

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



30 October 2007

Dear Section Presidents, International Board Members, International Affairs Representatives and Committee Convenors,

In this mailing you will find:

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As always, we welcome feedback and input to these monthly mailings. If you have something to contribute to the November mailing, please send it to marie.boroli@wilpf.ch no later than the 12th. Please remember that you can find this, and past monthly mailings archived on the WILPF international website at: http://www.wilpf.int.ch/updates/up_index.htm. A PDF version of this entire mailing is available here: <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/updates/2007/october.pdf>.

With warm greetings from the Geneva office.

Susi Snyder

1. Message from the Executive Committee

- In the last month the Executive Committee has continued to implement the ideas and decisions made at our August meeting, including: supporting the development of Committee work plans by the end of the year; maintaining communication with 5 sections each; commencing the evaluation process of our Secretary-General and the advertising of the post of UN Office Director; finalising the IPU edition focused on the Congress; acting on our decision to support a visit to Palestine and Israel for in-depth discussions with our sections.
- We have worked collectively on two letters to the International Board, one to stimulate discussion within the organisation on our international programme and another which proposed ways of moving forward from issues arising from events at Congress.
- We worked closely with Carol Urner of the Peace and Security Working Group on a statement on Keep Space For Peace, and have distributed a statement for sections to use to mark UN Day coming up on the 24th of October.
- On the 24th of September we sent out a statement on the situation in Burma. It was addressed and sent to all UN Member State Missions in New York (where the General Assembly was underway) and Geneva. (It is on the website in English and French.)

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www.ReachingCriticalWill.org
www.PeaceWomen.org

Annelise has volunteered to be the focal point to Y-WILPF and has been working with Susi on a letter to them. She has been in regular contact with some of 'her' five Sections. She has started the work on work plans with 'her' working groups and committees. Annelise is planning to go to the French board meeting in December. She is working on a statement for the 25th of November to End Violence Against Women and a case for each of the 16 days of action. She has also been giving feedback and input to the Danish National Action Plan on 1325.

Kerstin has been busy with several meetings in local branches and with her section board discussing the "old" and the "new" WILPF programme. She has also been engaged in preparations for the upcoming European meeting and in fundraising for the continuation of the cooperation of the European sections.

Kozue (September and October) has joined the Congress evaluation team that Regina had convened. She also attended the International Women's Network against Militarism's 6th international meeting held in San Francisco from September 10th through 15th as a part of the delegation from Okinawa/Japan. The network consists of women from Okinawa, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam and the United States, and the San Francisco branch of the WILPF US section was one of the host organizers of the 6th international meeting. She met with some members of SF branch who were hard working and dedicated members of the network.

Amparo has worked on reactivating the Argentina section. She started a conversation with a group of Mexican women who are interested in having a Limpal section in Mexico. She has regular communications with her sections. Amparo has also helped to finish the Colombia delegation report and is working on a strategy with the Colombia section to coordinate our participation in the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in March in New York. She has communicated with the Convenor of the Constitution Committee to start the process of drafting a work plan.

Felicity has been working with Susi on the website and the Congress report, spoke for WILPF at the Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the situation in Myanmar and has been planning a visit with the German section at the end of October and a visit to Palestine and Israel in November and is drafting several fundraising proposals for international WILPF to support the membership campaign materials and the March 8 seminar.

Tamara has initiated contact with all of her sections and has been working with Marie (along with Linda Belle at JAPA and Susi) to resolve the remaining issues regarding Congress finances and hopes to be able to send a report to the Board and the Standing Finance Committee by the end of the month.

2. Message from the Secretary General

Dear WILPF members and friends,

I have just returned from a short speaking tour in Tokyo, Japan. During this tour, arranged by former Japanese Section President Ms. Nagako Sugimori, I was able to speak with thousands of young Japanese women about peace, women's rights, international law, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution and our ongoing work to promote total and universal disarmament. It was a great pleasure to return to Japan once again, the first section I visited after becoming WILPF Secretary General.

I am currently collecting materials to create an exhibition on WILPF's history. I want to thank Ms. Sugimori for providing me with fascinating documents that show the beginning of WILPF's work in Japan- including an outline of Tomi Wada's work with WILPF. Tomi Wada was the first WILPF member in Japan, and attended our third Congress in 1921, in Vienna, Austria. I would appreciate it if you can send me additional highlights- including photos when possible- of WILPF's history in your section, to help with this exciting project.

