



# Peace & Freedom

JOURNAL OF  
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM  
AUSTRALIAN SECTION

*Consultative Status with ECOSOC, UNESCO, FAO, ILO, UNICEF*  
Volume 46 #1 April 2009

## WILPF QUEENSLAND'S PERFORMERS FOR PEACE



welcome you to the WILPF Triennial!

# Editorial

This month WILPF turns ninety-four! I invite you each to join in creating a special birthday wish - a powerful possibility for sustainable peace - and in keeping this candle of hope alight and sharing the possibility with others over the coming year.

In May, Queensland WILPF hosts the national WILPF Triennial meeting. The tranquil Mercy Place, nestled into the side of Mt Coot-tha overlooking Brisbane city, will be perfect for building old and new friendships and working with like-minded women on making a difference in relation to the issues you care about. And of course having fun!

In peace - and hoping to see many of you at the Triennial.

Chris



## Front cover photo:

WILPF's Performers for Peace ready to perform "Those Dangerous Things", a song from the well-known musical 'The Sound of Mining'.  
From left: Kathy Teakle, Del Cuddihy, Vicki Godfrey, Dragana Zivancevic, Norma Forrest, Danielle Burette. Photo courtesy of Mary Ziesak.

## Those Dangerous Things

words by Jo Wednesday

Mining and milling and then  
transportation  
Leaking and spilling and contamination  
This is what nuclear energy brings  
More and then more of these dangerous  
things.

Risking the hazards of high radiations  
Threatening the lives of the next  
generations  
This is what warlike mentality brings  
More and then more of these dangerous  
things.

When the bomb drops  
And the clouds spread  
Blotting out the sky  
It's then we'll remember those  
dangerous things  
And tell our friends - "Goodbye!"



# Contents

Editorial.....	2
Coordinators' report.....	3
WILPF Project on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.....	4
WILPF-Australia Triennial Meeting 2009.....	5
WILPF Australian Section election of office-bearers at the Annual General Meeting - May 2009.....	6
WILPF International Board Meeting .....	8
November 2008 Geneva.....	8
WILPF Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation.....	10
Do you know what UN International Year this is?.....	10
Human Rights and Women.....	11
WILPF Australia's letters to the Minister for Foreign Affairs .....	13
Durban Review Conference.....	13
.....and congratulations on family planning decision.....	13
From the branches.....	14
Vale Marjorie Ladkin.....	15
Stay in touch via two WILPF email lists.....	16

# Contributions

Contributions to *Peace & Freedom* - articles, poetry and graphics - are warmly welcomed. Please send to Editor, WILPF Peace & Freedom, PO Box 224 Inala Qld 4077 or email [biota@bigpond.com](mailto:biota@bigpond.com). Copyright remains with the creator, and articles represent the views of their authors, ie these may not be the views of *Peace & Freedom* or the organisations to which the authors belong. Material may be edited and/ or republished electronically on [www.wilpf.org.au](http://www.wilpf.org.au). The editor retains the right to approve content for inclusion. **All contributions must clearly indicate the author and contact details**, however the editor may at times choose not to print the author's details.

Submission date for next edition ...  
Friday 31 July 2009

# Websites

WILPF Australian Section website - [www.wilpf.org.au](http://www.wilpf.org.au)  
Australian UN Res 1325 website - [www.1325australia.org.au](http://www.1325australia.org.au)

WILPF's international websites:

Geneva office - [www.wilpf.int.ch](http://www.wilpf.int.ch)

New York office - UN Res 1325 - [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)

New York office: Nuclear disarmament - [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

# To join wilpf

Join WILPF and MAKE A DIFFERENCE for peace. For more information about joining, contact your closest WILPF Branch. Contact details are on the back page of this journal. To join WILPF's email discussion lists, see page 15.

Graphics: Thanks to Mary Ziesak, Guilio, Picasso, Brenda Lewis, Lesley High. Chris Henderson.

# Coordinators' report



*By Ruth Russell and Cathy Picone  
Joint National Coordinators*

**W**e hope that many Australian WILPFers will be able to attend the upcoming National Section Meeting in Brisbane, 22 to 24 May. Our three-yearly National Section Meeting provides us with the precious and relatively rare opportunity to gather together face-to-face and to make connections across the continent as members of the Australian Section. At the May Meeting, we will be discussing issues relevant to our aims, objectives, campaigns, projects and strategic directions for the next three-year period. We will also elect office-bearers to our Section's Executive Committee. Please note that changes have been made to the nomination process for election of office-bearers. Fuller detail about these changes can be found in this newsletter.

As you know, the theme for this year's Meeting is Women, Peace and Sustainable Futures. Heartfelt thanks to the sub-committee in Brisbane for all their work in preparation for the Meeting: Vicki Henry (convener), Joy Collins, Kathy Devine, Margaret Grace, Rhondda Kelly, Mary Ziesak and Dragana Zivancevic.

As usual, the recent period has been a very busy one for your national office. Ruth Russell, Lyn Lane and the 1325 Taskforce team have been working hard on the UNSCR1325 project for which, members will recall, WILPF received a government grant last year. For a more complete picture of our work around this 1325 project, and particularly for detail on the upcoming series of consultation workshops to be held around Australia, please see another page in this newsletter.

Also during this period, several letters have been sent to the Federal Government and/ or to embassies. On 5 January, we wrote to the Israeli Ambassador "with heavy hearts and a deep sense of great sadness" concerning Israel's attack on Gaza. We also wrote to the United States Ambassador on the same matter. On 15 January, we wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs urging increased financial assistance for the people of Gaza in the wake of the destruction and death caused by the attack.

In February, in support of the RoxStop campaign to stop the expansion of Australia's largest uranium mine at Roxby Downs in South Australia, we forwarded the RoxStop materials to branch delegates. In the Victorian WILPF group, Hellen Cooke reports that: "This is an excellent seven-minute

DVD. I took [the DVDs] to a meeting - teachers took them off to show classes - we decided to donate and order more." Thanks, Hellen!

