FWRM MEMBER ATTENDS WORLD AIDS CONFERENCE

FWRM member Dr Mridula Sainath recently attended the 12th World Conference on AIDS in Geneva. She said that the event was a memorable one in which she met and exchanged information with people all over the world on issues concerning HIV and AIDS. She said that a disappointing aspect of the Conference was the blatant disregard of participants to presentations made by those from the developing world. "Whenever anyone of color from the developing world (South) got up to speak, most participants would leave. It was quite obvious that people in the developed countries (Northerners) did not want to hear what those from the poorer countries had to say and this was very disappointing," said Dr Sainath in a presentation at FWRM's most recent Collective. Dr Sainath was critical of the decision to make AZT, a drug known to minimize the risk of vertical transmission of HIV from mother to baby available only to women who are pregnant in developing countries without looking at the total need of the woman.

Diet therapy shows that a PWA can still live a healthy and normal lifestyle according to French woman Lynde Catherine Francis.

"They agree to help women with AIDS in the third world countries by making AZT accessible to them but it came with conditions. Women were being viewed merely as a reproductive vehicle and the suggestion was that AZT will also be given with milk formula because breastfeeding was contra indicated with this regime. It is quite clear that the issue of AIDS has become politicized with the milk formula companies piggy-riding on AIDS treatment. Most developing countries do not even have the drugs yet and the treatment is also expensive. But then when they take the medication, there is no guarantee as the drugs have some terrible side effects."

She also said that she was also exposed to the issues of the side effects of AIDS treatment. "I saw some PWA who were undergoing treatment and it was quite horrific to see how they were affected by the treatment. Some had legs the size of an arm and big pouches (fat displacement). I also met a woman who agreed to pose for a photograph for me to bring home who had never been on any medication but was healthy simply by diet therapy. It goes to show that one can have HIV positive and still be healthy by being selective with what one eats and being positive," she said.

Dr Sainath also commented on the need for mothers to be re-tested in the last trimester of pregnancy. "At the moment mothers only get tested during their initial clinic visit. Women may be still sexually active when they are pregnant and this period is known for when extra-marital affairs by partners are most prevalent. The man may have caught something and given it to the pregnant mother but she would not know she has an infection because she only got tested when she first goes to clinic. This means that there are cases which escape the medical authorities' attention." Dr Sainath said that if the rate of sexually transmitted diseases in Fiji was anything to go by, then Fiji does have a problem at hand. "Fiji has one of the highest rate of STDs and reproductive cancers in the world and this is a good indicator of how AIDS can be a problem here. There are so many people who are carrying the virus but they are not aware of it because they have not been tested. The public have to be educated to go for testing with proper counselling," she added. ❐

SOQOSOQO VAKAMARAMA LAUNCHES BOOK

The Soqosoqo Vakamarama, Fiji's indigenous women's group launched a book on family titled *Na i Vola Dusidusi Me Vukea Na Kena Karoni Na Matavuvale* which translates into how to protect the family. The book sponsored by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was launched by wife of the President of Fiji Adi Lady Lala Mara. Written in the Fijian language is a basic handbook with instructions on aspects of family from motherhood and pregnancy, diet, contraception, hygiene, parenthood, sexually transmitted disease, HIV/AIDS and abortion to name a few of the topics covered in the booklet. It was written in response to the need for better education of non-English legible Fijians in the above areas. Indigenous Fijians make up the most cases in divorce, abortion, sexual transmitted diseases and diet related illnesses and it is hoped that with better understanding of the issues addressed in the book will make them more resistant to these problems. ❐

WOMEN MAKING PEACE - A KOREAN PEACE INITIATIVE

Spurred on by recent political changes that could either reunite the long divided countries of North and South Korea, or create another war, a group of women in Korea have revitalized their vision for peace. Calling themselves "Women Making Peace", they have taken the first step of identifying their hopes, dreams and goals for their organization. They began their group in 1997 and, according to representative Kim Yoon-ok, feel that "The Agreement between North and South Korea on Reconciliation, Nonagression and Cooperation, ratified on February 19, 1992, should be the guideline of women's actions for peace and unification. The process aims to form a peaceful Korean community by terminating the situation of a divided nation. And to make women's voices heard in the process, women's presence in the policy-making level should be at least 30 percent. We strongly urge the realization of the 1992 Agreement, for it was a workable compromise between the North Korean unification proposals based on a federal system and the South Korean functionalist approach."

Women Making Peace envision a unified Korea as a peaceful community based on gender equality. They see the need to not only reduce violence, but also to further the roles of justice and reconciliation in their own lives. As they looked at the condition of the two countries, it became obvious to them what they needed to do. In short, they needed to come to peace with their government, and they needed to come to peace with foreign nations.

In the interests of coming to peace with themselves, they identified three initiatives needing attention. One is the serious food crisis in the North, where the continuing deterioration of the North Korean economy and disastrous floods have resulted in widespread starvation. Women Making Peace support unconditional aid to those in the North and began the "Rice Sharing Campaign," not only to help feed the needy, but as a symbol of solidarity with their North Korean counterparts. They collect donations of rice, sometimes during street actions, to send to the flood victims.

Another area concerning coming to peace with themselves is increasing communication and cooperation between North and South Korean women. To even begin the process of peace making, they need to learn to know each other; and to even begin that process, they need to begin breaking down the stereotypes that have long been perpetuated by their respective media's and governments. In 1991, women had begun this process with an exchange meeting in Pyongyang and Seoul. There they began to realize a common national identity and mutual understanding in regard to their respective ideologies and political systems. Moreover, they realized the need to continue such conferences with the goal of developing various programs in the areas of economy, education, and women's issues, not to mention the continued process of becoming acquainted with each other.

Women in Fiji making a difference by staging protest marches organised by FWRM as seen here.

"The Women's Movement and Peace in the 21st Century" was the theme of the Korean Women's Association United 10th anniversary international women's peace symposium, held June 19 and 20, 1997, in Seoul. The Women Making Peace pointed out other conditions that were necessary for peace between North and South Korea. These included the need to reduce military spending and to improve the social welfare system, which they have urged politicians and military leaders to do; the need to take a pro-active stance and turn the 1992 Agreement from an armistice into a peace treaty; and the need to develop a pro-unification culture in order to counter decades of anti North Korea propaganda.

"Peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula is only viable with international cooperation." Kim Yoon-ok pointed out during the symposium. "We are open to learn from and work together with non governmental organizations working for peace and citizens' rights not only in northeast Asia, but also in the United States and European countries. We will further strengthen our solidarity with Koreans living overseas."

