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Dear ICW sisters and friends,

Greetings! I hope each of you finds great joy and satisfaction in all the things that you do. Spring has come and gone in the blink of an eye and summer now greets us in Seoul. Time marches forward, and so, with unshakable resolve, do we!

Last March, I attended the 62nd Session of the United Nation’s Commission on the Status of Women together with the ICW board members and delegates from March 12th to March 23rd. The theme for this session was “Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls”. ICW hosted two big events during UNCSW62 on March 13th and 16th.

The first, a parallel event, was co-hosted by ICW-Regional Council of Americas (RCA/ICW) and the Korean National Council of Women (KNCW). It was also sponsored by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of Republic of Korea and focused on the theme “Education and Empowerment of Rural Women: Strategies to Eliminating Poverty”. The second, a side event, titled “Transforming Society through Rural Women’s Empowerment” was also co-hosted by the ICW and the Permanent Mission of R.O.K. to the UN.

In addition, ICW co-hosted or sponsored many other events, working with various NCWs and UN organizations during CSW62. Another side event was held under the theme, “Advancing Women’s Health and Well-Being Using Information and Communication Technologies: Focus on Non-Communicable Diseases”. The event was co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Jamaica and Thailand to the UN, the WHO, and several civil society organizations.

I believe that all the events that ICW participated in were highly successful in terms of providing useful information, broad participation and lively ensuing discussions. I feel confident that our effort to review various strategies to transform our societies through rural women’s empowerment in political, economic and social realms was extremely productive. I extend my deepest gratitude to all ICW board members, delegates and the speakers for their remarkable contributions to making each of our side and parallel events highly successful.

I believe our discussions can shed useful light on the state of rural women in many parts of the world. By sharing a broad range of experiences in empowering rural women, we lay the foundation to establish both effective and concrete strategies to empower women and accelerate societal transformation.

We were fortunate indeed to have such marvelous speakers for all of our events, including Mme. Sizani Ngubane (2018 Woman of Distinction Awardee and Founder of South African Rural Women’s Development), Minister Mervat Tallawy (Executive Director of Arab Women’s Organization), Mme. Gertrude Mongella (Founder, Advocacy for Women in Africa), Dr. Pam Rajput (Emeritus Professor, Punjab University) to name a few. In each case, their insights were truly invaluable.
I am personally pleased that we have focused on the empowerment of rural women in this last year of our triennial theme, “Transforming society through women’s empowerment”. Women can contribute to the transformation of society for better future, if they are empowered to exert influence on society.

There still remain many obstacles to rural women’s access, including traditional cultural practices such as early marriage, child labor and slavery, trafficking and domestic and sexual violence. Limited access to health care and credit are also among the many challenges that rural women and girls face, which are further aggravated by the global food and economy crises and climate change. It is also important to remember that 78% of the world’s poor live in rural areas.

In short, rural women and girls suffer disproportionately from poverty and other forms of social injustices, but studies show that they may have the greatest potential to contribute to transformation. Rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economy, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development.

Education is a key to women’s empowerment and elimination of poverty. In most countries of the world, women and girls have less access to education than men. Two thirds of the world’s illiterate are women. Meanwhile, the results of EFA (Education for All) Global Education Monitoring Report by UNESCO have shown that for every $1 which is spent on education, between $10~$15 would be generated in economic growth. Therefore, increasing women’s access to education is not only linked to women’s empowerment, but also economic development of a nation.

The time has come to formulate and execute effective policy at all levels—national, regional and international—to promote women’s equal access to education. International Council of Women will accelerate its efforts to empower rural women and girls through education and other effective strategies, so that they can become the engine of transformative social development.

I believe with all my heart that we women can indeed change the world to create a better place. To do so, unity of effort is essential. Let us all, ICW sisters and friends, be at the forefront of bringing about the empowerment of women and lead the world to positive transformation. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Jungsook Kim (Ed.D)
President of ICW
The 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 62) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from March 12 to 23, 2018. The priority theme was “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”.

More than 8000 representatives from 1121 civil society organizations registered to attend this year to be informed and inspired to continue their efforts needed to lift women and girls out of poverty and violence and actualize their full potential and human rights. The aim of the CSW62 was to garner global attention to ensure the rights and development of rural women and girls who have long been left behind.

<Consultation Day>

The United Nations CSW 62, held from the 12th-23rd March 2018, on Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls, began with a preconference event, Consultation Day, on Sunday, March 11, 2018.

This year, the event of the Consultation Day was held at the Tribeca Performing Art Center, Borough of Manhattan Community College to a sold-out audience. Susan O’Malley, Chair of NGO Committee on the Status of Women, delivered opening and welcome remarks.

This was followed by a Conversation between two leaders of CSW62, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka, Executive Director of UN Women, and H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Ireland and Chair of Commission on the Status of Women. Their remarks touched on the various challenges faced by rural women and girls as well as the work of the Commission on Status of Women to empowering rural women.
After being presented with the Women of Distinction award, Sizani Ngubane, Founder of Rural Women’s Movement, South Africa, delivered a keynote address on the various challenges and needs faced by rural women in South Africa as well as the power of one woman’s determination to educate herself and create a movement of 50 thousand women to bring about change and progress to rural and indigenous women who have been left behind. Sizani Ngubane stated that:

“RWM has currently worked with 450 women who increased their income and 750 rural women have become better organized and mobilized to effectively lobby against and tackle legislation policies and practices that discriminate against women’s socio-economic and cultural well-being. Women are now effectively participating in the policy-making processes, as they partner with other women who are not members of RWM, by sharing their own experiences and knowledge.

The morning ended with a panel on the Concerns of Rural Women, where speakers from different countries spoke about the various topics of concern for rural women, including climate change, economic empowerment, land and property rights, combating violence, agricultural work, and the importance of data collection to identify causes and design effective policies and measures.

