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E - BULLETIN

February, 2013

February ISSUE

Commission on the Status of Women 57

Briefing Paper

Anticipation builds as NAWO prepares for the upcoming 57th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women to be held in New York from 4 to 15 March. The priority theme of this year's CSW is the Elimination and Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls. NAWO is acting as the secretariat and administrative lead to the UK NGO CSW57 Liaison Group, a group set up in which representatives from 70 UK-based NGO's can liaise among each other and with the Government Equality Office before, during and after CSW 57. Our Chair, Annette Lawson, has prepared a Briefing Paper for those who will be attending CSW 57. The Briefing notes are important to read for details on who will be attending, the ways in which NGO's can participate, the time and location of UK NGO meetings over the course of the Commission, registration for CSW and, in general, how CSW will be organised and how representatives can communicate with one another.

The link for the full Briefing Paper is:

<http://www.nawo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Briefing-Paper-updated.pdf>

NAWO Statement to CSW 57

The National Alliance of Women's Organisations (UK), NAWO, is an umbrella for women's organisations – service, campaigning and lobbying, networks, single or multi-issue, working in local, regional, national and international arenas. All members of the Alliance must subscribe to CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action; these international instruments hold groups (faith groups for example) that might otherwise disagree, together. All in NAWO seek gender equality and women's access to their human rights globally as well as at home. With violence against women in all its forms evident and pervasive throughout the world cruelly preventing women and girls – including infants and very young girls – from accessing their human rights and leading reasonable lives, NAWO believes that the two-week session of CSW, valuable as it is, and hopeful as we are of a successful outcome, is insufficient. Hence NAWO urges the Commission on the Status of Women to seek the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence with the addition of a new mechanism that should provide greater power and hence a more rapid achievement of the shared goal.

For NAWO'S full statement to CSW 57 see <http://www.nawo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Nawo-statement-to-csw57.pdf>

CSW 57 Draft Agreed Conclusions

NAWO welcomes the draft Agreed Conclusions with NGO amendments from the UK NGO CSW57 Liaison Group currently with the Government Equalities Office for EU negotiation.

The link to the Draft AC proposal can be found at: http://www.nawo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/CSW57_Draft-AC_proposal.pdf

Issues and Recommendations

The Issues sub-group of the UK NGO CSW57 Liaison Group has prepared and presented a CSW57 Issues and Recommendations paper to the Ministers responsible for CSW57 through the UK Government Equalities Office (GEO). This paper was revised on 12 January and 13 February 2013 to take account of further submission and meetings raised at meetings. The paper represents a broad consensus of views of 70 NGOs across the UK. It seeks to raise the major issues currently underpinning, affecting and increasing all forms of violence against women and girls in the UK as well as globally. It also makes recommendations which members would like to see the UK government take forward as they work within the EU to influence the EU position at CSW. The goal is to see the CSW Agreed Conclusions become an Outcome document that will genuinely move policy and implementation forward, making a real difference to the severely damaged lives of very large numbers of women and girls world-wide.

The paper begins with two major issues– the profound gender inequality in all societies across the world and the global financial crisis. It summarises how the UK experience can inform the EU’s Negotiating Position.

Some of the key strategic commitments that the paper recommends the UK, as part of the EU delegation, negotiate their aggress position on include:

- There should be no regression from the existing commitments in the Platform for Action and subsequent reviews, particularly General Recommendation 19.
- Fully implement and resource CEDAW.
- Recommit to the implementation of a global strategy to end VAWG
- Intensify global awareness of VAWG as a global emergency
- Build the foundation for a standardised and evidence-informed global prevention strategy
- Increase resources available to end VAWG
- Recognise the impact VAWG has on women and girls’ health and development. No regression from ICPD Programme of Action.
- Address male attitudes to change attitudes to women and girls
- Survivors should be at the centre of the strategy; the balance between prevention, early identification, protection and prosecution are key.
- Prevention must be given the highest priority.
- The strategy should be adapted, resourced and implemented at state level in all Member States

The link to the full Issues and Recommendations paper is: <http://www.nawo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/CSW-57-Issues-and-Recommendations-updated.pdf>

CSW57 Side Events

As part of CSW57, NAWO will have the following side events taking place in New York:

