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Major articles are also posted onto the Isis Website.

The annual subscription rate is US\$30 (for Asia, Pacific, Middle East), US\$35 (for Africa, Europe, North America, Latin America, Caribbean), or PhP300 (for the Philippines) inclusive of postage. Back issues are available at discounted rates.

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Linking women, sharing knowledge, considering change

APRIL 2002 No. 14

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### Call for Gender Parity at the International Criminal Court

**T**he Women's Caucus for Gender Justice is calling on everyone to join the campaign for women's fair representation in the election of judges to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which takes effect on July 1.

Immediate actions to campaign for women's equal representation is crucial as government delegates are in the process of drafting the rules of procedure in nominating and electing judges, prosecutors and deputy prosecutors.

Women's rights groups are advised to be aware of vote trading, suspected to be a cause for women's under representation in international posts. To date, only one woman has ever served as a judge on

the International Court of Justice throughout its more than 80-year history.

The 34 member International Law Commission had 20 women throughout its 55-year history until late last year, at which time two women were elected to the ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and

**CALL FOR GENDER PARITY**

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### UNGA Adopts WCAR Declaration and Plan of Action

**T**he United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has officially adopted the Declaration and Plan of Action (POA) of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR).

The resolution was passed after a roll-call vote of 134 in favour, 2 not in favour, and 2 abstentions.

The GA resolution calls for "the implementation of the conference's outcome documents, a five-person panel to monitor implementation

of the documents and measures to set up a special anti-discrimination unit in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights," according to a UN Wire report.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2  
UNGA ADOPTS.

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ISSUES 4

CAMPAIGNS 7

CONFERENCES & ANNOUNCEMENTS 9

WEB RESOURCES 14

ISIS CURRENTS 16

# Women's Groups Call for End to Crime of Adultery

## 'Law Can't Mend Broken Marriages,' they say

By Lin Miao-Jung

**F**ive women's organisations have called for the abolition of the crime of adultery. But they said that, in order to prevent the misconception that this would further restrict, rather than expand, women's rights, the Civil Code should first be amended to protect women's property rights.

The issue has come to the fore in the wake of the sex-VCD furor surrounding former director of the Hsinchu Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Chu Mei-feng, which, the groups said, seemed to highlight the commonplace nature of sex outside marriage.

The Awakening Foundation, Warm Life Association for Women, Taipei Awakening Association, Taiwan Women's Link, and Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights, made the call at a joint press conference.

Su Chien-ling of the Awakening Foundation said that abolition of the crime of adultery is the ultimate aim of the organisations, because, "What supports a successful marriage is love, not the law. Even if the authorities can punish married people who have sexual intercourse with people other than their

spouse, they cannot mend broken marriages."

Since adultery is grounds for divorce, the groups said, removing the offense from the Criminal Code may generate concern that when a husband's extra-marital liaisons result in divorce, the wife might lose not only her husband and, under the current regulations, her assets, but also her right to "justice" as represented by criminal penalties.

Current regulations give husband greater rights than wives over property which belongs to both, according to the Awakening Foundation's Tien Ting-fang.

The groups said that adultery is not a matter for the criminal justice system, but they called for certain aspects of family law contained within the Civil Code to be amended to protect women's prop-

erty rights. They said this should be done before adultery is removed from the Criminal Code in order to avoid the misperception that women's rights to both "justice" and property are being eroded.

Wu Yueh-chen of the Warm Life Association for Women said the importance of the property rights issue is paramount.

"Current regulations give husbands the right to manage property belonging to their wives. Husbands preparing to divorce on grounds of adultery usually transfer their own assets to others, often resulting in the wife receiving insufficient funds," Wu said.

"The first step to protect wives is therefore to amend the current law to guarantee husbands and wives equal rights to manage each other's property and to prevent husbands from transferring the property to other people," she said.

Source: *Taipei Times*, 10 January 2002, <http://www.taipetimes.com/news/2002/01/10/story/0000119329>