IAW on Social Media

GET TUNED!

by Sanja Jerai, editor of IAW social media

Do you already follow the activities of IAW on social media? We informed you about our social media accounts in the last IAW newsletter. Since there have been small changes, here is the updated list:

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/womenalliance/
Twitter https://twitter.com/womenalliance/
LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/in/womenalliance/
Instagram https://www.instagram.com/internationalallianceofwomen/
Pinterest https://www.pinterest.de/womenalliance/

The wide range in social media requires us to feed all of these platforms in order to reach as many of our members and interested parties as possible. In order to know how big our community is, we appreciate it if you connect with us, befriend us, follow us or establish contact with us. When we are connected, you will be automatically informed when we post new messages. What we are currently distributing via these channels are news and upcoming dates, both from us and from third-parties like UNWomen. The range is almost endless as we try to convey important information to you. You are welcome to like, share, retweet and comment. As a result of your reaction to our posts, your own
We also like to reflect on our strengths and use social media to provide information about IAW activities, services and, of course, information from our website. We would be most happy if we get input from you on the content of our social media contributions. We would be even happier if you provide us with relevant contributions for publication. Please, remember that we accept rather short posts on social media, as the space is limited by the providers. Your contributions can be in both English and French. Occasionally we also post in other languages, but we have a limited reach and they will remain the exception. Photos, which we are allowed to publish without a license fee and for which the persons depicted have given their written consent, are most welcome.

If you publish a relevant article on your social media that you wish IAW to distribute, just mention us in your post with @womenalliance (on Instagram @internationalallianceofwomen). We can then share your contribution with our readers.

In particular, we would like to ask our Affiliates and Associates: please connect with us on social media so that in the future we can like and share all contributions that are related to the IAW Action Programme!

IAW’s social media team will continue to contact you directly through our newsletter of articles worth reading as well as internal information about our channels.

Stay tuned!

30th annual session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

by Shannon von Scheele, IAW representative to the UN Vienna

On behalf of IAW, Rosy Weiss and I remotely attended the 30th session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), which took
discussions could not take place as the proceedings became bogged down early on with a political dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding the representative of Armenia being nominated for third Vice Chair of the Commission’s Bureau. Many tabled resolutions could not be satisfactorily discussed, because of this ongoing dispute. However, the Kyoto Declaration on renewing global cooperation against crime to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals was adopted.

The numerous side events were more interesting and allowed many experts to speak on the different topics which were finding little room in plenary. Here follows a taste of the main themes of some of these side events.

In *Addressing Gender in Preventing Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Africa* the various roles of women as perpetrators, supporters, associates and victims were illuminated. The Islamic State (IS) has increased the role of women participating in or even taking over terrorist activities. Socioeconomic problems must be addressed to reduce vulnerability to extremism, and gender issues must be mainstreamed. The resilience of women and their families should be fortified by increasing access to capital and legal and financial advice to promote entrepreneurship. Women represent some of the most powerful voices of prevention and advocating for inclusion and tolerance. Women only discussion platforms could stimulate more participation.

In *The Role of Gender in Organized Crime and in Designing Effective Responses*, the experts similarly noted that victims and perpetrators are not mutually exclusive, and this is often the case for women as many rise within the ranks of an organization moving from victim to perpetrator. The experts also noted that after being imprisoned, the women are often in more vulnerable situations than men with no other options but to go back to crime in many parts of the world. There is a need for complex and holistic policies looking at all perspectives instead of criminal justice systems which exacerbate the vulnerabilities of (female) offenders.

Several of the side events that dealt with human trafficking remarked on the increase of online sexual exploitation as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in *Enhancing Police and Justice Responses to Gender-Based Violence Against Women and Girls*, Kalliopi Mingeirou, Chief of Ending Violence against Women and Girls at UN Women, used the term “shadow pandemic” to describe the increased violence against women and girls in private and public settings as well as online since the start of the pandemic. During this side event, several UN resources that many may find interesting were introduced for police and the criminal justice system on incorporating a gender-based approach when dealing with victims of violence:

- The Impact of COVID-19 on Criminal Justice System Responses to Gender-based Violence Against Women
- Handbook on gender-responsive police services for women and girls subject to violence
- Study on Female Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation as Defendants
a tool for equality?

by Heide Schütz, convener of the IAW Peace Commission

In 2015 Torild Skard, IAW individual member from Norway and long-standing feminist wrote an article for the IAW website: No to female conscription. Now in 2021, Mr. Timothy Martin, a Wall Street Journal journalist based in Seoul, South Korea, read this article and sent a request to IAW asking for the point of view of IAW today.