In March, we wrote to the Minister for Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon, concerning the environmental impact of the Talisman Sabre 2009 joint military exercises with the United States on the Shoalwater Bay Ramsar Wetlands and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Copies of this letter were also sent to Senators Christine Milne and Bob Brown. Also in March, we wrote to Stephen Smith urging a strong official Australian delegation at the upcoming Review Conference of the United Nations World Conference on Racism, Racial Intolerance, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances ("Durban 2") to be held in Geneva from 20 – 24 April 2009.

During this period, we also made an important submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' (JSCT) Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. Thanks to Ray Acheson, Director of WILPF's Reaching Critical Will project in New York, and Celeste Salter of the NSW branch for their assistance with the preparation of this submission. On the basis that the question of gender has been inadequately addressed to date in the conduct of debates on nuclear disarmament, we also asked the JSCT to consider gender balance in issuing their invitations to the Committee's hearings. Our submission can be read at the JSCT website: [http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/nuclearnon\\_proliferation/subs/sub65.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/nuclearnon_proliferation/subs/sub65.pdf)

Once again this year, our organisation will be represented at NGO consultation meetings with the Department of Foreign Affairs in the lead-up to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee Meeting in New York, 4 -15 May this year. This year for the first time will also see a meeting with the new International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. Thanks to ACT branch members, Bobi Meyer and Zahira Madeleine, for agreeing to be WILPF's representatives at these meetings in Canberra on April 2. Thanks to Dimity Hawkins of ICAN for organising the meetings.

You may recall that in recent months we wrote twice to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, about the AusAID Guidelines for Australian assistance for family planning activities. You will be pleased to know that the Australian

***cont'd next page....***

### *coordinators' report continued...*

government has decided to revise the guidelines so that aid money will now be available to agencies providing abortion services and abortion advice to women in countries where abortion is legal.

From now until the end of May this year, the National Human Rights Consultation Committee is conducting an exhaustive series of Community Roundtable meetings in many locations around Australia. WILPF members are encouraged to attend the Community Roundtable meeting in your location. This website gives all the dates and locations: <http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/community.nsf/calendar>. The Committee includes Father Frank Brennan (chairperson), Mary Kostakidis, Mick Palmer and Tammy Williams. The WomenSpeak Consortium of which WILPF is an active member will

also be conducting a series of human rights consultation workshops in order to explore the issues as they relate to women's human rights. WILPF will also be making a written submission to the Committee's enquiry. Any offers of assistance with the writing of the WILPF submission are very welcome. If you have expertise in this area and are willing to assist us, please contact the national office. Submissions are due by Monday June 15th.

Love and peace,  
Cathy Picone and Ruth Russell  
Joint National Coordinators  
March 2009



*Above: Ruth Russell (left) and Cathy Picone*

## WILPF Project on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

Following a positive meeting with the Commonwealth Office for Women in early February, a few changes were made to the overall scope of the project for which WILPF received a government grant last year. In light of the government asking all ministers and departments to review their immediate priorities, some departmental projects are now being progressed in a "phased" approach. The WILPF UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) project falls under this umbrella for the Office for Women. As a result, several changes have been made:

- the proposal to establish an NGO Reference Group has been deferred;
- the initial Research Project will now become a Discussion Paper; and
- this Discussion Paper will be the focus of NGO consultation workshops which will be held in each state and territory in late April or early May.

The Discussion Paper (which will outline the twelve National Action Plans already in existence and their value for Australia) is currently being finalised by our research consultants for sign-off by Office for Women.

WILPF is now sourcing facilitator/s to provide the consultation material and facilitate the eight consultation workshops which will be held in all states and territories around Australia. The feedback from these consultations will be collated into a Final Report to the Office for Women

*An update from Ruth Russell.*



by the end of June. It is envisaged that this feedback will inform government consideration of the next phase of a possible UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan for Australia.

As the government grant will cover the cost of administration and co-ordination of the consultation workshops, WILPF branches will not be required to organise the meetings.

We do hope that many WILPF members will attend the consultation workshops when they are held in your capital city. Every effort will be made to accommodate pressures on branches in scheduling the consultation workshops. Branches will receive fuller information about the consultations as soon as they can be finalised.



# WILPF-Australia Triennial Meeting 2009

## A message from the organising committee

**The Triennial Meeting will take place in BRISBANE from the evening of Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>-to the afternoon of Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2009.**

The theme for this year's Meeting is: *Women, Peace and Sustainable Futures.*

The Triennial Meeting provides an opportunity for WILPF women from around Australia (and New Zealand, we hope) to come together for meetings and greetings, for strengthening our ties and our commitment, for sharing information, for being inspired, for electing the incoming Board members and for creating visions for the future and forging strategies for achieving those visions.

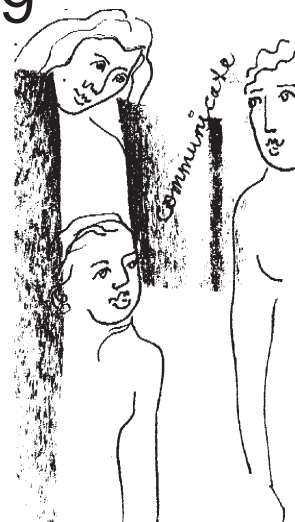
So much to do in two-and-a-bit days!

This edition of *Peace and Freedom* contains a copy of the registration flyer for the Triennial Meeting. The organising committee is happy to announce that thanks to some generous donations and to our success in gaining a grant from the Queensland *Gambling Community Development Fund*, we have been able to keep the cost of registration to a bare minimum.

For a VERY reasonable cost, you will be able to enjoy all the stimulus of an interesting program in a peaceful setting high on a hill overlooking the city of Brisbane. We have used the venue, the Mercy Centre, for the Triennial Meetings in 2000 and 2003 and can assure you that the accommodation will be comfortable, the food delicious and every care taken to ensure that our well-being is well catered for.