International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament - 24 May 1998.

What May 24 is all about...

International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, May 24, began in Europe in the early 1980s. Women activists wanted to work together internationally, protesting the deadly threat of the arm's race, leading the forward to peace through solidarity. The focus was

on action in local communities, connecting the problems of the world to each city, town or village. Women in many countries took part, as many as 1,000,000 in 1983 alone. May 24 went quiet in most places during the late eighties and early nineties, except for New Zealand, where women kept it alive until a rebirth in 1996.

As part of the follow-up work done for the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing, the International Peace Bureau and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation took up the challenge of women in the Beijing NGO Forum's Peace Tent calling for a women's peace day by promoting awareness of and participation in Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament. May 24, 1996 saw women commemorating the day with actions for peace in Croatia, Serbia, Canada, Norway, Azerbaijan, Italy, Bangladesh, Chile, Australia, Zambia, New Zealand and elsewhere. Actions ranged from radio broadcasts about women's contributions to peace and fundraising for land mine victims to petitioning for the abolition of nuclear weapons and street actions against militarism.

What is the World March of Women?

The Demands

The World March of Women in the Year 2000 will be making two major demands related to poverty and violence against women. With these demands we will challenge the various systems and authorities that generate inequality between men and women and exert control over women's lives. There are committees working now on developing the content of the demands so that a more detailed proposal can be discussed with the delegates attending the Autumn 1998 international preparatory meeting.

The Actions

Participating groups are invited to organize three actions:

- a massive women's vote, based on command demands, and which will take place between March 8th and October 17th, 2000;
- a nation action, the nature of which would be determined by women's groups in that country, to raise demands relevant to the particular nation;
- a world action on October 17, 2000.

For the world action, we propose a mass demonstration or rally on every continent. In North America the demonstration could take place in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York. All the voting cards could he deposited at the United Nations on this occasion. There is also at he possibility of going to Washington, headquarters of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). There could be a series of relay marches leading up to the mass demonstration. A popular education campaign aimed at informing people all over the planet of the reality of women's lives as well as women's movement initiatives from many countries will help build support for the action.

The Theme

The theme that has been proposed for the March is "Bread and Roses", a slogan from past struggles of progressive women in the United States, and adopted in 1995 and 1996 during actions organized by the women's movements in Quebec and Canada.

What we are fighting for:

- bread – what we need to live; the basic needs of life and
- roses – what we need to make life worth living; control of our bodies; the right to live free of violence.

As is the case for other aspects of the project (demands, actions, etc.), the theme is still being debated.

What We Want

- To stimulate a vast movement of grassroots women's groups so that the march becomes a gesture of affirmation by the women of the world.
- To promote equality between men and women.
- To highlight the common demands and initiatives issuing from the global women's movement relating to the issue of poverty and violence against women.
- To force governments, decision makers and individuals the world over to institute the changes necessary for improving the status of women and women's equality of life.
- To enter the new millennium by demonstrating women's ongoing determination to change the world. ❐

World March of Women, Newsletter, April 1998.

HUMAN RIGHTS AT 50

This year, as we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we need to remember that these rights: the inherent dignity, equality, freedom, justice, and peace should be accorded as a given right to all members of the human race including women and the girl child. Although the rights of women still lag behind that of men, it is interesting to note that one of the pioneer supporters of human rights was a woman, Eleanor Roosevelt, who was even elected chair to the Human Rights Commission. Mrs. Roosevelt once described human rights in these simple words: "Where after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home, so close and so small that they cannot be seen on maps of the world. Yet they are the world of an individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."Despite these words, and although equality is the cornerstone of every society which aspires to democracy, social justice, human rights and women's rights continue to be violated every day. It is unfortunate that in practically all societies, women are still subjected to inequalities in law, family, community and workplace. Stereotypes and traditions continue to hold women back and perpetuate such inequality. The struggle for human rights is not new. It has been in progress since early civilization and well before international law was established. Early and present day religions have been supporters of human rights in their requirement to honour human dignity as well as tend to community and individual needs. Below are just a few of the numerous treaties and conventions drawn up over the years in this struggle to honour human rights.

1215 The Magna Carter was signed by King John and it acknowledged that free men were entitled to judgment by their peers, and that even a sovereign was not above the law.
1791 The United States of America Bill of Rights

BODY SNATCHERS

"I'm the elephant man," Lesley Wasserman tells me. "I'm not human. I'm an animal." After a few months on a saquinavir/AZT/3TC combo, the 46 year old Santa Barbara, California, person with AIDS (PWA's) body began to blow up…and up…and up. Today the self conscious, five-foot-tall woman weighs in at 60 pounds above her normal 105. Her bust has swelled to size 42DD from 38C and she can't roll over in bed without first sitting up. Her back is in constant pain from hauling around so much weight. Every week she gain up to two pounds, even though some days, she tries to eat as little as possible. "I'm not attractive anymore," Wasserman says. "I'm not interested in sex and if my body disgusts me," she continues, "it's definitely going to disgust someone else."

A year and half into her protease regimen, Ann Birmingham (her name changed) was undetectable, had few side effects and considered herself one lucky woman. Then the 28 year-old's body began its strange metamorphosis. "I was a stick with boobs," she says. Her waist barreled from 27 inches to 32. Her arms and legs shed their fat, leaving her with veiny, skinny limbs. Her butt became a muscleless sack of bone. The most striking change occurred in her breasts, a 36C bursting to 38D. "When I walked down the street, you can be sure people were not looking at my eyes," she says. "It was psychologically pretty horrific. I didn't want to leave me house. I didn't want to be seen by anyone."

Birmingham panicked. "At first I didn't attribute it to the drugs. All I knew was that my body was freaking out. If I had not been in contact with other women with HIV, I would have had no idea what was going on," she says. "I would have thought I was going crazy." After talking with her physician, she decided to stop her saquinavir/d4T/3TC cocktail. Within a month her body normalized. She has in a sense deflated. While her breasts sag more than they used to and her waist is still a few inches wider, there's no doubt in her mind that the protease inhibitors caused these drastic changes.