He wrote: “I wonder if IAW has anyone who has followed this issue globally. Local reports say there are fewer than 10 countries that draft females into the military. But I’d be curious to get IAW's perspective on this issue globally but also provide commentary on the dynamic here locally in South Korea .”

The answer of the IAW Peace Commission reads as follows:

“We appreciate your request and would like to answer it in detail. However, we focus on the situation in South Korea which is especially relevant right now. We are not of the opinion that compulsory military service is a good example of gender equality. Gender equality would mean the freedom of professional choice with no barriers in a PROFESSIONAL ARMY. The freedom of professional choice is a Human Right for all human beings including men.

The Korean tradition of drafting men into the army and putting them into jail if they object on ethical grounds is not acceptable for us because it harms their Human Right to the freedom of professional choice. Thus a professional army would help to overcome the dilemma of mandatory service for all young people in South Korea in the present situation.

It is also important for us to point out that the drafting – even on a voluntary basis - of young people under 18 years is not compatible with international law (CEDAW, CRC, CESCR, ILO) and should never be practised (There are countries which do so).

As a Commission on Peace, we do not recommend that women join the army in order to become equal to men but we respect their right to the free choice of profession. (CEDAW Art. 1, Korea is state party).

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations we plea for the non-violent solution of conflicts, which means to reduce armies and work towards their elimination. It can be done and
The non-violent resolution of conflicts by negotiation saves many lives, a lot of pain, destruction, financial resources, even toxic and harmful emissions etc. Moreover, it leads to more sustainable peace, especially if women are included meaningfully in the peace process, as the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of the year 2000 prescribes. This resolution is binding. However, the implementation is very slow, which is far from satisfactory. The Peace Commission has initiated an IAW resolution on “Fund Healthcare not Warfare”.

April 16, 2021

As Mr. Martin asked additionally for a more detailed answer concerning what we thought about the argument of quite a number of Korean men and some women’s groups that if equality between women and men was to be realized it should begin with or at least include the compulsory military service for women as well as for men, the Peace Commission clarified that as already pointed out by the commission this was the wrong way to address equality between all genders since it was a Human Right of men and women (ILO) to choose a profession including the military. Thus compulsory military service was the wrong paradigm to start from; it should be changed to a professional army with equal opportunities for men and women. Moreover, the IAW Peace Commission referred to non-violent resolutions of conflicts which would also mean a system change for Korean society.

“If men think that they do more for the common good by military service that is forced upon them there are childbirth, loads of unpaid care work within the family and within society and the gender pay gap to be put into the women’s scale! We are convinced that an equal share concerning the latter two are the important cornerstones for gender equality.”

We also informed him that our research had shown at least two hidden reasons for the consideration of women’s mandatory army service in South Korea: the lack of young men because of declining birth rates and the wish for better legitimisation of the army. Additional information could be found by Korean women themselves www.koreaverband.de; offered in three languages, including English.

Ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention – the ILO C190!
Vividly I remember my joy in June 2019. The International Labour Organization (ILO) announced the adoption of Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

It is 2 years ago, and the Convention entered into force with the signature of two member states. On the whole, the Convention is ratified by only six countries up to now. A shame!

So the Campaign to Ratify is very necessary. It ran from June 21 to 25 with wonderful upbeat videos on the site of ILO. IAW hopes fervently that these Five Days of Action will lead to many more ratifications.

The Convention protects all workers, in formal and informal economy, with or without a contract, former workers, candidates, interns, managers, everyone in the workplace and on their way to it.

The people mostly affected by Violence and Harassment are women and girls, but they are not the only ones. Yet GBV (Gender Based Violence) is the abbreviation used to describe the criminal behaviour covered by the Convention.

IAW asks all members to influence their governments to ratify and implement Convention 190. I know that many countries have protective measures already. Maybe they think ratifying this Convention is not necessary. But this Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work is all encompassing, it protects more people in more circumstances!

It will help labour unions and employers to put more protection in place. The great thing about ILO is that it is a tripartite organization: Unions, Employers and Governments. And it has worked since 1919 for the good of all workers!”

Rebeca Grynspan appointed as UNCTAD’s secretary-general | UNCTAD
The Costa Rican economist and former vice president of the Central American nation becomes the first woman to be appointed secretary-general of the UN’s trade and development body.