1. Event: “ ‘Hate Crime’: Violence Against Women and Girls With Disabilities: Gendered people: gendered acts”

Date: Tuesday 5 March 2013

Time: 2.30pm

Venue: 2nd Floor, Church Center UN, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

2. Event: ‘Voices: Young People consider CSW 57’s issues: VAWG; HIV/AIDS prevention and the role of boys and men; After the MDGs, and the Emerging Issue’

Date: Wednesday 6 March 2013

Time: 12.30pm

Venue: Y-Room, Armenian Convention Center, 630 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10016

3. Event: ‘Global Goals: Making them work’

Date: Friday 8 March 2013

Time: 12.30pm

Venue: Baha’I International Community offices, 866 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

4. Event: “ ‘Lessons learnt on VAWG: a better future’ - including establishing a UN Convention on VAWG

**FURTHER DETAILS ON CSW 57 CAN BE SEEN ON OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.NAWO.ORG.UK**

NAWO 19th Annual General Meeting and Conference: 'A Europe Free From Prostitution'

NAWO AGM

NAWO invited all members to attend its 19th Annual General Meeting at 1.30pm on 28 February 2013 in Europe House, Smith Square, London. The AGM covered issues such as changes to NAWO's constitution, European Women's Lobby, UKJCW and European work, CSW57 Building New Alliances and introducing new trustees. In light of the agenda, we encouraged all members to attend and vote. Refreshments were be provided afterwards.

'A Europe Free From Prostitution'

Following the AGM we were proud to host the conference: 'A Europe Free from Prostitution' from 2.45pm-4.45pm on 28 February. This conference pertained to the theme of prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation in Europe.

In recent months the issue has been high on the agenda for the European Commission. On 19 June 2012, the European Commission adopted the "EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012-2016)" which sets out priority measures to be taken over the next four years including protection and assisting victims of trafficking, prevention: reduction of demand, increased prosecution of traffickers and an EU Transnational Referral Mechanism. On 18 October 2012, the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of Europe and the European Commission hosted a conference 'Working together towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings: The Way Forward' to mark the 6th EU Anti-Trafficking Day. NAWO was represented at this conference which served as a forum for exchange of views among representatives from EU Member States, academia and civil society on shaping future actions to strengthen cooperation, victim protection and assistance, prevention and prosecution in the field of trafficking in human beings.

Furthermore, the European Women's Lobby, Foundation Selles and Mouvement du Nid France held a conference in Brussels on 4 December 2012 which assessed 10 years of policies on prostitution in Sweden and the Netherlands. 200 women's rights NGOs from 25 EU Member States and 4 other countries gathered to advocate their Brussels Call "Together for a Europe free from prostitution".

In light of these developments, NAWO called on members and friends to participate in its conference which included buzz groups, a photo call for all MPs in attendance and a ceremony to sign-up for the Brussels Call. Julie Bindel who is a NAWO trustee and well-known journalist chaired the conference. Key speakers included Pierrette Pape (European Women's Lobby), Ann Hamilton (Human Trafficking Foundation), Yeliz Osman and Jain Lemom (the London Mayor's Office) and representatives from the Met Police Special Unit SC & 09. It was an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and enable NAWO friends and members to make their voices heard on the issue of human trafficking and prostitution.

Thanks to all who attended!

For further information visit our [website](#)/[facebook](#)/[twitter](#) page

NAWO and the Middle East/North Africa Women's Political Participation Visit

On 18 February NAWO met with the British Council, the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, and a delegation of 12 women representatives from women's organisations and newly formed coalitions and networks from Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco to discuss NAWO's role in influencing women's rights and gender equality in the UK and beyond.

The visit of the delegation of women is part of an Arab Partnership Initiative programme to promote women's participation in political processes. These women representatives are involved in the Women in Public Life project which aims to build broad-based support for the active involvement of women in public life including national and local political processes in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco. This is a three year project funded by the Arab Partnership Fund and is based on the successful Active Citizens model implemented in the region over the past 2 years which supports young people to be active in their communities.

As this demonstrates, the approach and methodology for supporting women's participation at community is well defined. However, further exploration must be done. The context in the region is changing rapidly. One of the issues commented on during NAWO's meeting with the delegation is a situation in which women's issues have been pushed back since the revolutions and Arab Spring revolts. Indeed, as often the case when a soc-

-iety is being re-ordered after war and armed conflict, women are often disadvantaged. News reports, for example, have noted an increase in the number of sexual assaults in public places and how women's issues in general have been sidelined in the region since the revolutions.

