

Dear all, this is a sort of general reflection with one proposal.

IAW started its existence with ONE item: votes for women. This made it easy to identify us for a certain period of time. Since then many developments happened, and accordingly, IAW broadened its scope from Suffrage and Equal Citizenship to Equal Rights-Equal Responsibilities. Today we have an array of concerns, from climate change to violence against women. Each of it of prime importance to women worldwide, but nothing that IAW could be specifically identified with. For example: When you think peace, you think WIPF; sexual and reproductive rights - IPPF, climate change - Oxfam, sust. development - WEDO, habitat - Huairou Commission, economy -IAFFE, Feminist Economics Journal, etc. As you can see there is ample knowledge out there, IAW, unfortunately, is not among the first you would consult in any of these areas. (This is to say that I also question the new direction of our IWN. When you not have an international renown in a specific area you cannot expect people to take advantage of your publication. Our IWN never were intended to provide professional, scientific knowledge - they should serve first and foremost the internal exchange between our members including international coverage.)

This having said, I am coming up with the idea of having again ONE item, covering all and pertaining to all other items important to women today.

As a European I would certainly and immediately propose **DEMOCRACY**. The elderly among you may recall the excellent IAW Congress 2002 in Athens on "Parity Democracy". Our Greek organisers insisted on the fact that the democracy, for which creation Athens is still applauded, was not a democracy according to feminist perception, as women (aliens and slaves) were excluded from it. Did we get parity democracy in the meantime despite the fact that we all now enjoy suffrage? I very much doubt - even as far as the the nordic countries are concerned. Nowadays we hear much about the impression that the "liberal" democracy is under threat. "Liberal" in the European understanding according to its anglosaxon model encompasses moderation, openness, rationality, tolerance and the balancing of interests. You may add to this cosmopolism plus the belief in international solutions such as the European Union. However, what does that mean to SA, Africa, Asia? And since when do we have this wonderful thing in Europe? Consider the situation of your own country. (Austria: at best since 1945).

Actually we are witnessing a loss of democratic values; what is now called the "illigal" democracy is ethnic, nationalist, authoritarian, populist. No longer can we trust language (lies, fake news, alternative facts); the media, as the fourth pillar of democracy are being under threat. It seem that only checks and balances remains intact - for the moment.

In its "We the Peoples", the former UNSG Kofi Annan gave a thoughtful definition of **GOOD GOVERNANCE** in 2000:

it comprises the rule of law, effective state institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and the participation of all citizens in the decisions that affect their lives. While there may be debates about the most appropriate forms they should take, there can be no disputing the importance of these principles.