Repercussions of the Pandemic for Women in Science and Technology.

by Alison Brown

Women in STEMM (science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine) have always had an uphill battle to take their places as equals in respect and in numbers to men. The struggle was even harder for women of color who faced racial discrimination along side of gender discrimination.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine had been gathering data on this. Their 2020 consensus study report, "Promising Practices of Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women in STEMM," provided suggestions for improving recruitment, retention, and advancement. Then the pandemic hit, the situation of women in the workforce, who still are considered the primary caregivers to children and parents, changed radically. Already existing inequities deepened, so a new report was commissioned.


An interview conducted by reporter Emily Kwong with Dr. Eve Higginbotham (Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania and Vice Dean for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity for Penn Medicine and Chair of a committee investigating how the pandemic specifically has affected women in STEMM) about our earliest understandings of how the pandemic has impacted the careers of women in STEMM, and what support institutions can offer can be heard at [https://www.npr.org/2021/05/17/997652545/pandemic-could-roll-back-advancements-for-women-in-stemm](https://www.npr.org/2021/05/17/997652545/pandemic-could-roll-back-advancements-for-women-in-stemm).

The Women & Gender Constituency invites you to participate in the 2021
Call for applications | Women & Gender Constituency (womengenderclimate.org)

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**Tobacco, Women and Human Rights**

*By Soon-Young Yoon, IAW main representative to the UN, New York*

Soon-Young Yoon, member of the IAW health commission, is co-author of an article on “Tobacco, women and human rights” published by the online journal Tobacco Induced Diseases. The article cites the IAW’s role in defending women’s human rights, stating: "This pandemic and the global climate emergency have accentuated underlying inequalities: women’s disproportionate burden of work, their minimal social protection, and gender-based violence. For this reason, the International Alliance of Women (IAW), an NGO dedicated to promoting the human rights of women and girls, recognizes the need to integrate strategies on gender, women, and tobacco control within the context of the broader sustainable development goals related to poverty reduction, employment, and environment.”

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**Economic Violence - the African Perspective**

*by Rita Marque Mbatha, Zimbabwe*

IAW Regional Coordinator for the Sub-Sahara Anglophone region
and developmental impacts for survivors of violence, as well as their families, communities and society more broadly. The averments below made by Jane Doe (not her real name) to our organization is a clear indication that gender based violence leaves devastation in its wake. The damage is raw, internal and unseen and the sorrow ongoing.

“I have resorted to prostitution to feed and educate my minor children. I got pregnant when I was about to go to University and my family disowned me. My husband’s superiority complex is not restricted to his financial muscle but is extended to controlling every aspect of my life. I have no voice any more, if I express an opinion, he reaches out for the nearest weapon, if there is none, his hands will suffice and after beating me with a multitude of blows, he walks out without leaving a morsel for me and the children. I have been customarily married to “my husband” for 9 years, 8 of them marred by extreme violence...I have reported him to his family before, but they allege "marriage is like that, you have to stick it out, one day he will change" ...I have even tried to engage the law enforcement personnel but have to withdraw the case every time, what mother would choose her own happiness over the security of her own offspring and who would pay the rental for the home where the future of my children is currently residing? He demands unprotected sex when he comes to visits after a long time of absence”.

Inequality rooted in patriarchy is the primary driver of gender based violence. With patriarchal power structures dominant, women cannot protect their bodies, meet their basic needs and participate fully in society.

Gender-based violence in Zimbabwe
Societies free of Gender Based Violence are non-existent, and Africa is no exception. Belief in male superiority can manifest itself in men feeling entitled to sex with women. The drivers such as social norms may be cultural or religious.

Impact of gender-based violence – Reproductive Health
Survivors are stigmatized, suffer in silence and are unable to access help because of psychological trauma causing relatives of survivors to also experience indirect trauma. There is shame and stigma associated with being sexually abused. The risk of unwanted pregnancy and other sexually transmitted infections abounds.

- Mental health - those who have been raped develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. International treaties and legislation are important but inadequate to end Gender Based Violence and strengthen responses.

Engaging Stakeholders and Addressing Underlying Causes
The multi-faceted responses and commitment from all stakeholders is material. Tackling underlying, interlinked causes of Gender Based Violence is material as the gateway to preventing and reducing cases of GBV. The police and civil society provide victim-friendly services and psychological support for victims of Gender Based Violence
have experienced sexual violence. The Domestic Violence Act in 2007 and setting up of Victim Friendly Units at every police station, have not encouraged women to make use of such services because of shame and stigma.

In South Africa, the crime statistics released by the Department of Police reveal the depth of crisis: nearly 3,000 women were murdered between April, 2018 and March 2019. This number translated to seven per day.

