minister, the President of the Republic, Ministers. Everybody has congratulated her for her courage so finally something is changing in my country and I am extremely happy.

Read more in [the Guardian](#)

Historic lawsuits related to Japanese military sexual slavery before and during WWII

by Sung Sohn, Individual member of IAW.

On January 8, 2020, the Seoul District Court in South Korea made a landmark decision ordering Japan to pay reparations to the victims of the Japanese military sexual slavery system before and during World War II. The Court, stating that the victims suffered a crime against humanity, ordered the Japanese government to pay 100 million *won* (approximately US\$91,000) each to the surviving victim and family members of those who are deceased. In August 2013, twelve women filed for court mediation seeking 100 million *won*

notification. Then the case proceeded to a formal trial.

For more information on this landmark case as well as others, [click here](#).

For the statement of the South Korean NGOs regarding this lawsuit, [click here](#)

Egyptian Female Government Excellence

by Horeya Megahed

Dr Hala El-Said, the Minister of Planning and Economic Development, was selected as the best minister in the Arab world on November 25, 2020. She won the Arab Government Excellence Award, which aims to recognize outstanding work in advancing governance and administrative practice in the region. The Award was launched in 1919 under the auspices of the Arab League and United Arab Emirates to create a new development movement in the Arab World.

Dr Hala is a prominent economist with a bright career as a member of the Central Bank's Board of Directors and the Executive Director of the Egyptian Banking Institute. She is the former Dean of the elite Faculty of Economics and Political Science before being appointed a Minister in 1917. She was selected as chairperson of the newly established The Sovereign Fund of Egypt (TSFE) which ranks 43rd out of the 93 funds of SWF global ranking. She plays the main role in the formulation of Egypt's Vision 2030, in addition to managing the country's digital transformation towards the development of a comprehensive plan for reform and governance.

Moreover, another young Egyptian female: Eng. Noha Ahmed El Sayed, received the individual Award as the best Arab government female employee after a competition with 5000 employees from all over the Arab World.

This Newsletter is edited by Lene Pind and Priscilla Todd

Copyright © 2021 International Alliance of Women, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