As for the program, that is going to be full and rewarding. The opening ceremony on Saturday morning will feature a *Welcome to Country* by an Indigenous woman, a welcome to the meeting by our two National Coordinators, the official opening by Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Ms Penny Wensley AO, and a keynote address by our very own International Vice President, Felicity Hill. On Sunday, besides the Annual General Meeting, we have set aside time for a presentation about our national project: *Security Council Resolution 1325, Towards a National Action Plan.*

There are three sessions, each of over an hour, for concurrent workshops. You will also find in this edition of *Peace and Freedom* a *Workshop Proposal Form* for those who would like to present a workshop.



We can accommodate up to fifteen workshops in all. We have already had indications that there is interest in workshops on various aspects of WILPF's governance including *Growing WILPF*. We invite those interested in these important topics to submit workshop proposals.

There are also spaces in the program for either leisure or for informal meetings. Issues raised in the workshops and informal meetings can then be brought forward at a two-hour plenary session on Sunday morning.

If your Branch has merchandise to sell, please bring it along. There will be a stall in the foyer.

The weather in Brisbane in late May is usually sunny and mild. You will not need heavy winter clothes, just bring something a bit warmer for the evenings.

We warmly welcome you to be part of this important event. Come to be inspired, to enjoy the company of some truly amazing women, to be entertained and to contribute.



*Drawings on this page: from the 2000 Triennial, by artist and WILPF member Brenda Lewis.*

# WILPF Australian Section election of office-bearers ...

at the Annual General Meeting - May 2009

## Background

**A**t the Australian Section Executive Committee teleconference meeting in January 2009, it was agreed that the next edition of the national newsletter, "Peace and Freedom" would include a brief description of the roles of the officer-bearing positions which will be declared vacant at our AGM in May. It was also agreed that the nomination process will be changed with nominations opening from the date when members receive their copy of this edition of "Peace and Freedom" and close at the end of the first day of the National Section Meeting, prior to the AGM which will be held at the National Section Meeting.

## Description of Officer Roles and Nomination Process

Our constitution states that the Australian Section Executive Committee shall:

be responsible for the implementation of the International Congress, International Executive Committee (now changed to International Board) and the Section policies and programmes between Section meetings;

- liaise with the International Officers and Executive Committee (International Board) of the League and other Sections;
- communicate with the Australian Government on behalf of the League, the Australian Section and its branches;
- co-operate with other national organisations where appropriate;
- promote and co-ordinate Branch activities within their state or regional area and approve any action extending beyond their state or regional area, including correspondence in the name of the League or the Australian Section; and
- arrange the publication of "Peace and Freedom" as the official newsletter of the Australian Section and distribute it to all members of the Australian Section.

All eleven Officer positions are voluntary and carry a three-year term of office:

Joint National Coordinators (2 positions)

Assistant Coordinator

Treasurer

International Board Delegate

Editor of "Peace and Freedom"

Branch Delegate for each Branch (one position per Branch).

## Job Descriptions

### *Joint National Coordinators (2 positions)*

Working closely together, the Joint National Coordinators facilitate the implementation of the constitutional requirements outlined above in order to promote WILPF's aims and objectives. Through delegation and/or undertaking tasks personally, the Coordinators ensure that the Australian Section can undertake campaigns and projects as part of the national and international work programs and respond appropriately to current situations.

These two positions are management positions with many tasks having set deadlines. A good knowledge of WILPF aims and campaigns is necessary. The time required is variable. Skills and abilities required include:

- research and prepare submissions for parliamentary inquiries;
- write letters to MPs and other key stakeholders on specific issues;
- work with other organisations on national campaigns;
- ensure the good functioning, maintenance and continuity of the Section Executive Committee;
- organise three-monthly meetings of the Section Executive Committee in order to make and/or endorse decisions concerning WILPF's ongoing campaign work, to ensure that effective communication is maintained between the Section Executive Committee and its branches, and that the National Section Meeting is held according to the constitution at least once every three years;
- ensure that good working relationships are built and maintained among the members of the Section Executive Committee;
- Support the regular publication of the national newsletter "Peace and Freedom"; and
- public speaking as a national representative of WILPF.

### *Assistant Coordinator*

The Assistant Coordinator works closely with the National Coordinators to take on delegated specific projects and tasks as required, and to support the Coordinators in their work.

### *Treasurer*

The Treasurer takes responsibility for preparing the Australian Section's budget, showing annual income and expenditure,

*cont'd next page....*

using recognised account-keeping methods. The Treasurer receives the capitation fees from branches and also arranges the yearly financial audit. She also prepares financial reports for the meetings of the Section Executive Committee and an annual financial report for the AGM. This position is supported by a sub-committee of the Section Executive Committee of which the Treasurer is a member. The time required is variable.

**International Board Delegate**

This is a liaison and support position between the Australian Section and the International Board (IB). The position requires a thorough knowledge of WILPF Australian Section’s activities, and WILPF’s international program. This position usually entails participation in the annual 3-day meeting of the International Board and regular liaison on issues involving WILPF’s international officers and campaigns as they arise.

**Editor of “Peace and Freedom”**

This position requires skills in the editing, design, production, printing and distribution of our quality publication which is produced every four months. This position requires around 20 hours per edition for research, preparation and editing time. Additional time is required for printing and distribution. The Editor may engage the support of an editorial team and some tasks can be delegated to members of that team by arrangement with them.

**Branch Delegate for Each Branch (one position per Branch)**

Branch delegates are elected as full members of the Section Executive Committee (SEC) to be the conduit between their branch and the Section Executive Committee. They act as the liaison person between the Section Executive Committee and their branches. Branch delegates are elected for a full three-year term. They are expected to participate in SEC meetings for which they provide regular branch updates. They also write branch updates for the national newsletter “Peace and Freedom”.

**Proposed constitutional amendment**

Proposed:

That the names “Section Executive Committee” or “Australian Section Executive Committee” be changed to “WILPF (Australia) Board”.