The panelists included Gia Gaspard Taylor from Trinidad and Tobago, Maria Luisa Mendonca from Brazil, Lilly Be’Soer from New Guinea, Ruth Faircloth from New York, and Hon. Marilou McPhedran from Canada.

The afternoon panel focused on Women’s Stories for Empowerment and Change. Four women’s stories through four different media were presented to show how storytelling can transform rural women’s lives. The event ended with a presentation of CEDAW awards to Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti and a posthumous award to San Francisco Mayor Lee.

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Dinner Reception

That evening, ICW President, Jungsook Kim, invited all the ICW delegates to a welcome dinner at Kunjip Restaurant. Besides making sure that all the delegates were well nourished with delicious and healthy Korean food, the evening provided a venue for delegates to meet one another and to exchange contact information. ICW delegates could pass on details regarding events sponsored by their respective NCW’s in addition to the various side and parallel events sponsored by ICW.
On the 12th of March, the opening ceremony of the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at the General Assembly Hall of UN Headquarters in New York. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world attended the session.

In his opening speech for CSW62, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, maintained that preventing and ending violence against women and lifting up marginalized women is “essential to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and urged all participants for their work to raise their voices for women’s equality, dignity, and human rights moving forward.

The Executive Director of UN Women, which serves as the CSW Secretariat, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, said: “The Commission’s agreement on measures to bring substantive equality to women and girls in rural areas is a vital step forward. In the Commission’s two weeks of dialogue we will have heard clearly from the women and girls themselves what they want: from the rights to own property, to the need for quality infrastructure, to the rights to make decisions about their own bodies and lives.”

Member States expressed deep concern about the disadvantages that rural women and girls face. The Commission emphasized that rural women and girls are essential to sustainable development and their rights and empowerment needs to be given priority. We have to accelerate action to end all forms of violence against women, including harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.

ICW organized two events: a parallel event, “Education and Empowerment of Rural Women: Strategies to Eliminating Poverty” on the 13th March and a side event, “Transforming the society through empowerment of rural women” on the 16th March. ICW wanted to put forth concrete measures to lift rural women and girls out of poverty and to ensure their rights and well-being. The participants to the CSW62 became more aware of the ICW and its mission for the empowerment of women and the advancement of their rights.

More than 200 participants filled the seats and floors of the 2nd floor in Church Center for the ICW’s parallel event, Eliminating Poverty through Education and Rural Women’s Empowerment, held from 12:30-2:00 pm on March 13, 2018.

ICW President Jungsook Kim opened the event outlining the importance of education to eliminating poverty. She then introduced and gave the floor to the moderator of the event, Vanisa Dhiru, President of NCW of New
Zealand. Vanisa briefly echoed Dr. Kim’s remarks and introduced each of the six panelists before they took the podium.

The first speaker, Mme. Gia Gaspard Taylor from Trinidad and Tobago, founder of the network for Rural Women in Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT), addressed the challenges faced by rural women and girls and NRWPTT’s achievements. She referred to various natural disasters that deter economic development and added that the extractive industries aggravate environmental deterioration. At last, Mme. Gia Gaspard Taylor introduced various examples of NRWPPT’s contribution to rural women’s economic and social well-being through their numerous skill training sessions that attributed to growth of their income and improvement of their livelihoods.

Dr. Maria Fernanda Arduino, President of Welcome Clubs International, stressed that training women, particularly mothers, can lead to significant transformation for the wellbeing of their communities. She introduced some strategies to empower and educate rural women and girls through government partnership with NGOs such as the training programs for mothers and afterschool programs for their children. She concluded by saying that the education and empowerment of rural women bring benefits to children, the future generation, and to the family as a social unit.

Mme. Sandra Cohen-Rose, President of National Council of Women in Canada, (NCW Canada), Dietitian-Nutritionist and Home Economist, elaborated on how life skills education program has contributed to alleviating poverty and empowering women. She explained that Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) is a form of education that focuses on cultivating personal life skills such as communication, organization and problem solving skills. She concluded that the life skills education create a confident, respectful, financially secure, less violent and healthier society.

Dr. Rochelle R. Dean, from Bahamas, Founder of Candid Concepts Development, spoke on SDG goal 4, and the importance of education to empowerment and collaboration between private industry and public sector to achieve women’s empowerment. She concluded as she stressed the importance of financial literacy education as it creates a positive cycle of learning.

Dr. Jung-Sook Kim, former MP and currently President of the International Council
of Women, introduced Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement), as a successful example of Korean government initiatives that empowered women and helped to eradicate poverty. Though not initially designed specifically for women, the movement was highly successful because of the enthusiastic participation by women. Women participated in organizational activities, such as managing consumer associations, which in turn led to the development of women’s organizations. Women also engaged in business activities and thereby contributed to the growth of household income. All of these activities have contributed substantially to the elevation of women’s social status and ultimately led to greater gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Following the President Kim’s broad portrayal of Saemaul Undong’s legacy in improving rural lives and enhancing women’s status, Dr. Younghai Park, Emeritas Professor at Sookmyung Women’s University, introduced various application of current day Saemaul Undong initiatives in promoting multicultural understanding and harmony.

.Side event: “Transforming Society through Empowerment of Rural Women”>

On March 16, 2018, ICW held its side event, Transforming Society through Empowerment of Rural Women, at UN Headquarters CR 11 from 10-11:15 am. Not an empty chair was left in the room and many people lined up against the walls and sat on the floor to hear the 2018 Woman of Distinction and Founder of South African Rural Women’s Movement, Sizane Ngubane and the Former Speaker of the Pan-African Parliament, Gertrude Mongella.