In other news, Milkah Kihunah has ended her time as PeaceWomen project associate in the New York office. Milkah's contribution to the Project over the last two years is deeply valued and she will be sorely missed as a colleague and friend. We wish her the best of luck with her future work and know that she will remain in touch with WILPF for a long time to come.

Best Wishes,

Susi Snyder

3. Report from WILPF's Fact Finding Mission to Colombia now available

The situation in Colombia has been dominated by civil war, violence, violations of human rights and displaced persons for more than 40 years. Colombia has the second largest number of internally displaced persons in the world, approximately 3.5 million people, the majority women and children.

The goal of the fact finding delegation to Colombia was to support the ongoing process of political empowerment and participation of women in conflict resolution and prevention. This is in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, "Women, Peace and Security." WILPF sees Colombia as an important case for implementation of the UNSCR 1325.

The report from the delegation is now available on the WILPF website here:
<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/publications/colombia.delegation.2007.pdf>

4. New Look to the WILPF Website!

Felicity and Susi have been working to give the WILPF international website a face lift. Instead of the darker purple, we have tested out a lighter blue and a different kind of font that is always black rather than purple. We think lifts it a little and makes it easier to read. We are going through page by page and editing and reorganising the content.

We would love your feedback on what we have done so far, and what you would like to see and find on the website! www.WILPF.int.ch

5. Human Rights Council – WILPF work on DRC and Burma

Democratic Republic of Congo: During the recent 6th session of the Human Rights Council, UK WILPF members Marie-Claire Faray and Amy Barrow initiated a statement about the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). WILPF submitted this as a written statement to the Human Rights Council, it can be found here:
<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/humanrights/2007/session6/statements/DRCstatement6.html>.

In addition to the statement, Georgie Stevens from the UK, spoke with Ministry Councilor Sebastien Mutomb Mujing of the DRC mission, and gave him a copy of the list of questions on recent violations of human rights in the DRC that were developed. He pleaded bad English and didn't want to answer the questions there and then, but said he would take the document away and consider it. In addition, we circulated another statement, under the agenda item of review of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the human rights situation in the DRC, which can be found here:
<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/humanrights/2007/session6/statements/DRC.oral.html>

Special Session on Burma at the HRC: On October 2, 2007, the Human Rights Council (HRC) convened its Fifth Special Session. This was prompted by 13 states and resulted in a resolution from the Council. Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, reported to the session, as did Louise Arbour, the High Commissioner for Human Rights. WILPF issued a [statement](#) on the militarized situation in Burma at the outset of the UN General Assembly. Sparked by WILPF UK member Amy Barrow, WILPF International Vice President Felicity Hill presented an [oral statement](#) to the HRC during the Special Session.

During the session, all of the regional groups condemned the military actions and called for extreme restraint by the Myanmar forces. Some delegations mentioned the controversial argument concerning country-specific mandates, stating that they are typically used by the West to pick on small countries and undermine their sovereignty. Some States, such as France, recommended sanctions as an effective means of coercion, while others, such as Cuba as well as the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), voiced disdain for these punitive measures, and urged the UN to support the people of Burma.

6. Keep Space for Peace Week – 4-13 October

WILPF members around the globe organised events during Keep Space for Peace week, and reports are starting to come in from these. Carol Urner, Peace and Security Working Group co-convenor has asked that anyone who coordinated an event contribute a brief report of what happened. These reports should be sent to Carol (carol.disarm@gmail.com) as she is compiling a report of Keep Space for Peace Week activities to be submitted to the organizers of UN Space week.

The Executive Committee issued a statement:

<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/statements/keep.space.for.peace.2007.html>). Mary Ziesak of Australia and Claire Gosselin in Boston USA used the statement in an event, as did UK member Marguerite Finn in her monthly column that circulates in a paper in the East Anglia region of the UK, :
<http://www.oneworldcolumn.org/179.html>

7. The European WILPF meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, the 17th - 18th of November

The Swedish section has invited European sections to Stockholm in order to develop common strategies and increase cooperation throughout European WILPF Sections

Accommodation in a hostel is available for 35 euros/night and there are also possibilities for home stays with WILPF members in Stockholm. The food is of course included at the meeting. We will serve traditional lunch and dinner/supper and of course delicious refreshments in Swedish style.

