

News Line 7

August 1999

Congratulations to:

Annemie **Neyts Uyttebroeck**, next President of Liberal International and patron of INL W who has been appointed Minister of Finance, Budget and External Relations in the Brussels Regional Government

Mimi **Kestelijn**, former MEP, member of VLD, who has been instated in the Belgian senate.

New Member

Baroness Emma **Nicholson** has joined INLW. She is Liberal Democrat, and was elected last June to the European Parliament.

INLW call for the liberation of Zulekha Mohamed

Zulekha Mohamed, leading member of the Civic United Front from Zanzibar, has been arbitrarily detained in Zanzibar since December 1997.

She was arrested in Zanzibar while campaigning for voting rights and human rights. Together with other members of the Civic United Front they are victims of the government of the United Republic of Tanzania and of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar.

The Women's Group of the Civic United Front presided by the Hon. Elizabeth Kasembe MP, is a member of INLW.

INL W calls for the immediate release of Zulekha Mohamed and of all political prisoners. INLW invite all its members to show its solidarity with Zulekha Mohamed by addressing letters to the government of Tanzania and Zanzibar demanding her release. Similar letters also should be sent to the embassies of Tanzania and Zanzibar.

European Parliament

In the newly elected European Parliament, women's representation has risen to 30%.

For the first time, since the election of Simone Veil in 1979, as President of the European Parliament, another woman has been elected President of the same institution. Nicole Fontaine is member of the French party Nouvelle UDF. Mme Fontaine has been Vice-President of the European Parliament, and had served on the Women's Committee and been active on the Conciliation Committee which deals with conflicts between the Council of Ministers and the Parliament.

INLW Hall of Freedom

Some nominations received suggest that the roles for nomination need to be clarified. A separate note is included with this News Line. Dahlia Sommer reports that Shinui is also preparing a list for their own use, of women who have campaigned at local level. This seems a valuable extension of an internationalist.

INLW Visits

Members international visits have included Janina Zukiena (Lithuania) staying with Emmi Weiss (Germany) and Mobina Jaffer (Canada) meeting Dahlia Sommer whilst in Israel.

Millennium Campaigns

The UK government is funding small campaign for local improvements, as well as national celebrations of the millennium. An example is the Each One Teach One campaign launched for women in Asian Communities. They are encouraged to pair up to exchange skills. The campaign extends expertise and friendships in situation where women may be isolated.

Newsline would be glad to publish any millennium campaign and activities for women which members send.

Honour-Killings in Pakistan

In January 1999, the BBC aired in England a documentary entitled "A Matter of Honour" about the so-called honour-killings of girls and women in Pakistan by their close male relatives. Even on a 'suspicion' of exchanging looks or smiling at another man, women and girls can be killed or burned to death. On February 15 and 16 1999, ABC Nightline presented the same documentary adding as commentators Asma Jahangir and Dr Riffat Hassan. Asma Jahangir, currently President of the Pakistan Human Rights Commission, is a lawyer who has represented a number of women in well-known cases. Dr Riffat, Professor of Religious Studies and Humanities at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, USA, has been engaged for 25 years in research on the position and rights of women according to normative Islam.

Both commentators pointed out that the so-called honour killings of girls and women had nothing to do with the teaching of Islam, and that such crimes were related to a male centred society

which was being challenged by many women's groups and young Muslims.

A network has been set up, called The International Network for the Rights of Female Victims of Violence in Pakistan, as a non profit organisation. More information can be obtained at: P.O. Box 17202, Louisville, Kentucky 40217, USA. Telephone 502-634-6754 and Fax 502-637-4002. E-mail mailintreach@listser.louisville.edu

IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance)

IDEA has developed a very interesting Website. The International Idea Voter Turnout Website (www.IDEA.INT/TURNOUT) contains the most comprehensive global collection of political participation statistics available. Regularly updated voter turnout figures are presented country by country, using both the number of the registered voters and voting age population as indicators of turnout. IDEA: Stromsborg-s-103 34 Stockholm, Sweden. Phone 46 8 698 37 00, Fax 46 8202422, e-mail: info@idea.int.

Publications

Europeans and their Views on Domestic Violence against Women. European Commission June 1999.

The European Commission has published its report of an Opinion Poll conducted in all 15 EU states. A total of 16 179 people were polled: 73.5% considered domestic violence against women to be very or fairly common; 94% considered psychological violence to be very or fairly serious and 98% took the same view of physical and sexual violence. Condemnation of threats of violence and restriction of freedom was similarly overwhelming. The main causes as seen by over 75% of respondents were alcoholism, drug abuse, unemployment, poverty and social exclusion and family background of violence. 95% considered such violence unacceptable in all circumstances and 86% considered that it was the state's duty to protect women.

Women in Politics World Biography. Interparliamentary Union, Geneva 1999. The Interparliamentary Union has published a world wide directory of women in politics.