Other speakers included H.E. Mervat Tallawy, Director General of Arab Women’s Organization, Dr. Pam Rajput, Professor of Punjab University and Former Chair of India High Level Committee on the Status of Women, and Dr. Ranjana Kumari, Director of Centre of Social Research and a women’s rights activist. H.E. Chull-Joo Park, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Korean Mission to the UN delivered welcome remarks as co-sponsor of the event before the panel started.

After welcoming the speakers, Jung-Sook Kim addressed the challenges that rural women and girls face
despite their significant contribution to global food security and nutrition, improved health, and the economic well-being of their families. Kim stated that social norms and cultural traditions often lead to negative consequences for rural women and girls: they face lower wage, lack of access to education, gender-based violence, and negative consequences regarding poor reproductive health.

Dr. Kim hoped that this event would inspire many fruitful discussions among the participants to address these issues.

H.E. Chull-joo Park, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, elaborated on the status of Korean rural women and how the Korean government has sought to meet their needs. According to the data, Women constitute 43% of the agricultural work force yet they own less than 20% of the land. They are also subject to violent acts and lack equal access to education. Therefore, the Korean government has taken measures to support women farmers to enhance their skill set and to improve their business opportunities. These efforts include creating training opportunities, providing counseling services, and improving access to social services. The Korean government has also set a quota system in place to improve women’s representation in decision making. Lastly, Ambassador Park emphasized that women in the fishing and agricultural industries must be supported, as they too are important members of the community.

The next speaker was Mme. Gertrude Mongella from Tanzania. Her background and experiences are awe-inspiring: President of Pan African Parliament, Secretary General for the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, UN Under-Secretary to the Secretary General on Women’s Issues and Development. Mme. Mongella was impressed with the role of digital technology and the extent to which it has transformed the South Korean economy. She emphasized that it is critical that rural women catch up with modern technological innovations and learn to use them effectively. Her concluding remark that “women are not invitees in this planet... they belong to this planet” was met with rousing applause by the audience.
Mme. Mervat Tallawy, a former minister of Egypt and a former chair of the CSW, spoke briefly about gender wage disparity. She underlined the lack of social appreciation for women with regard to domestic work. Mme. Tallawy went on to state that if women were given recognition, equipment, and financial support, the productivity of the agricultural sector would double. Improved agricultural productivity would also reduce pressure to import foreign agricultural products. She also stressed that women should be among the key functionaries in all development projects given their important role in agricultural production.

Mme. Sizani Ngubane, 2018 UN CSW Woman of Distinction Awardee and Founder of South African Rural Women’s Movement, was introduced by Jung-Sook Kim as a “champion of rural women’s rights”. Mme. Ngubane has worked tirelessly with over 50,000 women in disadvantaged areas to improve their livelihood and eradicate various forms of violence and injustices facing women. She mentioned several serious issues facing women in rural African regions including forced marriages. Women are also unable to exercise their right to land ownership because they are denied of their right of inheritance. She added that despite the high rate of sexual violence, there are few services designed to help female survivors of rape in their pursuit of justice. Furthermore, women in rural areas may have particular difficulty in even speaking about marital violence. Despite the minefield of challenges, African Rural Women’s Movement has continued to help rural women -- scoring incremental improvement in their rights to health, property, and inheritance.

The next speaker was Dr. Pam Rajput, Professor at Punjab University/Former Chairperson, Govt. of India High Level Committee on the Status of Women. Dr. Rajput has been actively engaged in the women’s movement since the mid-1970’s both in India and internationally. She began her speech with the powerful statistic that approximately 70% of India’s 1.25 billion population still live in villages. Dr. Rajput emphasized the importance of raising the level of digital literacy for those living in villages, particularly women. Despite the obvious importance of rural women, women are often deprived of the basic rights and the tools and resources they need to reach their potential. She concluded by stating that rural women are otherwise well equipped to be leaders, producers, entrepreneurs and service providers in their respective communities.

During the Q&A session, many hands were raised. After finishing the first round of questions, Dr. Kim graciously turned the floor over to the moderator Linda Liu, the Vice President of ICW. The questions and comments ranged from urging zero tolerance of forced marriage to the undesirable effects of colonization.
in Africa, including the brain drain and exploitation of natural resources. Gertrude Mongella took the firm position that certain events should be left in the history books and that colonization should not be used as an excuse for men marginalizing women. Sizane Ngubane underscored the need to educate parents and added that women and girls must not be forced into marriage. Pam Rajput said that changes need to come from the society. Sandra Cohen-Rose commented that for real change to occur, both men and women must move forward, and do so with a foundation of honest and open communication.

Overall, most of the events of the CSW62 focused on ways to overcome some of the challenges facing rural women and girls. With goals of achieving gender equality and empowerment we can move toward ensuring that no one is left behind, a key tenet of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to the 18 official meetings that include Ministerial Round Tables, high-level interactive events and expert panels, there were more than 280 side events hosted by Member States and UN Agencies, and 440 parallel events hosted by civil society organizations.

Toward the end of the UN CSW62, there was general consensus among participants on a broad range of specific measures and recommendations to eliminate some of the factors that worsen problems facing rural women and girls. The Agreed Conclusion called for accelerated actions based on the Beijing Declaration and the 2030 agenda for inclusive Sustainable Development. It also contained detailed strategies which would provide women with adequate living standards, equal access to land, education, health, technology, food and nutrition security and decent work, including assurance of their sexual and reproductive health and rights and seeing to an end of all forms of violence.

One can feel a high degree of satisfaction in that all the ICW events were successful, well attended, and received good reviews from the participants. The presence of the entire ICW board at the CSW 62 underscored ICW President Jungsook Kim’s leadership, organizational solidarity, and commitment to purpose. In addition, board members were afforded the opportunity to network not only with their own delegations, but also with other women leaders and organizations from around the world.

Edited from the CSW62 reports of Linda Liu (First Vice President of ICW-CIF) and Isin Atala (Recording Secretary of ICW-CIF)
During the first week of the UN CSW62, where all ICW board members gathered to attend UN CSW62, ICW Board members convened for the Spring Board Meeting on March 17, 2018.