**Gender based violence inequality, socio-cultural norms and economic development**

Under-reporting of gender based violence is hence the norm in Zimbabwe as victims tend to shy away from stigma and judgmental society and suffer in silence.

Stigmatisation is proliferate in most African countries. Marriage defines a woman. Ultimately the success, dignity and relevance of women is measured by their ability to persevere in marriage, no matter the cost. Terms like "kushingirira/ukubekezela in vernacular and [extreme tolerance in English] are overemphasized when girls are being prepared for marriage. *One is expected to have the patience of a wooden sculpture simply to exist without having any feelings.* Tragically most women would rather stay in abusive relationships than be "returned soldiers", a derogatory term used in Africa in reference to female divorcees. Unfortunately, these women do not only suffer discrimination from greater society but their families too. They have zero support system. They are shunned by their families, the few who are welcomed, are reminded daily of the "failures" they are, mocked and tormented emotionally until most resort to deviant behaviour or return to their abusive partners.

As averred by Jane Doe, she is a 32-year-old Zimbabwean woman who is customarily married and a mother of two minor girls. Tertiary education is a lifelong dream that has not yet materialized for her, something she hopes her daughters do not inherit. Unemployment being the only constant in her life, she is entirely reliant on her husband to provide for her. He is the sole breadwinner and sees to all the needs of the family even basics as meagre as salt. Sadly this case is not alien, this is the story of most gender based violence victims in Africa.
**Women’s Comfort Corner Foundation School Program**

Early adolescent interventions are expected to prepare grounds for positive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes at later ages. If girls and boys are socialized into believing in and practicing gender equitable norms and attitudes, they would be more likely to change their behaviors, which would lead to making informed choices and engaging in less risky sexual and reproductive health behaviors.

The intervention called Teenager’s Hub in Schools is carried out in Harare schools focusing on adolescent girls and boys aged 10-16 years. Ongoing interventions promote gender equality and include structured group education activities. Girls and boys exposed to the interventions are now open and showing greater improvement in self-reported measures of sexual and reproductive health than those with no interventions. There are some boys who have deeply ingrained beliefs about gender roles, and current indications are that they are unlikely to change their stance that they are superior than girls. Conclusions suggest that the gender-focused initiatives must engage children at early ages and also pay special attention to the areas that are difficult to change.

It is material to educate girls and women, including empowering them with life skills, leadership and living skills so that they take control of their lives and claim spaces of power.
«Her future is Equal»: The Equality Model to combat sexual exploitation.

By Irene Fereti, President of the Greek League for Women’s Rights

On Wednesday, 23 June 2021, the Greek League for Women’s Rights and the Greek Coordination of the European Women’s Lobby - as partners of the Brussels’ Call (https://brusselscall.eu) together with European Women’s Lobby (https://womenlobby.org) – presented the campaign, 'Her Future is Equal', calling for action to realise a European Union free from sexual exploitation and human trafficking: We promote the Equality Model as a proven approach to combat the complex issue of sexual exploitation.

The Her Future is Equal campaign has been running not only at EU level but also in several Member States where partners and members are working for legal reforms to adequately tackle the sex trade, including Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta and Spain, bringing our messages to the relevant public and political audiences.

Our aim was to present the reality of sex trade, sexual exploitation and human trafficking across Europe along with the increasing calls for change and the key opportunities for supporting real impact for women and girls affected.

Our event has brought together voices from politics, civil society, frontline and advocacy experts and representatives of key agencies, who agree we must act now to bring an end to coercion, violence and exploitation of women and girls, particularly those affected by prostitution. (re: Programme attached)

We are very pleased with the success of the event as reflected in the contributions and the commitment of the invited speakers as well as in the interest expressed by all the participants who joined us at this important launch. We look forward to a wide support in disseminating the message of the Her Future is Equal campaign, as we set forth our calls for implementation of the Anti-Trafficking Directive and the introduction of EU legislative action on sexual exploitation as part of a legislative framework to tackle violence against women and girls.

The event was held from 18.30 – 20.00 (Athens time)) on Wednesday 23 June 2021 on Zoom.

The GLWR already plans the next major event which will focus on bringing together voices from social protection agencies and the forms of actual support
Dear Madam,

The undersigned request on behalf of our organization for your editors to take note and act on the following.

The title on the cover of the latest Time journal is VISIONS OF EQUITY. Its Equity Agenda covers 35 pages and deals particularly with Black, Indigenous and People of Color BIPOC. Throughout these 35 pages the term equity is used next to equality without explaining the difference.