As a response to the new challenges facing women's groups in the region, the 'Women in Public Life' project aims to enable a group of young women to participate in their communities and local political processes supported by national multi-agency coalitions and regional networks.

The UK familiarisation visit is part of ongoing action research examining how women's active participation in local issues links to formal political participation at local and national levels. The objective of the delegation in meeting NAWO representatives is to learn from NAWO's experience of building a women's alliance and working collaboratively to influence political decisions.

Representatives included lawyers, journalists, teachers and activists involved in a range of organisations including the Arab International Women's Forum, the Egyptian Union of Young Lawyers and the League for Tunisian women voters. A male representative from the Libyan Ministry of Culture and Civil Society was also present.

NAWO Chair, Annette Lawson, and June Jacobs shared their experiences and spoke of how the formation of our women's alliance sprung from the loss of the Women's National Commission in 2010. The example of CSW was used to demonstrate how a women's alliance can work with government and affect political decision-making.

Mantel, Middleton and our love of the catfight

By now many people in Britain are aware of the ‘Mantelpiece affair’ that erupted in the media this week following double Booker Prize winner, Hilary Mantel’s, comments about Kate Middleton in a lecture that she delivered at the British Museum. The speech itself appeared as an article in the *London Review of Books* and focuses on the portrayal of royal women throughout history and in the present day.

While the article provides an engaging and insightful commentary on the institution of the monarchy as a whole and the way in which royal women are manipulated by the media, the subsequent public response to the article is just as fascinating to analyse.

With the tabloid portrayal of Mantel as a jealous mouthpiece picking on the poor princess, the attention surrounding the author’s comments soon cascaded into Fleet Street’s version of a modern day witch hunt. The backlash against Mantel included the Daily Mail’s review of the ‘Royal Bodies’ piece as a venomous attack on the Duchess of Cambridge as well as David Cameron’s assertion that Mantel’s comments were ‘completely wrong’ and misguided. In spite of this defence of Middleton, other journalists and public figures have come to Mantel’s defence.

They argue that if people had bothered to read past the first 600 words of ‘Royal Bodies’ which includes the now infamous comments about Middleton as a ‘shop window mannequin with no personality of her own’, they would soon learn that the 5800 word lecture is not really about Kate. It is about Diana and all the royal women that preceded her. More importantly, it is about the way in which these women have been objectified by the press, the public and the royal family. Indeed, Mantel is quite right in astutely observing that monarchy and the press machine have reduced her to a plastic doll if daily reports on her dresses, hairstyles and baby bump are anything to go by.

Far from being a venomous attack on the person of Kate Middleton, the article reads as a sympathetic depiction of royal women trapped in a cage and suffering from the prurient fascination and licentiousness of our culture regarding women. It concludes with a call for restraint of the press on covering the royals in general.

How to be a Woman author, Caitlin Moran, wittily commented that “‘Not understanding Hilary Mantel’s critique of the media’ is proving to be Twitter’s first Sorting Hat moment of 2013”. The public furore surrounding Mantel, therefore, is a sad case of simply missing the point. Or is it?

Writers such as Sam Leith (*The Guardian*), for example, would contend that the obtuseness of the press in understanding the nature of Mantel's remarks is only pretence. In this manner, the tabloid construction of Mantel as older, uglier and barren in opposition to the thin, beautiful and blooming princess is perhaps a 'deliberate mischief' on the part of the media. In light of Mantel's remarks on Middleton, the press have seized on her words to paint a portrait of a woman driven by jealousy and to create a Snow White versus Ugly Godmother opposition. In this way, the press characteristically resorts to the familiar cultural narrative of the catfight.

Let's face it. We all enjoy a good bitch-slapping show down. Think Mean Girls or the media portrayal of Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton in the 2008 American Presidential elections. The cultural and political implication of the catfight is that while it provides entertainment for an audience it trivialises and dehumanizes the women involved.