In her Presidential Report, ICW President Jungsook Kim expressed her appreciation to the Board Members for taking their time to attend the CSW 62 in New York and meet with many women leaders at the United Nations. She also conveyed her satisfaction with the success of the side and parallel events organized by ICW at the CSW 62 and the excellent speakers at ICW events, who were very well received by the audience filling all possible standing room and floor space.

Dr. Kim also voiced her appreciation to the cosponsors of these events, the Korean Mission to the UN, the Mission of Jamaica, the Mission of Thailand, the Korean Ministry of Gender and Family, the World Health Organization and KNCW. She informed the board that she had purchased both handbook and online ads for ICW events besides printing flyers, which have been beneficial in promoting ICW-CIF and ensuring that our events are well attended. She has also mentioned new updates on website and social media in further attempts to strengthen ICW network and disseminate important information for upcoming events such as ECICW GA and the 35th GA of ICW in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

During the meeting, the Board Members reviewed the financial accounts, the status of affiliations and the various funds held by ICW. Vice President Doris Bingley mentioned the potential for new affiliations and individual members to join ICW.

Finance Chair Hean Bee Wee presented the applications for the Mechta von Boogert award while Vice President Elisabeth Newman reported on her fruitful trip to South Africa to visit NCW SA and Lesotho. She noted her pleasure to meet with Daphne Hansen and other NCW of SA sisters and the members of National Council of African Women in Johannesburg. In addition to visiting NCW of Lesotho President, Patricia Mokhathali, Elisabeth had the opportunity to make acquaintance with the Queen of Lesotho and the founder of NCW of Lesotho. Elisabeth also reported on the good progress in the work of UN representatives and the Board also shared their thoughts to further encourage their progress.

Vice President Christine Knock discussed the situation regarding standing committee coordinators and advisors. Vice President Linda Liu related the status of the Lydie Rossini Project in India and added that there will be new opportunities for other small projects to apply. Together with Elisabeth, they jointly reported on the Project Five-O
developments, including the progress of an entrepreneurship training project in Papua New Guinea, the election of a new board and designation of new officers.

Kowani President Giwo Rubianto, along with a team of six, including a government representative, joined the board meeting in the afternoon to present their proposals for the 35th General Assembly to be held from 13th to 18th September, 2018 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. ICW President and board members enthusiastically provided suggestions and advice based on their extensive experiences to ensure an excellent program for ICW’s major triennial event before the meeting closed at 6 pm.

Report on the Regional Council of Americas (RCA) Business Meeting

On the 15th of March, at EVEN Hotel, the ICW Board and some RCA members gathered together for RCA Business meeting to discuss strategies to revitalize RCA.

Prior to the RCA Business Meeting, the ICW Board convened to discuss how to encourage participation of RCA in ICW. All the boards agreed that an emergency RCA meeting should be held during the UN CSW62 in New York to motivate its members to participate more actively in RCA.

Unfortunately, Mme. Cecilia Fernandez de Pallini could not attend the meeting, therefore, Male de Cabarrus, President of NCW Guatemala was elected as the acting president of the RCA to prepare the next regional meeting at the 35th GA in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Afterwards, the Board and RCA members discussed how to revitalize RCA. Male De Cabarrus expressed her resolve to do her best for the success of the RCA regional meeting at Yogyakarta together with the support of Mme. Cecilia Pallini and all the RCA affiliates.
No one CSW is the same. This year’s, CSW62, had a relaxed friendly atmosphere though was busy even in to the second week with many side and parallel events taking place. As usual, in the UN building many meetings were closed including the negotiations on the Outcome Document. When I first attended CSW 10 yrs. ago NGO members were permitted to listen to the negotiations as observers. The side events, many of which focused on some aspect about women and girls from rural areas all seemed to be very well attended.

The ICW-CIF side event Transforming Society through the Empowerment of Rural Women was no exception generating much interest with a room packed to overflowing and prompting many questions. All five speakers, including H.E Chull-joo Park, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea in the UN, highlighted the injustices and discrimination women and girls in rural areas suffer. Mme Sizani Ngubane, NGO CSW/NY 2018 Women of Distinction Award/Founder of South African Rural Women’s Movement, outlined the many issues faced by women and girls in rural areas including inheritance, rape of women and the treatment of widows.

A second side event, Advancing Women’s Health and Well-being Using Information and Communication Technologies: Focus on Non-Communicable Diseases, was organised by ICW-CIF Permanent Representatives to the UN NY with the Permanent Missions to the UN of Jamaica and of Thailand with the WHO Office at the UN NY as the main co-sponsors. Speakers focused the use of modern technological advances to promote healthy living helping to combat NCDs; such methods of communication are particularly valuable for rural areas.

The sessions where States were reporting, this year, on progress in supporting women and girls from rural areas covering all aspects of life, were intriguing to listen to. The sessions were also well attended. The parallel events, which make up the CSW NGO Forum were held in various buildings near the UN including the Church Centre; these, too, were well attended. Of the various parallel events I attend I found one looking at mental health from social, economic and environmental factors, rather than a medical angle, particularly interesting bringing out some good points for consideration. Another event, run by NCW USA focused on Ethiopia and the advancements being made in the prevention of fistula as well as advancements in the surgery to repair fistulae.

The ICW-CIF Regional Council of the Americas and KNCW parallel event, sponsored by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Republic of Korea, focusing on Education and Empowerment of Rural Women: Strategies to Eliminating Poverty was well attended and raised interest from the audience. Among presenters were Dr. Jung-Sook Kim who spoke about Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement) and Empowerment of Rural Women in in Korea and Gia Gaspard Taylor who gave an account of the interesting work of the Network of...
Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago. The SDGs were frequently mentioned, particularly Goal 5, as were the goals relating to education, health and alleviation of poverty and hunger.