*Proposed Cathy Picone/ seconded Ruth Russell.*

**Nomination Process**

It was agreed at the January meeting of the Australian Section Executive Committee that the nomination period should open earlier than previously. Nominations for the above positions will now open with the publication of this edition of “Peace and Freedom”, and will close at the end of the first day of the National Section Meeting, with the complete list of nominations publicly displayed on the second day of the National Section Meeting in preparation for the AGM, when the positions will be filled by election according to our constitution.

We ask each candidate to forward a nomination application to the Returning Officer C/O the national office (address on back page of this newsletter). The nomination application needs to provide information under the following headings:

- Name, postal address, phone numbers and email address if applicable;
- Knowledge of WILPF’s aims and programs;
- Your involvement in and commitment to WILPF;
- A statement of your vision for WILPF;
- Your skills relating to the particular position for which you are nominating; and
- Name of your proposer and seconder. Each candidate will need to seek the approval of their proposer and seconder.



*Memories of the 2003 Triennial. Participants in a workshop, left to right: Jane (NSW), Carolyn(QLD), Edwina (Aetaeroa), Stella (NSW), Margaret (NSW), Trude (NSW), Helen (VIC), Margaret (ACT), Mary (QLD).*



# WILPF International Board Meeting November 2008 Geneva

*By Mary Ziesak, WILPF Australia International Executive Board member who attended this international meeting.*

**E**ighty five women from 27 countries' Sections attended the International Board Meeting of WILPF in Geneva concluding on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2008. There were participants from several African countries, Nigeria, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The other countries represented were Australia, Albania, Aotearoa, Belarus, Belgium, Colombo, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Our three Australian participants, Felicity Hill our International Vice President arranged our day at the United Nations and doubtless worked on much of the organisation of the whole meeting. Lyn Lane from the ACT branch is a member of the Finance Committee and took part in their important deliberations. I was, apart from the Racism Workshop facilitator, the Convener of the ad hoc Resolutions Committee and am one of the Conveners of the Racism Working Group.

Regional, Committee and Working Group meetings were held in the evenings, before the program each day and during lunch breaks.

The Asia Pacific Regional group, including Australia, India, Japan, Sri Lanka, Aotearoa, and the Philippines met together briefly only.

## **Racism, Diversity and Conflict Resolution Workshop**

Two days before the WILPF IB Program commenced all participants took part in a day workshop "Racism, Diversity and Conflict Resolution" to build community and assist in smooth running of the IB Meeting. This workshop emerged from the recognition that ongoing education in how individuals constructively deal with conflicts is a step towards lasting peace. The training had already begun several months earlier through Email discussions and notes from the Conflict Resolution Course. This was designed to stimulate creative thinking and problem solving amongst WILPF Members. The interactive workshop was in four sections –community building, diversity, conflict resolution and a DVD "Making Whiteness Visible."

There was good critical discussion following the workshop and agreement that we should in future have some similar training preceding IB meetings. Possibly a half day workshop with prior information distributed to IB members. (A separate, more detailed report on this workshop will be available)

## **A Day at the United Nations**

The day before the IB we were treated to an inspirational seminar at the United Nations, *Palais des Nations*, which is only a short walk from the WILPF Geneva Office. The Seminar "Over 1325 Billion Arguments for Human Security" was keynoted by Cynthia Cockburn (*her speech is available at [www.wilpf.int.ch](http://www.wilpf.int.ch)*). Cynthia, who is an independent researcher (not paid by a university) posed some searching questions such as, why do we have women only organisations? To quote her 'she tells what other women have told her in order to make women's experience of war visible –to get a gender analysis and to be in control'. Cynthia interestingly compared Women in Black and WILPF saying that WIB retains its spontaneity; organises a biennial encounter – they admire WILPF's organising but question what price is paid for that? The panel discussion that followed was titled "Resolution 1325 & Human Security: Limiting or Expanding our Political Horizon?" Lunch was taken in the restaurant overlooking sweeping lawns, the botanical gardens, Lake Geneva and to the snow capped mountains that surround Geneva. There was the opportunity to visit the UN Bookshop where I bought books for my grandchildren.

In the afternoon we took part in a panel discussion "Whose Responsibility to Protect? Peacekeeping and Enforcement."

## **The International Board Meeting**

The four day International Board meetings' full agenda was completed with energy and enthusiasm with members taking part in the discussions tirelessly.

The WILPF four program priorities were agreed by the Board with sections encouraged to implement them nationally. They are:-

### **Challenge Militarism**

The main areas to work on are *Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty 2010 Review* Conference Preparations; *UN Security Council Resolution 1325* – create National Action Plans (Australia is already engaged in this); "*You Get What You Pay For*" – use material developed already by the international office. Other reference material can be found on the Reaching Critical Will, International Campaign against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Mayors for Peace websites. We need to create awareness about the enormous amount of money spent worldwide on armaments.

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### **Strengthening the United Nations**

WILPF and the Durban Review Conference to be held in Geneva in April 2009 – this is a follow up to discover what governments have done to implement *The Plan of Action* from the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances; *CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and its' Optional Protocol* (encourage governments to ratify if they still have not) plus the *African Women's Protocol*.

The WILPF UN Committee was formed to support better understanding of the UN Charter and All bodies of the UN.

### **Invest in Peace – Climate Security=Human Security**

WILPF will take part in working groups and produce education materials in advance of conferences such as the *Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change (12/2009)*; WILPF will generate a more visible policy on *Food and Water*. Norway Section is producing a 100 page book on water and the Section members will self fund themselves to the world Water Forum (16-22 March 2009 in Turkey); Depending on funding the Environmental Working Group will hold an event on the Democratic Republic of Congo exposing the link between resources and conflict to coincide with the Commission on Sustainable Development Meeting 4-15<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Gender Budgeting - the Dutch Section is preparing material for distribution; Promoting Global Economic Justice- the Economic Justice Working Group will work on this and report their progress to the next IB meeting;

Corporate connections - the Environment Working Group will develop specific materials about corporations especially and for example, AREVA, and their better adherence to environmental justice and human rights law.