Welcome to the new "AIDS" look. "Faster than you say triple drug combination

ey Wasserman before and after protease

therapy," a slew of symptoms limb wasting, truncal obesity, breast enlargement or depletion, thinning of the skin, "buffalo humps" (accumulated fat across the shoulders), lipomas (fat deposits) – is being added to Kaposi's sarcoma and corpse like wasting in the HIVer's horror-house mirror. Although this fat redistribution syndrome is an equal-opportunity menace, its effects tend to look more dramatic on the female frame. Expanding waistline are one thing; disfigurement is another. Women with HIV, many of who are already negotiating an emotional minefield of shame, guilt and sexual insecurity are now faced with a new set of challenges. "These body changes are one more punishment that reinforces the feeling that, "obviously, I'm not supposed to be in this body," says Karyl Draper, Chair of the Los Angeles County HIV Commission. "Just when we were starting to tackle the psychological effects of HIV, these dramatic physical effects surfaced. "Add to that, the lifelong pressure from society and the self to stay thin. "The fat-is-bad view is so omnipresent, says PWA Mary Lucey, that when people saw a woman with wasting syndrome, the response used to be, "You look great, you lost some weight." For Lucey such comments prove how deep the "you-can never-be-too-thin" mentality is ingrained. "The sad fact is," says Lucey, "she wasn't on a diet. She was dying."

Although they don't cause traditional HIV wasting, there is a growing conviction amongst PWAs that protease inhibitors are causing these new bizarre body changes. Many on the cocktail are having other problems too including unusually high blood levels of triglycerides, glucose and cholesterol. A handful of studies are underway, but so far no one knows how extensive these problems are and the only evidence circulating in the scientific community is anecdotal. As doctors scratch their heads, PWA Donna Hagerty, 58 who says she looks and feels 12 months pregnant, avoids mirrors and admits, "If I won a lottery, the first thing I would do is get a liposuction." More than a few PWAs already have. ❐

Adapted from Ms Magazine June Issue, 1998

••• WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FWRM •••

New Members

Julie Apted, Suva.
Lisa Apted, Suva.
Talei Burness, Suva.
Gloria Sukhu, Fisheries Dept, Lami.
Ashika Anjani Singh, Wailoku.
Tamsin Vuetilovoni, Suva.
Alumita Durutalo, USP, Suva.
Melenaite Statham, Suva.
Sarah Kwong Wah, Suva.

Visitors to the office

During the months of May and June 1998, a number of people visited our office for research, information or simply to find out what we are all about. They included: Anne Kautu from Kiribati AMAK Office, Margaret Reynods of The Australian Senate in Canberra, Social Welfare Review, June Taguchi of Japan, Ryapi & Pepe Pasese of Majuro, Melinda McComb of Hawaii, Chrisitine Collette - Health Project Designer (AusAid), Jerome A of Canada, Mary & Jo of NZODA, Students of La Trobe University in Bendigo and participants of the Feminist Legal Theory and Practice Workshop.

Niu Waves Evening – July 2nd 1998

FWRM held a fundraising drive at a local pub (Traps Bar) on the evening of Thursday July 2nd and the evening featured a local university based writers organization Niu Waves. The evening featured readings on poetry and other literacy work of members of Niu Waves. The event was well attended by supporters of FWRM which included members of the diplomatic corps, NGOs, the business sector and friends and members of the Movement.

T-shirts for sale

There are Polo T-shirts for sale at the office for $15.00 each. There are big sizes and different colors available in two designs.

FWRM T-Shirt Design.

Thailand workshop, 6 – 10 July 1998

FWRM Weer Project Officer, Reijeli Nicole, is currently attending the above workshop in Thailand on the "Advocacy on Women in the Informal Sector". The workshop is being funded by Asia Foundation.

Reijieli Nicole

GENDER Issues

Margaret Chung of UNDP compiled the draft of the Fiji report. FWRM was invited to comment on the situational report. It is currently with the Department of Women & Culture for circulation to the various NGO's.

Work

FWRM's Ema Tagicakibau is on the Working Committee on Child Protection and Services for the Department Social Welfare Review. "My contribution there is from aspects of family law concerning children and I look forward to contributing FWRM's views on issues concerning children's welfare in the committee.

Ema Tagicakibau

Staff Turnover

FWRM has had to terminate the employment of Rosemary Naivalurua, the Communication Officer due to lack of funding for salary for the position. She will continue to be involved with the Movement as an active member and as the producer of Balance. FWRM wishes Rosemary well in her future endeavors.

Rosemary Naivalurua

with the recognition of freedom of speech, press and fair trial was incorporated into the Constitution.

1946 The Commission on Human Rights was established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

1948 The United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human rights which articulated the fundamental and inalienable rights of all members of family, and was the first comprehensive agreement among nations regarding the specific rights and freedoms of all human beings.

1953 The European Commission on Human Rights and Court of Human Rights were created as well as the Convention on Political Rights of Women (UN) was adopted.

1965 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was adopted by the United Nations.

1973 The International Convention on the Support and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid was adopted by the United Nations.

1979 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly.

1993 The Second World Conference on Human Rights convened in Vienna where the Declaration and Programme of Action were adopted and a post of Human Rights Commissioner was established.

1998 Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which marks a cornerstone event in the human spirit to recognise, promote and protect Human Rights and fundamental freedoms.

Why do we celebrate?

We are celebrating the human spirit and the acknowledgement that people were able to create such a thoughtful document that has thus far been a guiding light towards a better understanding of human rights for all. Although there are still many human rights violations in the world community, this document has been instrumental in shaping the world's attitude towards the issue of human rights. ❐

Adapted from the COMMON CONCERN - June 1998, The Quarterly Magazine of the World YWCA.

FWRM STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

Strategic planning is the process of determining *what* an organisation intends to be in the future and *how* it will get there. It is identifying the potential of the organisation, the best path to follow and the most efficient way of reaching intended targets.

FWRM staff and Management Committee members converged at the Centra Resort in Pacific Harbour on the week end of 9 & 10 May, 1998 to discuss the directions in which the Movement should move towards for future sustainability.

The workshop objectives were: to understand where FWRM has been; to create a vision for where FWRM wants to go; to analyze where FWRM is now; to develop a plan for attaining our vision; and to strengthen solidarity and teamwork within the movement. Critical issues that were identified and addressed were:

Resources

Lack of core funds to sustain the movement as a whole;
Lack of job security for staff; and
Restricts Advocacy Acts, as it is project based.

Strategic Goal:

The movement is working towards obtaining sufficient core funding to support salaries and operational costs within the next 2 to 3 years.

Strategic Objectives:

It was discussed that donors needed to be educated on the importance of core funding and supporting a movement such as FWRM. Therefore the movement needs to identify and target progressive donors; to explore/review ways in which we can generate income through our services; to explore fundraising strategies/opportunities.

It was felt that the system of defining responsibilities needed to be specified. The delegation of responsibilities for staff and members needed to be more specific.