Suggested agenda:

17th of November,

Arrival 8.30-9.00 am

Meeting 9.00 am - 6 pm (with breaks)

6 pm - social event

18th of November,

Arrival 8.45-9 am

Meeting 9 am -3 pm

Closure 3 pm

Suggested topics from the Swedish section:

We should discuss on how to structure our cooperation and more importantly, the content of this cooperation. What should be on the WE agenda? Should we develop common goals and common strategies? A WILPF Europe Policy is the first step towards a reliable and constructive teamwork. The Swedish section has already formulated a policy as a basis for discussion.

The second topic that will be covered is a joint statement on the reformed EU Treaty. Three sections: the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden wrote a statement for the congress in Bolivia. There was unfortunately not enough time to discuss it.

The final important topic to discuss is European Security Policy. What is it and how should we work with it? The section in the Netherlands suggests cooperation on the European Parliament elections in 2009. The Swedish section suggests a joint project towards a nuclear-free Europe. The role of NATO; so called joint Peace missions Battle Groups, e.g. Nordic Battle Group; the WE view on the concept of security etc. are just a few examples.

European Security Politics affects people in Europe as well as people in other countries outside our region. Decisions made by the member states on how to carry out their security policies are of interest to us all as the consequences of these actions will affect everyone, to a greater or lesser extent. This brings up questions like: How is this cooperation carried out? Which are the relevant security issues? Security for whom? The Swedish section considers it to be of great importance to follow the development of European Security Politics and to continue asking questions about the security work and cooperation. The EU and the OSCE ought to make sure that security policies are founded on human rights and democratic values and are made in cooperation with the civil society. Most of the European WILPF branches are in countries that are members of

the EU, OSCE and NATO. All these international organisations affect us more than most of us are aware of. Therefore we call for European-wide cooperation on these issues.

For more information, please contact Saba Nowzari in the Stockholm office, saba.nowzari@ikff.se or +46 8 702 98 10

8. First Committee Monitor

WILPF coordinates the NGO Working Group on the First Committee, and Reaching Critical Will edits and publishes a weekly digest of what takes place in the UN General Assembly First Committee which is focused on International Security and Disarmament. The Monitor covers a range of peace and security issues debated and discussed in the UN General Assembly First Committee, including the Arms Trade Treaty, conventional weapons, landmines, nuclear weapon free zones, prevention of an arms race in outer space, small arms and light weapons, terrorism, verification, disarmament machinery, biological and chemical weapons, fissile materials, and more.

The first edition can be found online at: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/FCM07/week1.html>. You can also download this edition from our website at: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/FCM07/week1.pdf>.

In addition, during the General Debate of the General Assembly, the Reaching Critical Will project compiled an index of all references to the following issues: Disarmament, Non-proliferation, Security, Multilateralism, Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Energy, Terrorism, Iran's nuclear programme, North Korea's nuclear programme, Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, Missiles, Conventional Weapons, Small Arms and Light Weapons, Arms Trade Treaty, and Disarmament and Development/Military Spending. It is available here: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/1com07/disarmindeindex.html>

The PeaceWomen Gender Index includes all references to gender, women, females, girls, gender equality, violence against women and participation made in statements delivered during the General Debate, available here: <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/genass/GA62/ga62.html>

9. Invitation to participate in the WILPF delegation to the Commission on the Status of Women- February/ March 2008 CALL FOR WILPF PARTICIPATION

Dear WILPFers,

The WILPF-UN Office in New York welcomes WILPF members to come to New York City to participate in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) taking place 25 February – 7 March 2008.

This year's main theme on which governments will negotiate policy is: "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women." The Commission will also be reviewing the implementation of previous CSW agreed policy on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building" adopted at the 2004 CSW, to identify remaining gaps and challenges.

We look forward to welcoming delegates to attend the Commission, participate in WILPF's advocacy with governments around the CSW themes and to be involved in the various side events taking place.