In place of the last daily briefing the NGO CSW committee organised an informative closing session which reviewed this Commission and Forum and looked ahead at directions that may be taken to improve the running of the NGO CSW Forum in the future. Later in the day the closing of CSW62 was held in the UN headquarters.

Following some delay it was announced that a consensus to the Outcome Document had been reached to the relief of all. It was CSW56 with the main theme ‘The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication; development and current challenges’ where no consensus was reached. The main stumbling blocks related to reproductive rights and gender equality. Little has changed with these issues still being problematic but fortunately a consensus has been reached at subsequent CSWs. This CSW62 document is not as strong as many had hoped with some issues barely touched upon such as widows. We now need to work hard to overcome the deficiencies to ensure women and girls living in rural area are not left behind.

Apart from the events for CSW, ICW-CIF held a Regional Council Meeting of the America where Malé de Cabarrus from Guatemala was appointed acting President until the General Assembly in September. An ICW-CIF Board meeting was also held at the EVEN Hotel, New York, on March 17.

ICW-CIF remains a partner in Project Five-O with BPWI. This year the presidency reverted to ICW-CIF for the next three years with Linda Liu being voted as president. Officers representing ICW-CIF are Dr Jung-Sook Kim, Iryna Kurowyckyj and myself as Directors and Isin Atalia as recording/minutes Secretary. The project “Entrepreneurial Skills and Development” in Papua New Guineas is proving to be most successful.

Dr Jung-Sook Kim is to be thanked for her generosity in hosting a welcome dinner the evening prior to the commencement of CSW62 and for hosting several lunches and dinners during the two weeks of the Commission. These usually proved to be good networking opportunities as she would invite people not involved with ICW-CIF or we would catch up on CSW news and business in general.

With my time on the ICW-CIF Board coming to an end, I would like to thank the previous ICW-CIF President, Cosima Schenk, and the present President, Jung-Sook Kim, for giving me the opportunity to be involved with the preparations and running of CSW during my nine years on the Board. This chance has given me a good understanding of CSW and the involvement of NGOs. Over the 10 years I have attended CSW there have been changes, difficult to define – things evolve. However, one positive is large number of young women who now attend and take an active part. The young are our future.

Elisabeth Newman, ICW-CIF Vice President
Attending the CSW 62 Commission and Forum was a valuable and interesting experience from a first timer's perspective, but it was also quite an overwhelming experience at the start due to the large number of events on offer and the logistics of getting to them as they were spread across New York. There was much to take in – the official UN events, Government sponsored events, parallel events, side events, unadvertised last-minute events and private invitation only events.

I managed to 'gate-crash' one of these private events called '#MeToo Say survivors: Human Rights, Gender and Trafficking in Human Beings,' which included speakers such as Mira Sorvina, one of the first Hollywood actresses to speak out publicly about sexual abuse in Hollywood as well as other survivors of trafficking and prostitution who shared their experiences and emotional stories.

Whilst all the survivors' stories were harrowing to hear, for me the most moving testimony came from a young South African woman sitting quietly in the audience who had also been trafficked and had found herself trapped in a turbulent world of men, drugs and prostitution for 18 years. Hearing Grizelda Grootboom's heart breaking story reduced me and most of the audience to tears. Her suffering was extreme, and no woman should have to go through this.

Grizelda is now rebuilding her life with her son and has a more stable life, helped by an NGO called Embrace Dignity. She has written a book about her experiences called “Exit, a True Story” published by Blackbird Books, which I have read and thoroughly recommend. The #MeToo movement has become an important global vehicle for women from all backgrounds to say enough is enough to violence and abuse and this UN platform gave survivors of trafficking a much needed opportunity to have their voices heard.

As well as having the opportunity to listen to others, I was also invited to take part in a side event on Child Widows and Young Widows organised by the National Alliance of Women's Human Rights Organisations in the UK, in which I was asked to speak about the relationship between child marriage and child widows.

I am grateful to the ICW for this wonderful opportunity to meet many courageous activists from around the world, each having a different personal reason for being there, but united by a common goal of fighting for women's human rights and equality.

Mohinder Watson, ICW Permanent Representative to the UN Geneva
Erika Chao graduated from Smith College, U.S.A, with Bachelor's Degree in Economics in May 2018. Her experiences include volunteering during ECM in Taipei, facilitating Jackson Street School's Math Club programs, and serving as a co-chair of Asian Students Association.

This year is my fourth time attending CSW at the United Nations as a youth delegate of ICW-CIF. I am really thankful that ICW President Kim gave me this opportunity to see firsthand what it takes to be a leader of a large international organization. I am glad that I was able to meet other younger ICW delegates such as Jeannie Kim and youth delegates from other National Councils. I also enjoyed meeting and working with Honey Kang, secretary of ICW.

As usual, the daily morning briefings were excellent. Delegates from all over the world asked questions and discussed issues about women's economic empowerment, employment, and equality in workplaces. The abundant parallel and side events gave information about opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls through government-initiated programs. An example to achieve gender equality in workplace can be seen in Finland, where it is promoted for both men and women to have parental leave in order to achieve equal parental responsibilities.

By doing so, women are encouraged to go out and work instead of staying at home all day to take care of household work. In Ecuador, organic laws are enacted against violence against women. The government also established specialized services to help rural women and girls who face gender biased violence. Another example of the promotion of gender equality can be seen in Slovenia. The ministry puts in effort to include gender equality in different parts of its national development plan.

In ICW's parallel event, the speakers talked about education and empowerment of rural women. Having land ownership, access to financial support, and education are strategies to eliminate women's inequality. Moreover, rural women need more access to productive resources, market and financial services, and training for entrepreneurial and business skills in order to have better lives. To sum up the events, the message conveyed is that we need to focus on increasing women's involvement, promoting an equal society, and encouraging women to participate in the workforce.