Strategic Goal:

The movement has, in effect, a clear demarcated roles/responsibilities of all involved.

Strategic Objectives:

The Collective felt that there was an urgent need to review current decision making process/roles/responsibilities/limitations of Management Committee/staff/collective; to conduct annual reviews for staff projects etc; and establish a clear internal system of monitoring and evaluating projects/processes/roles/responsibilities/limitations.

Community Impact and Intervention Strategic Goal:

The movement has a strong visible participation community outreach program, which strengthens partnership with all stakeholders.

Strategic Objectives:

It was decided that there was a need to review/modify our current outreach program; and to establish a system to gather/analyse needs/data and link these to determine our programs. The meeting was made possible by funding assistance from the Department of Women & Culture and the facilitators of the meeting were John & Colleen Taylor (UNDP NGO Strengthening Project). ❐

FWRM staff and members addressing critical issues facing the movement.

SEXISM IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Female Law Student Faces Discrimination

that the boy was to be returned to his grandparents' at the end of his visit to his father. 'He was going to start kindergarten so I was concerned that he be back in Fiji in time for school preparations.'

Her intention was that her son joined her once she had settled in overseas. However, this was not to be as the child was detained by the father who later informed the mother of his intentions to keep the child through a letter. 'He didn't even have the decency to talk directly to me about it because he was aware of how I would react. He had clearly betrayed my trust and I immediately flew back to Fiji where I obtained an ex parte order for custody in the Magistrate Court in Suva.'

In response, the father applied to the Samoan Supreme Court for a similar order and subsequently won the case when the Court rejected the mother's claim that the father had no right to custody of his illegitimate child and that only she as his mother was entitled.

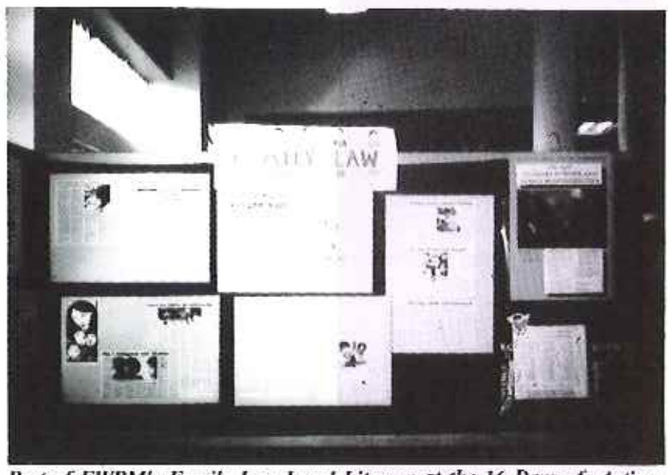
Under this circumstance, the fact that neither Fiji nor the father's resident country have ratified the Hague Convention was not a compelling factor that made them decide that the mother should have the child restored to her. The Samoan Chief Justice had (in a previous decision) said that the country cannot stand apart from the rest of the world and not recognize that the law had changed although it was not a signatory.

However, under this scenario, the woman's legal counsel said that 'a lawyer can be compelled to advise a client: 'go and snatch the child, hang on to the child, delay all Court proceedings as long as you can and get a track record with a child of 12 months at one place in a steady environment and you have a good chance of hanging onto the child. On the basis of the judgment of the Samoan Court of Appeal, 'we think it would be disruptive to send him to Fiji now to live with his mother, there being nothing in the circumstances of the case to warrant such a course.'

'And of course we were heavily criticized for obtaining an ex parte order from the Fiji Magistrate's Court but one has to consider the position of the distraught parent (mother), particularly a single mother without any official documentation apart from the birth certificate to say that the child is hers. She has to go to another jurisdiction to face immigration officials and Court officials and claim that this child is solely hers for reasons that she is entitled to take the child from the jurisdiction. So that was the reason why an application was made and all these: ex parte order, uncontested, papers not served from the other side because she had to have something beyond the birth certificate to say this child is mine. I'm the mother of the child and at the moment I have sole custody of the child under Fiji jurisdiction. But the child was taken out of the Fiji jurisdiction to another jurisdiction,' said the cousellor.

He emphasized that there was no social welfare independent report instigated by the Samoan Court or assessment as to how the mother or the father relates to the child. 'It was really a *fait accompli* that was reinforced by the Court's decision. The parties were evenly balanced and could have looked after the child equally.' He added that in Samoa under the Samoan Law the mother of a child borne out of wedlock was the sole custodian. In the Lower Court the judge said that the illegitimacy was irrelevant and therefore it was open to either party to be considered for custody.

The mother of the child had gone to Samoa earlier before the Court battles began in an attempt to retrieve her son. Mother and son flew out of Western Samoa into American Samoa in the hope that they could escape the Samoan jurisdiction. However, as is the case in most island



Part of FWRM's Family Law Legal Literacy at the 16 Days of Action exhibition held in Suva.

the topic in newspaper, radio, TV, booklets, etc.

The aim of this topic is for husbands/males to treat women with respect and dignity and vice-versa, decrease DV in Taveuni. Strategies recommended included compulsory counseling for couples before marriage, (Law Reform Proposals), inrease age of marriage and assess level of maturity, all cases of DV to be reported and highlighted.

Actions to Support Working Women

The aim of this topic was to prevent occurrence of rape on Taveuni, to decrease rape of females by males, to work towards increased penalties for rapists. Strategies used were family upbringing to stress importance of respect for males/females, counseling in schools for males/females, community awareness to discuss these issues, law reform – reducing cases (as FWRM suggests), maximize & carry out penalties, consistency by court standard, evidence to be "fair" to victim, plea for sensitive and better service by Police and Medical, educate youths on effects of rape, use village court system of dealing with such issues in the past.

The atmosphere:

Responses from the participants were: "It created awareness of women's rights and the organizations/personnel available to help those women whose rights have been violated in one way or another," "It increased their knowledge of family law & human rights," "The training materials were easy to follow and they appreciated the involvement of the Medical and Police Force staff," "They would like to have follow up workshop/sessions as the issues discussed are important the fact that they do not have easy access to information/organizations/personnel that deal with these matters. ❐

Participants at one of FWRM's workshop that was facilitated by Ema Tagicakibau.

THE ANNIVERSARY PRESENT

The setting:

The main character:

The plot:

Towards the middle of next year, the population of the world will pass 6 billion people. Reaching this landmark is an extraordinary achievement for humanity. No era in history has sustained population growth so rapid, while at the same time improving health and nutritional standards for most of the world's people. At the same time fertility and family size has fallen faster than ever before. The momentum of population growth has slowed, is slowing and will slow still further. We have something to celebrate.