### **Building WILPF**

By the next WILPF International Congress, in 2011, each Section will be asked to present its' own action plan towards 2015 - WILPF's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. A Committee was formed to work on this event. We are asked for ideas for a slogan, logo and title for the event planned for The Hague. Holland.

### **WILPF finances**

The 2009 budget was passed. This was a bare bones budget with little funding available for some parts of the program and with minimal staff for the Geneva Office.

A new treasurer, Nancy Ramsden, from the United States was appointed. The International travel fund was amended and the IB agreed to implement six fundraising ideas:

- An annual letter from the International Presidents to go to every member
- Recruit to the Committee of 100
- 28<sup>th</sup> April fundraising birthday celebrations

- Internships and summer schools
  - Use program proposals generated by Geneva in a coordinated way
  - Build WILPF's endowment
- 2007 audits were approved

Sliding Scale International Membership Fee was approved based on purchasing power parity, with a minimum fee set at 10 Swiss francs per year.

The Manifesto proposal for 2015 that was agreed to be worked on at the Bolivia 2007 Congress was reviewed by Edith Ballantyne and suggestions for inclusion in this are also invited. This will be a 3-4 page document - so we need to hone out history, actions, successes and visions exceptionally skillfully to achieve this.

I was once again honoured to represent our Australian Section of WILPF.

For further reports or hard copies on any areas not covered in this brief report please contact Mary 07 3372 8954 / 0409 496 474 or Email maryziesak@bigpond.com

Mary Ziesak  
February 2009



Images: Mary Ziesak, 2008



Top: workshop session. Above: meeting participants Lyn Lane (WILPF ACT), Edith Ballantyne (former International President) and Felicity Hill (International Vice-President) .



# WILPF Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation

By Cathy Picone

**B**ecause women have been inadequately represented in debates on issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, WILPF's submission of February 2009 to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation drew the Committee's attention to the question of gender balance. In our submission, we wrote that:

"Our organisation has worked actively against nuclear weapons since they were invented. Because of the inextricable link between nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons, as well as for the documented proliferation, economic and health impacts, our organisation is opposed to nuclear energy.

WILPF was in the first group of non-governmental organisations to receive consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1948 and later with UNESCO. From its inception, WILPF has witnessed the extent to which the sovereignty-defying nuclear weapon, occurring simultaneous to the sovereignty-based United Nations, has both marked and undermined the political structures of our times, and has influenced and affected the United Nations, particularly the radioactively contaminated Security Council.

WILPF has played an active role in the Special Sessions on Disarmament, in the Non Proliferation Treaty conferences, and in the Conference on Disarmament. Providing an NGO draft document during the negotiation of the NPT, ours is the only non-governmental organisation to have attended every

single Review Conference and Preparatory Committee of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Since 1984, WILPF has worked with other NGOs to organise a seminar linking 8 March - International Women's Day - with disarmament, peace and security issues. Each year, a report and statement from the NGO conference has been read into the record of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the only official oral statement from NGOs to this body.

In 1999, WILPF established the Reaching Critical Will project to enhance the preparation and participation of non-governmental organisations in the work of disarmament diplomacy, decoding the technical language and providing ongoing reporting of what governments are saying and doing. WILPF maintains that empowering women to participate in this work is necessary given the extreme gender asymmetry resulting in a democracy deficit in disarmament decision making.

Our Reaching Critical Will website (which places all speeches and draft resolutions and working papers online from the NPT, the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly First Committee) is widely used by diplomats, Foreign Ministries and non-governmental organisations around the world."

A full version of WILPF's submission is available online at the JSCT website:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/nuclearnon\\_proliferation/subs/sub65.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/nuclearnon_proliferation/subs/sub65.pdf)



## Do you know what UN International Year this is?

### 2009 International Year of Natural Fibres

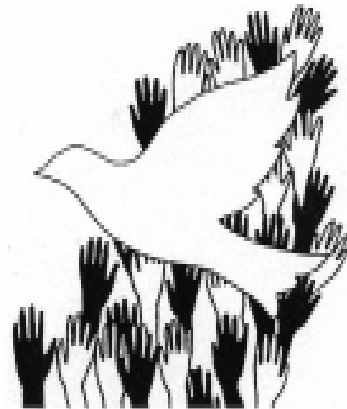
Natural fibres are either extracted from plants from the leaf, the inner bark or fruit/seed crop, or from animal wool/hair, or insect cocoon or from the mineral product. Plant sources of fibre include cotton, hemp, kenef, ramie, sisal, flax, linen, limae, jute, seagrass, bamboo and abaca. Animal sources of fibre include sheep, alpaca, llama, goat and camel and can be either wool, hair or leather. Insect fibre is predominantly from silkworm cocoons. See [www.naturalfibres2009.org](http://www.naturalfibres2009.org).

### 2009 International Year of Astronomy

This is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Galileo Gallilei's first glimpse of the universe, including the "Gallilean" moons of Jupiter, through his famous telescope. No wonder it has been proclaimed as the International Year of Astronomy. See [www.astronomy2009.org](http://www.astronomy2009.org).

### 2009 International Year of Reconciliation

The 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, recognising that reconciliation processes are particularly necessary and urgent in countries and regions of the world which had suffered, or were suffering, situations of conflict that had affected and divided societies in their various internal, national and international facets, proclaimed 2009 the International Year of Reconciliation.



# Human Rights and Women



*Ruth Russell writes about the role and importance of a Bill of Rights and shares material from the Human Rights Resource Centre.*

On 10 December 2008, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Australian federal government launched a national public consultation about the legal recognition and protection of human rights and responsibilities. This is an historic opportunity for individuals and communities to improve our democracy and have our say about the protection of fundamental values such as freedom, respect, dignity and a fair go.

The three main consultation questions are:

- Which human rights should be protect and promoted?
- Are these human rights currently sufficiently protected and promoted?
- How could Australia better protect and promote human rights?

## ***What are human rights?***

Human rights are basic minimum standards that are required for people to live with human dignity.