While attending the events this year, I noticed that there were more young women participating in the events comparing to previous years. Hopefully more and more young people can attend CSW and become more aware of empowerment of women, especially in developing countries. I personally learned a lot from getting to know the members of the women's movement, so I hope other young women can also have the same experience as I do.
The UN in Vienna is the seat of the United Nations Office Vienna (UNOV) and of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Also located in the VIC (Vienna International Centre): UNIDO, UNOOSA, UNODA, UNCITRAL, IAEA, CTBTO PrepCom. Regular meetings of the following NGO Committees (NGO Alliance) are attended by the ICW Representatives: VNGOC on Ageing, VNGOC on Drugs, VNGOC on Peace, VNGOC on the Family, VNGOC on the Status of Women, VNGOA on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The UNODC (UN Office on Drugs and Crime) produced an indispensable 43 pages brochure “Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018-2021) which was introduced during a CND Side event on 14 March 2018. For more information: unov-unodcgender@un.org

Side Events/Special Events>

The Internet Freedom Conference on “The Role and Responsibilities of Internet Intermediaries” by the OSCE was highly appreciated and forward looking, drawing our attention to the challenges ahead of us in the IT world. At the end of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship the Ministerial Conference was held on 7-8 December. In one of the Side events on “Partnership against Human Trafficking” chaired by the ODIHR Director, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gisladóttir, I could make a statement on ICW’s historical and present efforts. She recalled on Eleanor Roosevelt “We owe to Eleanor Roosevelt, to all women, to ensure that the words in the Declaration’s (of Human Rights) first article – “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” – become a reality.”

A Civil Society Conference preceded by the Civil Society Conference 2017. The recommendations adopted by more than 100 NGO representatives, the “Vienna Declaration”: “Preventing Security Measures from Eclipsing Human Rights” was presented to the OSCE Chairperson in office, the Austrian chancellor Sebastian Kurz.

The Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) held its meeting at the UN Vienna in October 2017 “Civil Society / UN partnership for social Development – The inclusion and democratic participation of Civil Society throughout the 2030 Agenda”. On the same day CoNGO was celebrating its 70th anniversary. With the CoNGO President Cyril Ritchie, the New York V.P. Soon-Young, and the V.P. for Geneva and Vienna, Dr. Wolfgang Beiglboeck participating the festivity was given a special musical highlight: Three young clarinetists, provided by the Association of Women Musicians of Vienna, performed. Finally at the UN an outstanding NGO symposium was held in the framework of the 16 days campaign on violence against women: “Violence against elderly women” putting light on all aspects of violence in the various settings of life of an elderly woman.

Eleonore Hauer-Rona, ICW Permanent Representative to the UN Vienna
<CIVIL SOCIETIES ORGANISATIONS (CSO) Consultation>

Prior to the UN FAO Asia Pacific Region Conference, 30 people representing 24 non-government organisations or CSOs held a Consultation from 5-7 April. We contributed to a CSO Statement, and Presentations to be presented at the FAO Conference. These represented small-holder farming groups, rather than large-scale agriculture, or factory farms, like for poultry and pigs. They spoke of agro-ecological approach to farming, using natural systems to produce nutritious food. They included youth and women’s organisations (including ICW) and came from India, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, Mongolia, Tonga, Philippines, Cook Islands, and Fiji.

<FAO CONFERENCE ASIA PACIFIC REGION>

FAO Director-General, José Graziano da Silva, had earlier called upon the FAO Member Nations of Asia-Pacific to step up their actions in the fight against hunger. He urged for more work and stronger partnerships to meet the 2030 Agenda of achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly, SDG2, to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. The conference also expressed growing concern with the problem of overweight and obesity, which, if left unchecked, would result in a time bomb of diet-related diseases such as diabetes and other non-communicable diseases. (fao.org) The FAO Assistant Director-General, Kundhavi Kadiresan, stated that issues such as lack of food safety, hunger, zoonotic diseases, and climate change are all “converging”, plaguing the global efforts to end hunger, improve nutrition, and expand trade.

<FOOD AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE>

Most of the 40 countries’ governmental representatives spoke about the harsh effects of climate change happening in their countries such as the effects of lengthy draughts, torrential rain and flooding destroying crops. The member countries emphasized the importance of the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework in guiding future actions for agriculture, food security and nutrition in the face of climate change. They supported FAO’s efforts to help family farmers build more resilience against climate change and to improve statistics that can guide policies and actions. Graziano da Silva noted that climate change must be addressed to win the fight against hunger and added that “adaptation of agriculture to climate change” must be made. Graziano da Silva also pointed out that in order to achieve this, developing countries in particular must take advantage of available international funding bodies such as the Green Climate Fund to promote adaptation measures.” (fao.org)
Among APRC’s recommendations to FAO was to use “One Health" strategies to reduce food-borne illnesses, trans-boundary animal and plant diseases and anti-microbial resistance from antibiotics in livestock. The countries also recommended that FAO expand food safety interventions in the Pacific to reduce health risks associated with food-borne parasites, use of chemicals and effective risk-based import controls" (fao.org). Much of the obesity epidemic causes were attributed to highly-processed imported foods, fatty, salty fast-foods, and sugar-laden processed food products.

<CSO PRESENTATION>

Maria from PNG spoke about the effectiveness of small farm methods in harsh climate and the current difficulties of small farm-holder, particularly female producers as corporate farms and mining companies are taking over the land. The companies are also major emitters of greenhouse gases and we must be taking action to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gases. Currently, 80% of food producers in the Asia Pacific region are small-holder farmers, and many women are engaged in agricultural labor. There is a need for an ecosystem approach for sustainable food production, and recognition of the Rights of Indigenous People and Peasants. In regards to gender equality, it was noted that there should be an equal representation of both genders at conferences.