As we reach six billion, the question is what we can maintain this progress. In 1999, the population of the world will be twice what it was in 1960. It was only in 1987 that we celebrated reaching the five billion mark. We are adding to our numbers at the rate of 80 million a year and will continue to do so for most of the decade. What happens after that depends on decisions made in the next ten years.

One billion of us are between 15 and 24 years old. They will largely determine the pace of population growth in the next century by their decisions on the size and space of their families. Their decisions will be affected by their economic well being, by their education, by their health status – and by their ability to make choices.

For all women and men, but for young women especially, ensuring choice is all-important. This depends partly on their education, education gives confidence. It depends on their access to reproductive health services, including family planning, the information and means to choose. And it depends crucially on the behavior of men. Men - as fathers, husbands, teachers and leaders – must be prepared to acknowledge women's rights to choices, and to support the choices they make.

If women can choose, they will have fewer children than their mothers did. Families will be smaller and population growth slower. That is the lesson of the last 30 years. The nations of the world agreed that at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 that reproductive health was a human right. Everyone has a right to choose the size and spacing of his/her family. If they can exercise their right to choose, then we will be on our way to slower and more balanced population growth. ❐

PACIFIC REGIONAL FEMINIST LEGAL THEORY AND PRACTICE TRAINING WORKSHOP

Seventeen women activists and lawyers from eight regional countries attended the workshop at the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) training room from 29 June – 3 July 1998. The workshop was funded by Asia Pacific forum for Women's Law and Development (APWLD) together with RRRT.

The theme of the workshop was "Gender equality training for legal practice". The main objective was to train and introduce participants to feminist legal theory which will enable them to apply the skills involved in feminist legal practice to law reform and litigation.

Issues that were discussed included:

- Gender;
- Feminist legal theories on equality in law;
- Human rights;
- Analysing discriminating legislation, common law and legal practices;
- How to use the UN Conventions in court;
- Analysing cases;
- Mounting test cases;
- Forming arguments for women's equal rights in the law.

Coordinator of FWRM, Gina Houng Lee said the workshop was a first for the Pacific and welcomed the initiative. "This will certainly be an innovative workshop as we will look at how the law discriminates against women. Moreover, it will enable participants to come up with strategies to deconstruct the law to ensure that laws actually assist women and are not harmful to women". The outcome of the workshop was to:

1. Establish and strengthen the network of activists and lawyers working together for the benefit of women;
2. Build up a regional network;
3. Make further commitments to assist NGO activists in challenging the law and discrimination of women. ❐

Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, Virada Somswadi and Imrana Jalal at the opening of the Feminist Legal Theory & Practice Training Workshop.

NURSING WORKERS

Breastfeeding is a woman's issue because it is every woman's rights to breastfeed. Women everywhere should be able to exercise this right. Supporting and promoting breastfeeding will contribute to improving the health status of women and children, which in turn will enhance the social and economic status of women.

International Labor Standards

International Labor Organisation's (ILO) stand on nursing says that nursing workers should be entitled to an hour a day to nurse her child, she should have the right to interrupt her work for this prupose and these interruptions should be counted as working hours and paid accordingly.

ILO also recommends that nursing breaks should, whenever possible, be extended to a total of a least one and half hours during the working day, with adjustments permitted on the basis of a medical certificate. Nursing and day care facilities should be established in work places, meeting adequate standards for equipment, hygiene and staff.

The Economic Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding can bring economic benefits to many levels of society.

For households,breastfeeding prevents the unnecessary purchase of breastmilk substitutes and feeding equipment. It also saves expenses on medical care through fewer trips to a physician or hospital for a sick child, medications and time caring for a sick child. In addition breastfeeding saves on time in preparation for bottle feeding such as to fetch water, fuel and cleaning utensils. It also saves on cost of birth control methods and menstruation supplies and there is time saving on workdays lost in caring for sick children.

For employers, breastfeeding incurs

rather than the criminal act, which is assault is the problem."

Gina had written that the consensual act between two consenting adults is not a crime and that the issue that needed to be addressed was the criminal act of the assault. "Would the FAB consider terminating a scholarship if the recipient has been a male? Unlikely I think. The hypocrisy of a society that finds adultery acceptable for a man but not in a woman is nothing short of discriminatory," Gina writes calling for FAB not to deny women the right to tertiary education.

Gina's article was met with mixed emotions by the general public and in a letter written to the Letters to the Editor Column of the same newspaper; a Fijian man slandered Gina and FWRM for what he termed as "promoting adultery." To this letter, Gina replied in the same column that her article was not to promote adultery but to question the intention of the possibility of a scholarship being terminated for a married female student because of her having an affair. "Our argument is that this would be unlikely be so for a married male student in a similar situation. While adultery is a moral sin, it is not a crime and we consider the consenting relationship between a man and a woman to be the purview of the private domain. FWRM will continue to fight injustices against women because of their gender to ensure that women's rights are indeed human rights," Gina concluded in her letter to the press. ❐

Men of Quality aren't scared of Women of Equality.

FIJI MOTHER LOSES CHILD TO SAMOAN FATHER

What happens if your son or daughter is taken away from Fiji without your consent or is detained in another country? The fact that Fiji is not a signatory to the Hague Convention is just one of the many reasons why Fiji residents are helpless when their children are detained overseas. The Convention renders a country the obligation to abide by international standards as to how initial Court decisions on the custody of children are upheld. Just be alert and take precautions that the children are not taken out of the country is the message one would get after hearing the story of how a mother in Fiji lost her son to a father who is a citizen of another country.

Distraught and helpless, the woman agreed to an interview with FWRM in the hope that she is able to make people in Fiji aware of the emotional, legal and economic consequences of being subjected to such a situation. In her plight to regain custody of her son, she became a victim of a legal battle that has left her and her family emotionally and financially spent. This is her story.

'I remained friends with my son's father even after we split up and I wanted the boy to grow up knowing his father and his family. Our split was amicable and I encouraged my son to maintain links with his father and his side of the family. His father who used to reside here in Fiji would sometimes have him for weekends and I did not ever think that something like this would happen,' the mother said.

According to the judgment of the Samoan Court at which the mother lost custody, 'the mother stayed in Fiji with their son at her parents' home and regarded their association as at an end although they still remained in contact and the boy moved between them and their respective grandparents under generous agreements for access and residence. Both parties were working and it was clear that the grandparents played a large part in caring for him, with the assistance of house helps. Money was never a problem, nor was there any dispute about parentage, the respondent (the father's) name appearing in the birth certificate.'