Australia does not have a piece of legislation that protects all of our rights.

The Human Rights Law Resource Centre has put out many fact sheets covering different areas to assist people consider these questions. Printed below is their fact sheet on Human Rights and Women.

As human beings, women are entitled to the human rights afforded to all people under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Rights which are relevant to women in particular and are currently in need of greater protection are discussed below but women's rights are not limited to only these issues.

The outcome of the National Human Rights Consultation has great potential to address many of the currently inadequately protected areas of women's rights.

## ***Discrimination and Equality***

The right to equality before the law means that people must not be discriminated against on the basis of their sex, marital status or family responsibilities.

Australia made a commitment to pursuing equality between men and women when it ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Since then the Australian Government passed the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth) which made both direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of sex unlawful.

Direct discrimination means treating a person less favourably because of their sex. For example, it would be direct discrimination for a woman not to be served at a shop on the basis that she was a woman.

Indirect discrimination on the basis of sex means imposing a condition, requirement or practice which appears neutral but nevertheless has a disproportionate impact on people of a particular sex. For example, it may be indirect discrimination against women for an employer to impose a height requirement on potential employees if height is irrelevant to the job to be performed. This is due to the fact that women are generally shorter than men and as such more women would be ineligible due to the height restriction.

Despite the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, it is clear that women have not achieved equality with men in many areas. This is particularly the case in the workplace. Women are still greatly under-represented in both the public and private sectors. There is also substantial pay inequity between men and women, with women earning on average significantly less than men. Also, although many similar nations have introduced a national paid maternity scheme, Australia has not. At the request of the Australian Government, the Productivity Commission has conducted an inquiry into paid maternity, paternity and parental leave but no decision has been made yet.

The Sex Discrimination Act also fails to provide a framework for addressing systemic sex discrimination and promote substantive equality for women. As a result women continue to suffer from discrimination in many areas of life.

## ***Freedom from Torture, cruel inhuman or degrading treatment and the Right to Life, Liberty and Security of the Person***

It is never permissible to torture someone or subject them to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Inhuman treatment means treatment causing severe mental or physical harm and degrading treatment means treatment that is grossly humiliating or undignified. Whether treatment is serious enough to be inhuman or degrading will always depend on the particular circumstances of the person's case. For example, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment can occur when a woman is forced to have sex or engage in sexual acts against her will. Women like all people, also have the right to liberty and security of the person. This means that they have the right to be generally free to go about their lives in a safe environment without physical interference of their bodies.

***cont'd next page....***

Women often have these rights breached through acts of domestic violence. The incidence of violence against women in Australia remains appallingly high across all communities and socio-economic contexts. Although some legislation exists targeting the perpetrators of domestic violence, acts of domestic violence are still widespread. The Government has set up a National Council to reduce violence against women and children which is developing a national plan of action. Services relating to domestic violence are underfunded, with shortages of long-term housing for women leaving home due to domestic violence and little support for women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women with a disability and indigenous women.

The trafficking of women under conditions of sexual servitude breaches the human rights of those women and can involve a range of exploitative practices that include sexual, physical, psychological, criminal and labour exploitation. The victims of sexual servitude are most often not citizens and in some cases, illegal non-citizens. The current visa system does not adequately protect such workers and if criminal proceedings are commenced against the perpetrators, victims are generally forced to return to their country of origin at the conclusion of the proceedings unless the Minister exercises his or her discretion to allow them to stay.

The major focus of the Government's efforts in the area of trafficking relating to sexual servitude has been dedicated to prosecuting the perpetrators or offenders. As such, the protection of women forced into sexual servitude remains low.

**Protection of Families and Children**

There are many examples of where the current Australian framework fails to adequately protect families and children. Although financial support is provided by the Government through the 'baby bonus' upon the birth or adoption of a child, there is a great shortage of childcare centres and the cost of these services can be prohibitive for many families. The lack of paid maternity leave can also act as a disincentive for women to care for their children after birth.

Concern also exists that the current provisions of the Family Law Act 1975 (Commonwealth) place too greater emphasis on contact with both parents and may override the provisions that are intended to recognise the need to protect children from family violence and abuse.

Same-sex couples and their children also continue to be discriminated against in many areas impacting upon family life including family law, health care and superannuation. Most significantly, the Marriage Act 1961 (Commonwealth) was amended in 2004 to specifically exclude the recognition of marriage between same-sex couples.

There are therefore, many areas in which the protections afforded to women and families need strengthening.

You have the power to change this.

**10 Reasons for a Human Rights Act**

- To protect the rights of all Australians
- To encourage healthy checks and balances on government action.
- To consider human rights & provide a safeguard against controversial laws, such as the Northern Territory intervention, sedition and counter-terrorism.
- To promote a community of respect and tolerance.
- To require Government to act consistently with human rights. This would require reconsideration of issues like mandatory immigration detention.
- To put human rights above politics and arbitrary government action.
- To improve government policy and decision making.
- To provide a yardstick to assess government action against international standards.
- To protect rights of vulnerable, isolated and disadvantaged Australians.
- To promote a strong, inclusive community where we respect our neighbours' rights.

Further information is available from the following websites:

Human Rights Law Resource Centre [www.hirc.org.au](http://www.hirc.org.au)


Australian Human Rights Commission (formerly HREOC) [www.hreoc.gov.au/](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/)

National Human Rights Consultation [www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/](http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/)

Make your submission to the National Human Rights Consultation Committee

The Human Rights Law Resource Centre ([www.hirc.org.au](http://www.hirc.org.au)) has a template which you can download and just tick the boxes and/or make comments then post off to the National Human Rights Consultation Secretariat (full postal address is on the bottom of the form). **Deadline for submissions has been extended until 15 June 2009.**

SPREAD THE WORD AMONG YOUR WOMEN FRIENDS AND GET AS MANY WOMEN TO MAKE A SUBMISSION AS POSSIBLE OR HAVE YOU SAY ON THE GETUP OR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WEBSITE SURVEYS.