Wendy Rainbird, ICW Adviser for Environment

« ICW Report on International Relations and Peace »

On International Women’s Day, the Chair of the Knesset Committee for the Status of Women, MK Aida Toma-Slimane gave an overview on the main constitutional legislative and legal developments in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the ceremony at the Knesset.

The Society for International Development and the Pears Foundation honored me with a special Award “recognizing my work in changing lives in developing Nations, putting the focus on the promotion of the status of women, enhancing their position within society, especially in poverty reduction". I also had the honor to be among the contributors to the 2018 IFLAC Anti-War and Peace Anthology which is being published these days through Amazon.

During the last six months, I also became an active member of the External Relations Committee of the Women Wage Peace Movement, sharing my experience in building bridges between Israeli and Palestinian women and in developing programs for peace education in our societies. At the request of the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs, I also organized a Study Day, commemorating the 120th Anniversary of our late Prime Minister Golda Meir. At the event, three female parliamentarians spoke about the obstacles that women face in the political and public life and how to overcome them.

Mazal Renford, ICW Advisor for International Relations and Peace
At the very beginning of this year, National Council of Women of Taiwan, ROC (NCWT) held the first meeting of the newly elected board on January 4, 2018.

At the meeting, Mrs. Betty F. H. Chang was elected to be the new President for the term 2018 to 2020. In the meantime, five working committees were set up at the second board meeting on March 6, 2018: First Vice President Mrs. May Lu Chin-Mei is responsible for the Activity Committee, Second Vice President Mrs. Rita H. Huang is responsible for the Membership Committee, Executive Supervisor Ms. Linda Liu is responsible for the International Affairs Committee, Director Mrs. Regina Chen is responsible for the Information Committee and Supervisor Ms. Marianne Chao is responsible for the Constitution Committee. President Mrs. Betty Chang appointed Ms. Julie Yeh as the Secretary-General of NCWT.

In February, the Foundation for the Promotion of Women’s Rights invited NCWT to join a steering committee with the objective of promoting local understanding of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On behalf of NCWT, Executive Supervisor Ms. Linda Liu has attended two of the preparatory meetings.

This year, NCWT will continue to collaborate with Taiwan Coalition Against Violence (TCAV) as co-sponsor of five TCAV grassroots training sessions on the prevention of gender violence and promotion of gender equality. The first session was held on March 17th, 2018. Secretary-General Julie Yeh and Secretary Nereid Miao participated in the first event on behalf of NCWT. More sessions have been scheduled for April 18, May 23, June 27, and August 29, 2018.

Betty Chang, President of NCW Taiwan

Betty Chang (5th from the left), Linda Liu (6th from the left), and NCW Taiwan members
“Bildung, das gemeinsame Ziel” (Education, the common goal) was a much enjoyable event on education with a full room and high level audience: the presentation of our documentation “Education, the common goal” to commemorate the 300th birthday of Maria Theresia (well known for her school reform for children of both sexes from 1774) and 125 years of the first grammar school for girls in Vienna that was initiated by Marianne Hainisch, the founder of NCW Austria.

These initiatives laid the foundation for better access to higher schools and universities for girls and women. Gender Pharmacology was the theme of another NCW Austria lecture and discussion meeting with speakers from NCW membership. On NCW Austria Founder’s day, 5 May, NCW Austria inaugurated an exhibition on “100 Years Women's Voting Rights in Austria”. This will be the first exhibition on this theme in Austria. Also NCW Austria will be part of a TV-documentary on “100 Years First Republic of Austria”. The first elected president of the republic was Michael Hainisch, the son of Marianne Hainisch.

To commemorate the Day of Older Persons an event was held at Vienna's Town Hall “Frau trifft Alter” (Women and Old Age). The lecturer overviewed a wide range of masterpieces from Renaissance to the present day on the topic of old age and arts. Today, aging is often negatively depicted by the cosmetics industry. However, many historical and contemporary works by artists in the past pursue a completely different idea of age. For the first time that has been showcased in a comprehensive exhibition at the Belvedere Castle.

Our member organization MAS produced 3 books to motivate, to activate and to support relatives of Alzheimer patients. MAS continues its successful programme “Holidays with Alzheimer Patients and their family members / careers”. Together with the chamber of pharmacists, MAS is running a campaign and also produced guidelines “How to celebrate best the Christmas period with people suffering from dementia”. These guidelines are available on the organizations website and in all Upper Austrian pharmacies and dementia service offices.

Another MAS project is called “Dementia-friendly police”: Together with the Donau-Universitaet Krems, MAS developed online learning programmes and workshops for police officers to sensitize them for a better understanding of situations with elderly people and their security in daily life. Promoting Women Composers, concerts with music only by women composers were also on the agenda of the Club der Wiener Musikerinnen (Association of Women Musicians of Vienna) inter alia.

Eleonore Hauer-Rona, President of NCW Austria
During less than four months after the New Year, the Women’s Union of Russia has held a number of large scale events on different issues. This was done in addition to regular activities (events, round tables, conferences, contests, etc.) conducted by WUR affiliations in 82 regions of Russia. In Moscow, in February, March and April we have organized a very interesting “round table” and two workshops (one of them in Kursk) in the framework of our big creative project “Symbols of small motherland – Russia’s pride and glory”. The project was actively supported by school children, students, experts in the sphere of folk art, teachers of higher education institutions and schools. The purpose of the project is to learn and share with all what the cities of Russia are famous for, what these symbols mean in the life of local residents by uniting them and inspiring them for creative work.

In March, the Forum "Health of Women of All Ages" attended by doctors, activists of women’s movement, and representatives of medical and social institutions has taken place. The issue under discussion was preserving women’s health, from birth and to a ripe old age, in modern conditions.