The mother who was living abroad had agreed to allow the boy to go with his father to Samoa 'because his father said that he had just built a house and wanted his son there for the housewarming and everything,' said the woman who agreed to the interview on the basis of anonymity.

'It seems that I was crucified for wanting a career and I was made out to be a bad mother because I had left the boy with my parents.' In the ruling, it was stated that the Judge did not believe that the mother's stated intention of abandoning her plans to work in Australia, in favor of returning to Fiji to work in her father's business and living in the family home where she could play an active part in caring for her son. 'She was never ready to have him live with her in Australia and had no plans to raise and take care of him when she obtained that ex parte order from the Fiji Courts,' it was mentioned.

The agreement between the parents was

that the boy was to be returned to his grandparents' at the end of his visit to his father. 'He was going to start kindergarten so I was concerned that he be back in Fiji in time for school preparations.'

Her intention was that her son joined her once she had settled in overseas. However, this was not to be as the child was detained by the father who later informed the mother of his intentions to keep the child through a letter. 'He didn't even have the decency to talk directly to me about it because he was aware of how I would react. He had clearly betrayed my trust and I immediately flew back to Fiji where I obtained an ex parte order for custody in the Magistrate Court in Suva.'

In response, the father applied to the Samoan Supreme Court for a similar order and subsequently won the case when the Court rejected the mother's claim that the father had no right to custody of his illegitimate child and that only she as his mother was entitled.

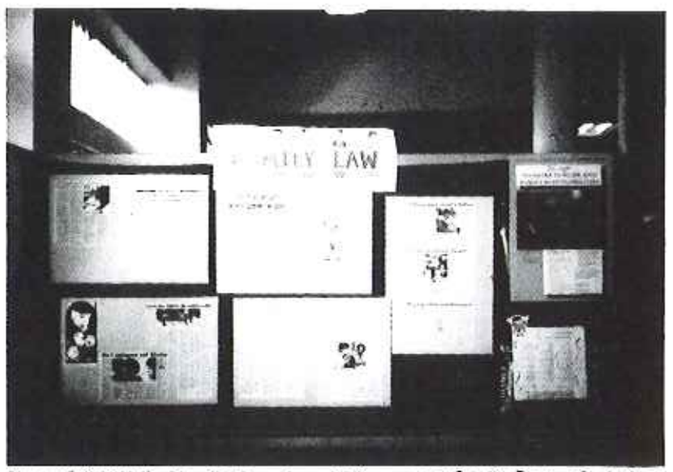
Under this circumstance, the fact that neither Fiji nor the father's resident country have ratified the Hague Convention was not a compelling factor that made them decide that the mother should have the child restored to her. The Samoan Chief Justice had (in a previous decision) said that the country cannot stand apart from the rest of the world and not recognize that the law had changed although it was not a signatory.

However, under this scenario, the woman's legal counsel said that 'a lawyer can be compelled to advise a client: 'go and snatch the child, hang on to the child, delay all Court proceedings as long as you can and get a track record with a child of 12 months at one place in a steady environment and you have a good chance of hanging onto the child. On the basis of the judgment of the Samoan Court of Appeal, 'we think it would be disruptive to send him to Fiji now to live with his mother, there being nothing in the circumstances of the case to warrant such a course.'

'And of course we were heavily criticized for obtaining an ex parte order from the Fiji Magistrate's Court but one has to consider the position of the distraught parent (mother), particularly a single mother without any official documentation apart from the birth certificate to say that the child is hers. She has to go to another jurisdiction to face immigration officials and Court officials and claim that this child is solely hers for reasons that she is entitled to take the child from the jurisdiction. So that was the reason why an application was made and all these: ex parte order, uncontested, papers not served from the other side because she had to have something beyond the birth certificate to say this child is mine, I am the mother of the child and at the moment I have sole custody of the child under Fiji jurisdiction. But the child was taken out of the Fiji jurisdiction to another jurisdiction,' said the cousellor.

He emphasized that there was no social welfare independent report instigated by the Samoan Court or assessment as to how the mother or the father related to the child. 'It was really a *fait accompli* that was reinforced by the Court's decision. The parties were evenly balanced and could have looked after the child equally.' He added that they had argued that under the Samoan Law the mother of a child borne out of wedlock was the sole custodian. In the Lower Court the judge said that the illegitimacy was irrelevant and therefore it was open to either party to be considered for custody.

The mother of the child had gone to Samoa earlier before the Court battles began in an attempt to retrieve her son. Mother and son flew out of Western Samoa into American Samoa in the hope that they could escape the Samoan jurisdiction. However, as is the case in most island



Part of FWRM's Family Law Legal Literacy at the 16 Days of Action exhibition held in Suva.

the topic in newspaper, radio. TV, booklets, etc.

Domestic Violence (DV);

The aim of this topic is for husbands/males to treat women with respect and dignity and vice-versa, decrease DV in Taveuni. Strategies recommended included compulsory counseling for couples before marriage, (Law Reform Proposals), increase age of marriage and assess level of maturity, all cases of DV to be reported and highlighted.

Rape:

The aim of this topic was to prevent occurrence of rape on Taveuni, to decrease rape of females by males, to work towards increased penalties for rapists. Strategies used were family upbringing to stress importance of respect for males/females, counseling in schools for males/females, community awareness to discuss these issues, law reform redefine rape (as FWRM suggests), maximize & carry out penalties, consistency by court standard, evidence to be "fair" to victims, lobby for sensitive and better service by Police and Medical, educate youths on effects of rape, use village court system of dealing with such issues in the past.

Responses from the participants were: "It created awareness of women's rights and the organizations/personnel available to help," "Those women whose rights have been violated in one way or another," "It increased their knowledge of family law & human rights," "The training materials were easy to follow and they appreciated the involvement of the Medical and Police Force staff," "They would like to have follow-up workshop/sessions as the issues discussed are important the fact that they do not have easy access to information/organizations/personnel that deal with these matters. ❐

Participants at one of FWRM's workshop that was facilitated by Ema Tagicakibau.

WORLD POPULATION DAY

Towards the middle of next year, the population of the world will pass 6 billion people. Reaching this landmark is an extraordinary achievement for humanity. No era in history has sustained population growth so rapid, while at the same time improving health and nutritional standards for most of the world's people. At the same time fertility and family size has fallen faster than ever before. The momentum of population growth has slowed, is slowing and will slow still further. We have something to celebrate.