Every HUMAN has RIGHTS

but YOURS aren't protected

CALL FOR A BILL OF RIGHTS

NOW



# WILPF Australia's letters to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

## *Durban Review Conference*

*Two of the many letters WILPF  
Australia has written to the  
Australian Government. These  
are both to Stephen Smith,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs.*

6 March 2009

Dear Minister,

**W**e are writing to inquire about Australia's official participation in the upcoming Review Conference of the United Nations World Conference on Racism, Racial Intolerance, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances (WCAR) to be held in Geneva from 20 – 24 April 2009.

The Australian Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was a member of the Non-Governmental Committee that worked to educate and raise awareness throughout Australia in preparation for the WCAR that took place in Durban, South Africa from 31 August to 7 September 2001.

In Durban, WILPF's international members were involved in the WCAR parallel forum for non-governmental organisations. The official delegation from Australia led by the Hon Kay Patterson, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, comprised government and non-government members and contributed to positive outcomes in the areas of indigenous issues, cultural diversity and human rights education.

The importance of this Review Conference cannot be underestimated. Australia has an ever increasing number of different cultural and racial groups settling to live permanently and becoming citizens. Every Australian needs to be engaged in working to study and understand these differences so we can become a more harmonious society where all are accepted without discrimination of any kind, and racist attitudes and intolerances are a thing of the past. In addition, Australia has the eyes of the world on us due to the well-known and ongoing difficulties and gap in life expectancy endured by our Indigenous Australians.

For these reasons, WILPF believes that Australia should send a strong delegation to the Review Conference once again comprising both government and non-government members.

We would very much appreciate your informing us of the commitment of the Australian Government to the Review Conference.

We thank you for your kind attention and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely  
Cathy Picone and Ruth Russell  
Joint National Coordinators



## *.....and congratulations on family planning decision*

17 March 2009

Dear Minister,

**T**he Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) wrote to you twice in recent months regarding the limitations of funding and restrictions on the scope of work that Family Planning organisations could perform in developing countries. We now wish to congratulate you and the Government on your decision to rescind the restrictions on information and education programs in women's health in developing countries which included references to abortion or post-coital contraception.

These restrictions have previously meant that Family Planning programs in developing countries have suffered from limitations on provision of information, and lack of funding. Women in these countries have the highest rates of maternal mortality associated with unplanned pregnancy and unskilled abortion arising from inadequate access to information and contraceptive services. The better support for programs of education for women and training of service providers will have the effect of reducing unplanned pregnancy and enabling better spacing of births.

Your decision also means that Australia is better supporting the UN Millennium Development Goals of 2000 and the decisions taken at the UN Conference in Nairobi in 1985, and many other international conferences that:

"The ability of women to control their own fertility forms an important basis for the enjoyment of other rights." (Par 156)

WILPF also congratulates United States President Obama for taking similar action in removing the restrictions dating back to 1984 which removed funding for Family Planning organisations even when they were working in a country where abortion is legal.

Once again, we warmly congratulate the Australian Government on this important change.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Picone and Ruth Russell  
Joint National Coordinators



# From the branches

## SA

Our final meeting for 2008 was a most enjoyable Christmas get-together with WILPF and Women In Black. We celebrated with songs, games, anecdotes and lovely food. We held our planning meeting for 2009 on February 14th, and look forward to a busy year ahead. On February 19th, WILPF was represented at "Wodlianni: Stolen Generations Coming Home Reconciliation and Healing Event". The event, hosted by Journey of Healing and ANTA, was held in the grounds of Government House. It marked the 173rd Anniversary of the Letters Patent of 1836 establishing the province of South Australia. The Governor of SA, along with other speakers, addressed the gathering, and there was a demonstration of spear and boomerang throwing, with a healing ceremony which concluded the proceedings. At the February Women In Black rally, pamphlets were distributed delivering a message of optimism, with ceasefires in Gaza and in the Congo, and a hope that the USA with the new President will lead the way by at last recognising global warming and strengthening codes of ethics with regard to expenditure of public money. We hope to see an end to the era of the "War on Terror" and look forward with optimism to better times. On March 5th the International Womens Day rally in Adelaide addressed the topic of paid maternity leave. On March 7th and 8th WILPF, along with ANTA and APC, held a stall at Womad.

*Report: Kate Parsons*

## TAS

Whilst it has taken some time for us to get into gear after our non summer— aren't all you mainlanders envious?— the Gaza escalation got some of us kick started again. There was an impromptu rally outside Duncan Kerr's office at which a number of us were present and Margot Roe spoke. Women in Black meet fortnightly. All the regulars are also members of WILPF. What feedback occurs is mainly positive. Indeed since Women in Black formed here, six years ago, most comments have supported our stand. In the very beginning, an Israeli man staying at the Grand Chancellor told us we were naive ignoramuses. He may have been privvy to Israeli secret service information we were not, but we knew we knew a good deal!

For International Women's Day one of our members, Yabbo Thompson, hospitably always arranges an IWD breakfast at her home, and usually an event at Women Tasmania. This year she had an IWDA member and an Amnesty member speak at a soiree. Renae Davies, expert on the border area between Burma and Thailand, focused on what IWDA is doing in that border region. There are now a number of Karen refugees recently settled in Hobart. Contact with them could be an initiative for this branch in the future. Our activity to celebrate IWD is a morning tea to be held at the Female Factory.

Whilst we are active in many voluntary organizations and put the WILPF perspectives forward at the National Council of Women of Tasmania (this year a hundred and ten years old so even more venerable than us), as well as at the Networking for Harmony Committee of the Hobart City Council, the UNNA association, the Peace Trust, Medecins sans Frontiers and Amnesty International, we do not seem to be able to attract membership from younger women alas. Suggestions from any readers are welcome. What we will not consider is a calendar or a Big Sister version of Big Brother however!

Bron Meredith turned ninety a few weeks ago. Although she is in a good deal of pain from a crumblin spine, her spirit is the same. She is an inspirational role model for all who know her. Another faithful member, Doreen Batey has also had health problems. Our loving thoughts are with the members who are unable to attend meetings any longer. A stop press on the health front is that Audrey Moore had a fall from a stepstool and broke a vertebrae. We hope for a quick recovery on her part.