In addition, it further divides women from each other and prevents them from collectively challenging the male dominated status quo. Thus the projected image of Mantel as a bickering jealous schoolgirl serves to amuse readers and, in the process, renders her arguments petty and ineffectual. Would the same reaction inflame if it had been two men involved? Hardly; the press were provided with the opening of exploiting the politics of a woman commenting on another woman. The media has in this instance

capitalized on our culture's obsession with competition between women in order to discredit Mantel's ideas and distract us from what she is really saying. Ironically, the invented catfight surrounding Mantel's comments makes Mantel a victim of what she critiques: the media's control of the representation of women. Therefore, the press response in this affair contributes further to containing women.

What has unfolded is a feminist debate in the form of two kinds of women; one who is seemingly mouthy and questions the status quo, Mantel, and one who remains quiet and acts the part she is taught to play, Middleton. In the true spirit of cat fighting we are prompted to ask ourselves: are we Team Mantel or Team Middleton?

The twenty first century crime that Hilary Mantel committed was daring to speak her own mind. It isn't a case that what she said about Kate Middleton is politically incorrect. It is a case that her commentary on two traditional instruments of patriarchy, the monarchy and the press, is considered politically incorrect and unacceptable.

Mantel dared to open up a familiar debate on female objectification in our culture and was publicly lambasted for this in the media. Thus it seems that we are still burning women at the stake for having an opinion.

By Donna-Marie Bohan

The link to Hilary Mantel's full article 'Royal Bodies' is :

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n04/hilary-mantel/royal-bodies>

NAWO Youth Caucus

Preparations are underway for an exciting new year with NAWO's newly formed Youth Caucus!

NAWO Youth Caucus aims to deliver a number of events and discussions on gender issues from a youth perspective for the year ahead with 'Young Women and Politics' as the first theme to emerge in their series of topics. Details of their event based on this topic will be confirmed shortly.

In addition, the group will be sending on representatives to CSW57 in New York in March. During CSW these talented young individuals will be holding the side event 'Voices: Young People consider CSW 57's issues: VAWG; HIV/AIDS prevention and the role of boys and men; After the MDGs, and the Emerging Issue' on 6 March in New York. We wish them the best of luck and success on behalf of NAWO!

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the NAWO Youth Caucus blog at <http://nawoyouth2013.blogspot.co.uk/> which contains a number of engaging articles on issues such as sex trafficking and HIV/AIDS prevention as well as posts pertaining to their participation in the upcoming CSW.

Remember to Like **The National Alliance of Women's Organisations Youth Caucus facebook page** in order to show support for the group and to track details regarding their upcoming events!

Dates for your Diary

International Women's Week

4-8 March 2013

Commission on the Status of Women 57

4-15 March 2013

New York

For a full list of side events taking place during CSW 57 go to

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/side-events.htm>

Debate: 'What has the EU done for gender equality?'

Thursday, 7 March 2013

4.30pm-6.30pm

Europe House, 32 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3EU

What role has the EU played in shaping gender equality for women in Europe and the UK? And what opportunities and dangers might arise in this field from any renegotiation and repatriation of powers by a UK government in the years to come?

Join the discussion led by our panel:

- Mary Honeyball, Labour MEP for London and member of the Gender Equality Committee
- Dr Roberta Guerrina, Senior Lecturer and Head of the School of Politics at the University of Surrey
- Jacqueline Minor, first female head of the European Commission Representation in London
- Justine Roberts, businesswoman, Co-founder and CEO of Mumsnet

To Register for the event please email agnieszka.piela@ext.ec.europa.eu citing the event title in the subject line

Call for submissions

Paper submission: 'International Congress on Gender Violence: Intersectionalities'

Submission deadline: 4 March 2013

The Basque Country will hold an 'International Congress on Gender Violence: Intersectionalities' on 10-12 July 2013.

The congress will be hosted by the International Institute for Sociology of Law, which is located in Oñati, Spain. Sessions will be held in both English and Spanish, with simultaneous translation provided for the final keynote speaker session. This congress is aimed at examining the main conceptual frameworks for thinking about gender violence. The International Institute for Sociology of Law invites participants to consider how useful the concept of gender violence is for tackling violence against women. It particularly encourages papers that will examine the intersections of gender violence with other determinants of inequalities. Papers are invited from researchers working in the area of gender violence, as well as policy makers, practitioners and activists. The Institute feels that this interdisciplinary may help to produce new conceptualisations of gender violence.

More information is available on: <http://www.iisj.net/?sesion=1347>



An exciting March lies ahead so keep in touch via NAWO's facebook and twitter pages to receive further information on upcoming events!