As we reach six billion, the question is whether we can maintain this progress. In 1999, the population of the world will be twice what it was in 1960. It was only in 1987 that we celebrated reaching the five billion mark. We are adding to our numbers at the rate of 80 million a year and will continue to do so for most of the decade. What happens after that depends on decisions made in the next ten years.

One billion of us are between 15 and 24 years old. They will largely determine the pace of population growth in the next century by their decisions on the size and space of their families. Their decisions will be affected by their economic well being, by their education, by their health status – and by their ability to make choices.

For all women and men, but for young women especially, ensuring choice is all important. This depends partly on their education, education gives confidence. It depends on their access to reproductive health services, including family planning, the information and means to choose. And it depends crucially on the behavior of men. Men - as fathers, husbands, teachers and leaders – must be prepared to acknowledge women's rights to choices, and to support the choices they make.

If women can choose, they will have fewer children than their mothers did. Families will be smaller and population growth slower. That is the lesson of the last 30 years. The nations of the world agreed that at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 that reproductive health was a human right. Everyone has a right to choose the size and spacing of his/her family. If they can exercise their right to choose, then we will be on our way to slower and more balanced population growth. ❐

Editorial Comment:

In this issue of Balance, we feature the Draft Sexual Assault Offences Legislation which the Fiji Women's Rights Movement submitted to the Fiji Law Reform Commission (FLRC) in November 1996.

We do this for a number of reasons.

One, awareness raising to assist the Movement with lobbying efforts in pressuring government and influential policy makers in bringing about legislative changes.

It is also timely to share this, given that the FLRC will present its report, in October 1998, on the proposed changes to the Criminal Procedures Code (CPC) under which the Sexual Assault Laws are included.

Also, in the last few months, the media has played a major role in cultivating and building public opinion in terms of the increased violent crimes on women and children. The public's outcry was very comforting and encouraging. While we commend the media for this, we also call for further gender sensitisation within the media fraternity.

However, no amount of talking, will bring any solace to the women, children and families subjected to violent sexual crimes. What's needed is ACTION.

OUR CULTURE OF SILENCE AND PASSIVITY MUST STOP.

Everyone concerned about peace and the respect for the dignity of women must demand immediate legislative reforms and a change in attitude.

FWRM needs your support in lobbying for the changes advocated in our reforms.

Gina

FAMILY LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS WORKSHOP, TAVEUNI

By Ema Tagicakibau, FWRM Legal Rights Training Officer

FWRM in conjunction with the Coordinator of the Taveuni Women's Support Group (TWSG), Volau Yavalanavanua conducted the above workshopatthe Provincial Meeting House in Somosomo, Taveuni from May 4 – 8, 1998.

Participants included housewives, teachers, medical staff and members of the police force. They represented their respective women's organizations, employers and church groups. The workshop as a strategy for promoting Legal Literacy in the rural communities was aimed at:

Promoting understanding of the law with a special focus on Family Law so that participants could gain access to information previously out of reach, and to know how matters are dealtwithbythe law-enforcement agencies like the Police and Courts;

Challenging attitudes and stereotypes in society so that both men and women could contribute as equal partners in the home, community and the nation as a whole and thus to development;

Understanding that the main focus of legal literacy is about women's and children's rights(asthemost disadvantaged groups) as an example of human rights education. The workshop was aimed at educating participants to:

- gain basic knowledge and understanding of family law;
- be able to identify where the law protects women and where it is limited;
- be able to inform others of their rights and how to access them;
- Support and assist in seeking changes to the law where it is inadequate.

During the workshop, the four priority areas identified were:

Marriage:

The aim of this topic was to promote and/or maintain marriage based on mutual respect and equality. Strategies recommended to participants include marriage-counselling sessions, parental workshops in community, promoting family time, law reform based on maturity and not age, lobby for better service/ sensitivity by Police and Medical Department.

Child Abuse:

The aim of this topic was to promote rights of children in family, school, community; educating parents to be more responsible in their roles, increasing awareness of CA/ Rape, lobbying Police & Medical for better and sensitive treatment of CA victims; reviewing cultural aspects that places high acceptance of violence as a means of discipline.

The strategies employed: family meeting counseling, school PTA meeting, home rehabilitation program, training, Bose Ni Tikina/Yasana, (village/provincial meetings), regular workshops in villages, regular media releases on

communities where confidentiality is non-existent, the father discovered their whereabouts and enticed them to return to Samoa where he promised that he would allow the mother to bring the child back to Fiji. 'How he found out where we were was beyond me. But once in Western Samoa, he failed to keep his word and I was forced to give up my son again to him. By this time I was emotionally exhausted with everything that had been going on and just could not continue with the fight to gain custody. I then decided to come back to Fiji, assess my options and I was prepared to go back and fight for legal custody over my son,' said the emotionally distraught mother.

'Although I lost custody over my child in Samoa, I feel that I have done my best to get my child back even to the extent of fighting for him in a Samoa Court. I feel for the women who do not have the financial means of fighting for custody over their children that they have lost to partners who take the children out of the country. I cannot even get access to him in Fiji and can only do so if I go to Samoa to see him. I can only do that on the condition that I cancel the ex parte order from the Magistrates Court in Fiji. But after all that he has put me through, I just don't trust him any more and I am reluctant to cancel the ex parte order. What guarantee is there that he will keep true to his word, I just have to wait and pray that something will give and I may have him back,' she said. ❐

MIGRANT WORKERS GO ON HUNGER STRIKE

Chinese women migrant workers employed at a local garment manufacturing business went on a hunger strike recently in protest against poor work and living conditions. The women, employees of Ghim Li Fashions (Fiji) Ltd are part of around 100 women migrant employees working at the garment factory. The women had allegedly locked themselves in their rented apartment demanding better living conditions which was described as unhealthy, crammed and lacking proper ventilation. Company officials said that the women had refused food and had said that their agent had jilted them who they claim had over-deducted their wages. Another woman was said to have left the flat looking for an alternative accommodation. The woman said that they had been subjected to unscrupulous agents who made false promises.

The hunger strike triggered a national outcry by unions and woman's groups in Fiji. Fiji Trades Union Congress' Pratap Chand said that FTUC had been calling on the Labor Ministry to ensure that work permits are not granted to foreign workers in the garment industry because of the current unemployment problem in Fiji. "The Ghim Li saga brings to the forefront the depth of the oppression and exploitation foreign workers have to go through in Fiji," Mr Chand said.