At a recent expo at the University, WILPF and Medecins sans Frontiers shared a stall. A goodly number of students passed through. It seemed to me the students were more interested in collecting freebies of various sorts than in considering options for how to live peacefully and sustainably in the world.

The Bahai Centre is now operational and available for hire by the general public. It has well designed multi-purpose spaces and a cafe open to the general public so will get a lot of use hopefully. They are a group that has suffered much persecution in their country of origin but have not become vengeful. As a memorial for Lesley Alcorso, our branch has decided to fund a bursary at the Conservatorium. That will be good exposure of WILPF and music was very important to Lesley. Those of us who have been members for a long time have very fond memories of the end of year concerts Lesley hosted.

*Report: Margot Roe*

## QLD

Our combined December meeting and end-of-year party was enjoyed by all. Over \$300 was raised via a well-stocked 'bring and buy' table, raffles and a biscuit barrel auction. Performers for Peace presented their new piece, *UNSCR 1325 – Blue Silk Dreaming*, and Intern Tanya Negerevich presented her report 150 Years of Women's Peace Activism in Queensland: Enduring Commitment.

The branch Management Committee met to discuss plans and goals for the coming year and created a proposed calendar which was subsequently taken to the WILPF Queensland monthly meeting held in February.

The Events Committee continues with preparations for the National Board Triennial Meeting to be held in Brisbane in May.

In early February, several members got together for lunch to say to our Swedish intern, Sakina Ramic. Sakina was presented with a lovely pair of silver earrings depicting koala paw prints. Sakina then flew home from a very warm Brisbane summer to the chilly depths of a Swedish winter.

Report: Joy Collins

Image: Mary Ziesak, 2008



Swedish intern Sakina Ramic and WILPF Qld's Kathy Devine hold a classic WILPF banner.

## NSW

This is the completion of nearly 50 years of WILPF NSW and my two years as President. At this time we look back on the last year and analyse what has been achieved or not and look ahead for the next year and the future. Hannah Middleton spoke at our AGM in April 2008 on the Anti-Bases Campaign and the possible impact of the change in Government. For the rest of the year we decided not to have regular speakers but to use our meetings as planning meetings. We have not had a secretary for those 2 years and I thank Trude Kallir and Jane Corpus Brock for the work they have done looking after our finances.

We have had two workshops which looked at our structure, membership, public profile, and future. The first workshop in May was run by Rosemary Shapiru Liu in May, and the second in September was part of a Shopfront Project with UTS student Peta Nicholas. We still have to examine these reports carefully and decide what we can do, who will do it, and how. Looking through the monthly minutes there are a number of items not completed.

On the positive side we can be pleased at some of our activities. Margot Pearson and I gave statements at the Consultation on the Defence White paper in September along with other NSW Peace groups. Our small Blue Mountains group held another successful meeting in December "Women and Social Justice Human Rights Day" with four speakers. It attracted an audience of 60 but required a great deal of organization, and we thank Celeste Salter and the group for their hard work. They manage to get much local support. We have also worked with the Humanist Society and UNAA NSW to hold a seminar on Bougainville Women during the week of International Women's Day.

We have actively supported other Peace groups particularly International Women's Day and Hiroshima Day and the Reconciliation groups. We have participated in the IWD march and had a stall in Hyde Park. We thank Trude Kallir for managing the sales of our special goods which are a good part of our income. We have also continued to publish our quarterly Bulletin with help from Spider Redgrave and are grateful to Tania Plibersek and the local ALP Branch for printing these out for us without charge. Some of us participate in the Women in Black silent vigils on Sydney Town Hall Steps. The actual number of active workers in WILPF NSW is small and many of our members are involved in a wide number of organizations but not always as members of WILPF. And we are all getting older and less active.

In January this year Margaret Holmes, the founder of WILPF NSW turned 100, the third of our members to do so. Although she cannot any longer participate in meetings we have decided to have a special party at our May meeting to recognise WILPF's 94 birthday, UN Security paper 1325 and Margaret's birthday. Thank you to all those who have supported WILPF and all the other meetings you attend.

Report: Stefania Siedlecky AM, President.



## Vale Marjorie Ladkin



Marjorie Ladkin died recently in Adelaide at the age of ninety-four.

Marjorie was an active member of WILPF from the time when the South Australian Branch was rejuvenated in 1966 under the leadership of Doreen Rude, Maud McBriar, Jean Blackburn and Margaret Forte. When Doreen left Adelaide in Sept 1967, Marjorie became Branch President and in 1968 was a leading figure when Adelaide hosted a live-in Section meeting.

She continued as an active member, often on the executive, for several more years and was Section President in 1971-72 when South Australia again took on Section responsibilities. In addition to her work in WILPF, in her profession as a nurse she became full time secretary of the South Australian branch of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (RANF) in 1965. She gave herself wholeheartedly to the RANF which grew in membership, in its range of activities and in strength as a professional and industrial organization for nurses. She retired in 1975.

Cynthia James



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*WILPF brings together women of  
different political & philosophical  
convictions united in their  
determination to abolish the causes  
and the concept of war.*

*WILPF's ultimate goal is the  
establishment of an international  
economic order founded on meeting  
the needs of all peoples and not on  
profit and privilege.*

*Join this worldwide sisterhood of  
peace activists and transform  
the world.*



## Stay in touch via two WILPF email lists....

**WILPF Australia email list.** All WILPF members are eligible to join the WILPF Australian members' email list which is hosted by the Australian Virtual Centre for Women and the Law. To subscribe, visit <https://www.nwjc.org.au/cgi-bin/emma/sub.pl?l=wilpf-sectionmembers>.

**WILPF International email list.** The international WILPF-News email list can connect you with current ideas and activities in Geneva, the UN office and elsewhere. Joining is easy - just type your email address into the box located at <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/>

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