Both themes present an excellent opportunity for WILPFers. Our work on the first theme will focus on the opportunity costs for gender equality of military spending and we look forward to WILPF sections looking at this issue in their own countries. We will be sending more information in the coming weeks about our approach to these themes.

REGISTRATION

If you would like to participate in CSW 52, the Registration Deadline for the WILPF UNO is 5 December 2007. If you are unsure if you can come, register anyway. There is no cost to register. You must be a WILPF member to participate as part of the WILPF delegation.

NO LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL BE PROCESSED.

SEND to sam@peacewomen.org :

- your full name,
 - all contact information (email address, mailing addresss and phone number)
 - Section and branch information
- Please also let us know if you need WILPF to provide you with a letter for visa purposes.

SIDE EVENTS

We have had several requests for WILPF to sponsor or arrange particular side events at the CSW and have a form (attached) for you to fill out if you would like to propose a WILPF side event. Please note that WILPF can only sponsor a limited number of side events due to limits placed on the number of events per organization for which we can get space.

Please send in your completed event proposal form to sam@peacewomen.org by 5 December 2007.

MORE INFORMATION

We will be developing our own web pages with information on the CSW so please visit <http://www.peacewomen.org>

Also for now, please visit the official UN website for more information:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/52sess.htm>

For information on the Review theme from 2004 please visit:

<http://www.peacewomen.org/un/ecosoc/CSW/CSW2004.html>

Governments will be reviewing their implementation of these commitments on women's participation:

<http://www.peacewomen.org/un/ecosoc/CSW/FinalACCSW48WomenPart.pdf>

Please note that WILPF is unable to provide financial support for participation and will not be involved in travel or accommodation arrangements. We will however send out more information on logistics and accommodation possibilities in the area and encourage you to network with other WILPF members on options.

We ask that you arrive in New York to participate in a WILPF strategy meeting on Saturday 23 February and the NGO Committee on the Status of Women's NGO Consultation on Sunday 24 February prior to the commencement of the CSW.

Hope to see you at the CSW!
WILPF UN Office

10. Development Has a Woman's Face: Insights from within the UN

New book published by former WILPF International President, Krishna Ahojapatel.

Women are poorer than men anywhere, everywhere. How did poverty acquire a gender bias? Are the causes that procure this remarkable gender bias connected to any particular system government of economic structure? If not then wherein lies the problem? Is the segregation of occupations in the labour market to determine the inequality of remuneration between women and men? How is the political drama of women's entry into the labour market connected to the legislative provisions to protect maternity rights and parental leave? What was the political prerequisite to create basic needs strategies at a global level when in fact women were meeting these minimum needs at the household level? As women attempt to climb step by step the corporate ladder at the macro level, there is a tremendous upheaval in current strategies to discuss micro enterprises and micro credits for women. Why should the gender division of labour signify big money for men and small money for women? No matter which process of the development paradigm is analyzed, its hidden economic reality touches the profile of a woman, and Krishna explains how in her new book

Order copies (50 CHF) from the WILPF office in Geneva- inforequest@wilpf.ch

10. Is WILPF a feminist organisation?

For those of you who are not subscribed to the wilpf-news email list, you have missed out on a 25 part discussion that was sparked by Sheila Triggs (President, UK Section) who wrote a very short email on 5 October asking on behalf of researcher Cynthia Cockburn "Does WILPF collectively (rather than as individuals) define itself as a feminist organization....What do you think?" WILPFers certainly are thinking

about this subject and have responded thoughtfully and passionately, offering multiple definitions of feminism and highlighting how linked sexism is to militarism, racism, colonialism and classism. A particularly profound and insightful contribution was submitted by Anna Rooke, who concluded her contribution with, “I am more comfortable suggesting – like social critic bell hooks – that WILPF often advocates diverse feminismS. WILPF may not 'BE' feminist in a static, universal, de-contextualized, de-historicized, unified, unchanging sense. But WILPF may indeed 'ADVOCATE' multiple feminismS at different times and in diverse contexts.” If you wish to receive one document that collects all the comments in this discussion, please write to sheila.triggs1@btinternet.com but better still, subscribe to wilpf-news and participate directly! To sign up, scroll down on WILPF's homepage www.WILPF.int.ch