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement as part of the Labor and Migration Task Force of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) is assigned to be a part of a research team into the migrant labor situation in Fiji. In its report at a recent meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, FWRM had recommended that a study be made into the situation of migrant workers in the Pacific, in particular in Fiji as a result of the increase of migrant labor since the rise in manufactured exports. It is envisaged that the result of the survey would render more light into the situation in Fiji and thus give credible data for recommendation to Government policy on migrant labor in Fiji.

(continued from page 1)

The report contains seven parts and a summary of the parts is:

I. Part one contains the terms of reference and scope of the report;

II. In part two, the existing legal provisions in Fiji dealing with the crimes of rape and child sexual abuse are set out. There is a brief analysis of the limitations of the provisions based on decided cases and women's experiences in Fiji.

III. The third part sets out the proposed law reforms suggested by the FWRM. There is a short discussion on the strengths and limits of these recommendations.

IV. In part four, the existing provisions dealing with child abuse and incest are set out with a brief comment in their limitations.

V. In part five, the proposed draft legislation on sexual assault is set out and explained.

VI. The sixth part proposes draft provisions for amending and strengthening the law dealing with the sexual abuse of young persons and children.

VII. In part seven, strategies of lobbying and potential areas of conflict and resistance from legislators and policy makers are discussed.

As the document draws on the experience of many jurisdictions it is hoped that it will serve as a useful resource material in Fiji particularly in the Asia Pacific region more generally, for women who are lobbying for changes in laws governing sexual assault. ❐

From the Editorial Desk:

We are looking forward to responses from members who wish to contribute articles for Balance or to comment on stories covered so far. For more information on any of the articles published in this issue, do not hesitate to call or write to the Coordinator, Gina Houng Lee on the number and address listed below.

Interested persons and current members whose membership have expired are also asked to please forward subscriptions to:

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NGO COALITION & SPACHEE SEMINAR

The NGO Coalition on Human Rights in conjunction with the local environment group South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology & Environment (SPACHEE) convened a panel discussion on Wednesday, June 24 at the FTA Hall in Suva. The seminar was well attended by members of the Coalition, diplomatic corps and the general public.

The topic of the seminar was Human Rights and Responsibility for the Natural World and speakers included Dr Kartayathu Koshy who spoke on the topic Human Rights to Clean air, Stanley Flavel who spoke on The Importance of Clean Seas, Claire Slatter who spoke on Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) and the Destruction of Natural Resources, Angie Heffernan of Greenpeace who spoke on People's Responsibility to the Natural Environment & Biodiversity, Victor Kaisepo of the Pacific Concerns Resources Center who spoke on Indigenous Rights and the Environment and Reverend Pothin Wete of the Pacific Theology College who spoke on the topic Our Religious Responsibility for the Environment.

Citizenship Constitution of Fiji's (CCF) and FWRM supporter Claire Slatter's presentation was of special interest to the audience generating debate and discussion. She spoke at length on the effect of SAPs to the natural environment. "Because they were initially concerned with ensuring that indebted countries met their debt payments, which had to be paid in foreign currencies, SAPs encouraged increased production for the export market. Since most of the world economies are primarily cheap producers of natural resources and agricultural commodities (a legacy of colonialism) -- this is what their economies are based on – this resulted in intensified production of agricultural commodities. The massive loss of natural forests in regions of the economic South are in the last decade and half directly linked to the pressures of countries in these regions to augment their foreign exchange earnings by selling their natural resources," Claire said.

Claire said that because SAPs are pedalled as the magic formula for achieving economic growth and because neo-liberal economics has become orthodoxy, many Governments today accept them as common sense and citizens are rarely consulted before Governments adopt such policies. She emphasized on the impact of globalization with the implementation of such concepts as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) which renders powerful private interests the priority at the expense of the rights of states and ordinary citizens. Ms Slatter is also the co-author of the FWRM published research on women workers in Fiji titled Laboring Under the Law. ❐

Greenpeace activist Angie Heffernan, left,(one of the speakers at the NGO/ SPACHEE seminar), Maureen Penjueli and Craig Pratt fight for human rights to clean environment.

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Newsletter of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement
"Balancing the Scales" May-June 1998 Issue

DRAFT SEXUAL ASSAULT OFFENSES LEGISLATION

On June 7th 1998, FWRM held a discussion evening with other women on the Draft Sexual Assault Offenses Legislation with Vani Dulaki as the resource trainer. Women attended the discussion from other NGO's, Young Lawyers Association and also FWRM staff and collective members. FWRM had made a reference to the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) on May 25, 1995, as part of their program to lobby for law reforms on rape.

Women having a discussion on sexual offences at FWRM's office.

The document recommended the necessary improvements to promote equality for women within the existing legal system with particular regard to sexual offences. The recommendations were made pursuant to the Fiji governments ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its commitment thereunder to substantive equality for women. Specific recommendations were made to reform the existing laws dealing with rape and child sexual abuse to bring them into conformity with constitutional guarantees to women's equality and in discharge of the government's obligations under CEDAW.

The recommendations were based on the assumption that the laws fail to deal effectively with violence perpetrated by men on women, and against children and young persons. The legal system itself has played a role in recreating and reinforcing women's subordination. These assumptions and the role of law are explained and discussed in the memorandum.

The memorandum had been complied with the belief that the criminal justice system can play a significant role in the process of replacing the myths about rape and sexual as sault, and the stereotyped views of the situations in which such crimes occur. It can substitute such myths and stereotypes with views that are based on facts and empirical evidence, which are relevant to the legal definitions of rape/ sexual assault. The objective is to transform the way in which prosecutors analyse and present the issues to be decided in such cases built on an analysis based on law and not myths. Prosecutorial strategy can be influential in challenging these myths and replacing them with fac tual accounts of the is sues relevant in law to rape and sexual assault. And this process in turn can influence the way in which rape and sexual crimes are perceived and understood by society. In order to understand how this shift can be brought about it is important to look in detail at both the existing and the proposed legal definitions of rape and sexual assault.

The recommendations in the report draw on the experience of Fiji women and contemporary research that analyses the impact of the existing laws dealing with sex crimes on women. In addition, it draws on the reforms that have been implemented or proposed vis a vis the application and impact of sexual assault laws.

(continued on page 15)

What's in this issue:

Draft Sexual Assault Offenses Legislation* Family Law & Human Rights* World Population Day* Pacific Regional Feminist Legal Theory & Practice* Nursing Workers* Fundraising Event* Latest at FWRM* Body Snatchers* World AIDS Conference* Book Launch* Women Making Peace* Human Rights at 50* Strategic Planning Meeting* Sexism* Law student faces Discrimination* Custody Case* Hunger Strike* NGO Coalition