However Equity is not the same as Equality. Equity is not sufficient, Equality is needed.

According to the Oxford dictionary equality is the same, identical, whereas equity is fair, impartial. Fair is “appropriate in the circumstances”

Who will decide what is “fair”? Or what is “Appropriate in the circumstances”?

The recurrence of the word Equity is dangerous as it could easily be used by the present transnational campaign against Human Rights with the objective to return to a patriarchal system.

The concept of Equity is used to keep women in their place: in the kitchen. And men in the decision making positions, in short: the patriarchal system. The present international backlash uses this concept Equity.
importance of Women’s Equal Rights in 1995.

1994-1995, the year leading up to the 4th Women World Conference in Beijing, women, National and International women’s organizations, fought against Equity. They succeeded: equality was included in the 1995 Being Declaration and Plan of Action and thereafter in the many annually Agreed Conclusions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

However there have been continuous efforts to reverse the use of Equality and introduce equity and patriarchy again, including at the United Nations and in the US. Today, New York has a Women’s Equity Department.

A recent March 2021 study “POWER OVER RIGHTS” - supported by the German Government and by the Finnish Government - describes how well organized and financed the transnational anti-gender movement with its Strategy to reintroduce Patriarchy is.

We request you to report about this.

Artemis Westenberg,
President
The Netherlands Society of Women’s Rights, Female Labour and Equal Citizenship

Anje Wiersinga,
International Alliance of Women (IAW) Representative Council of Europe Convener IAW Democracy Commission
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THE GATES OF EMPOWERMENT

by Anjana Basu

Empower women and the economy improves was Melinda Gates’ theory in The Moment of Lift, the book is which she wrote about the growth of her involvement in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. To prove this theory she described interactions with women in India and Africa, a journey of empowerment that gradually grew from nutrition to children to distributing contraceptives, halting genital cutting, starting self help groups and preventing violence among sex workers which ultimately led to prevention of HIV. The links between issues only become clearer as one talks to women, builds their confidence and discovers what the real situation is. Nutrition for children was important but so was promoting contraception since many women had more children than they could afford to feed. Contraception
formation of self help groups facilitated by the community centres that the Gates Foundation helped set up. What evolves is a situation of wheels with wheels – the men have to know what is in it for them before they are willing to allow any signs of independent thought among their women. Local helpers and grassroots work was what made the breakthrough for the Gates Foundation since once locals realized that communities were willing to come together to support initiatives for women, most menfolk gradually fell in line. On the face of it India and Africa come across as patriarchal societies – however, most of the actual work is done by women. Researchers experimenting with seeds at first could not understand why their hybrid seeds failed to sell despite in-depth discussions with men farmers until it was discovered that the sowing and planting was actually done by women who, because of their hands on experience, had very different requirements from the men. Once that hurdle was overcome the seed production and the harvest process became more profitable for all involved and the women in fact proved to be more adept at seed generation.

Condom distribution in Calcutta’s Sonagachi too, took a different turn. The Gates Foundation had set up a body called Avahan, invitation in Sanskrit, which spoke to sex workers about condom use with an aim to preventing HIV. However the realization there was that abuse at the hands of men, including police, was preventing sex workers from being allowed to use the condoms and that the sex workers were not allowed to gather together to discuss the issue. Avahan therefore set up community centres where the women could talk freely and assembled local women activists and lawyers to create a commotion outside police stations every time a sex worker was wrongfully dragged in. Once the issue of violence was sorted out, the matter of the condoms became easy.

What is needed now however is a similar stance regarding the changing lives of these women after the pandemic. Women with absent husbands who are the main work force have found themselves at a loss since most homes in the cities are not allowing women workers to come and go freely. Those who have bank accounts find themselves scraping the dregs without enough funds to look after themselves and their children.

Sonagachi, where the sex workers could speak of at least 15,000 to 20,000 clients every day, is currently abandoned. On average, there are approximately 12,000 women who live in the three dingy lanes of the red light area who are without income and who swear that the scenario is worse than HIV. A few of the lucky ones managed to return to their original villages before the lockdown was imposed on March 24 in 2020 and they have not returned. Some local NGOs like Durbar are organizing staples for them since the ones in the houses have no funds to buy food.

Child marriage figures have shot up since families lack the wherewithal to earn a living due to lockdown though there is an absence of available data on how many girls have been forced to submit to this.

Sadly due to the fact that Melinda Gates has filed for divorce, the Gates Foundation in India has not been able to involve itself beyond recommending masks and social distancing – though both Bill and Melinda Gates are