In April, we have launched the seventh School of civil activity - an educational program for activists of our regional affiliations. It is underway for five years now and enjoys big success.

Currently, we are preparing an international conference of CIS women’s organizations “Partnership of CIS women’s organizations towards peace and stability in the interests of sustainable development (in the framework of the proclaimed CIS Year of Culture)” to take place on May 17-18, 2018. Conference participants will not only address important cooperation issues, but will also gain a familiarity with Moscow and its culture. Seven CIS countries will be represented at the Conference, including Novella Djafarova and Pyarvan Mamedova, members of the ECICW from Azerbaidjan.

Helena Bashun, International Secretary of WUR
Every year we present our AUWCH award to an individual, an organization or a company for a sexist comment, message, measure or campaign. The award is a suggestive cactus because we want to “prick” sexists towards better action in the future. In January 2018, we presented our AUWCH Award to the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA). The premiums that soccer players get when they play for the national teams are extremely unequal. The Red Flames, the women’s soccer team, got a fraction (200 euro/player) of the amount of the Red Devils, the men’s soccer team (8000 euro/player) for each match they play, completed with a premium in case of victory. The RBFA refused to accept the award because they consider “equal pay for equal play” economically unviable.

Currently, fathers and co-mothers in Belgium are entitled to only 10 days of ‘paternity’ leave after the birth of their child. We demand 20 days, without loss of income. We believe extended paternity leave will benefit gender equality in society and families, and the position of women on the labour market.

To strengthen and empower single mothers, we started the MIRIAM project in 2015 in five Public Centres for Social Welfare, with support from the federal Public Planning Service of Social Integration and the Karel de Grote University College. Single mothers are specifically vulnerable: they experience difficulties in finding housing and child care, while they are socially isolated and even subjected to poverty. During the project, the women received individual and collective customized support, with a holistic and gender sensitive perspective. Empowerment was the main focus. On International Women’s Day, the PPS Social Integration held a press conference where we discussed the results of the project. Due to its success, the project will be established in six other Public Centres for Social Welfare.

We oppose the changed regulations of the pension schemes that our current government has introduced since its formation in 2014, as they affect many people negatively, mainly women. The government has raised the pension age to 67 years, restricted the conditions for early retirement, abolished the ‘extended leave of absence without motivation’ (used by many women to provide care for children, the sick and the elderly), reformed the ‘survival
pension income’ (i.e. basic income for pensioners). The government has also narrowed the definition of “heavy job” as only physical labour, dismantled the equated periods of leave, and implemented a point system with arbitrary standard for earning points.

To protest against these measures, we mobilize with other women’s organizations and trade unions in the platform Assez is genoeg (Enough is enough). In October 2017 and on 8 March 2018, the members of this platform gathered at the Central Train Station in Brussels for a protest action. In November, we took part in a panel discussion on the family dimension of pensions, organized by the Council of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women.

<Peace Conference in Ypres>

On Saturday 10 March 2018, we organized a Peace Conference together with the city of Ypres and Mothers for Peace. Women from Afghanistan, Belgium, Iran, Congo, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Israel/Palestine, and Ukraine debated and exchanged experiences on human and women’s rights, violence against women, poverty, and peace. After the conference we held a peace walk through the city of Ypres.

Magda De Meyer, President of the Dutch Speaking Women’s Council of Belgium

NCW Australia

In March, Lady Cosgrove our patron hosted a garden party in the beautiful gardens of Government house. Lady Cosgrove is the wife of the Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove, who is Queen Elizabeth’s representative in Australia as Head of State. We were delighted with her generosity in hosting for 100 NCWA members and supporters. Lady Cosgrove met earlier with the president of NCW Australia, Robyn Nolan, President elect NCWA, President NCW Western Australia, and Kate Wright Vice President NCWA and National Coordinator of National Council of Young Women – Australia. We had members attend from right around Australian - Queensland, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.
NCWA has been busy in the last three months advocating to Government on issues including:

- Seeking support for a set of breakthrough Breast Cancer drugs- the CDK inhibitors from the Minister for Health the Hon Greg Hunt MP
- Marine debris
- Electoral Matters into the Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform)
- The National Broadband Network
- Superannuation

We are also planning our triennial conference in October. We have a working title of NCWA Finding Solutions. We will have a range of high profile speakers, academics, practitioners and those with lived experience to help us to work to find solutions to the vexed problems of violence against women and the homelessness of aging women. We will then use these solutions to advocate to government to create cultural change to improve the lives of women and men in our community.

Barbara Baikie, President of NCW Australia

**NCW Canada**

*Celebration for 125th Anniversary*

After an unusually long Canadian winter, we are looking forward to spring, as we prepare for our Annual General Meeting and 125th Anniversary celebrations. It will take place June 7-9, 2018, in beautiful Niagara on-the-Lake, known for its scenic landscape, wineries and numerous other natural attractions, including the Niagara Falls. Hosted by the Niagara District Council of Women, who will be celebrating their 100th Anniversary, it promises to be another well-presented meeting, where Resolutions and present concerns will be debated. Montreal’s historic Mount Stephen’s Hotel was the scene of a large gathering of accomplished women for the Montreal Council of Women’s celebration of its 125th Anniversary and its Women of the Year Luncheon.

Here Margaret Trudeau, author and advocate for mental-health issues, and mother of Prime Minister Trudeau, was chosen Women of the Year. Tribute was paid to this remarkable woman for her work in opening up the dialogue on mental health. We look forward to more joyous events across Canada to celebrate our 125th Anniversary and increase our visibility.

<UN CSW 62>

At the 62nd meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 12 to 23 March 2018, NCWC was well-represented by eighteen members. On Sunday, March 11, 2018 over a delightful dinner hosted by President Jungsook Kim I along with fellow NCWC members Jeannette Logan,
VP Justice, Daniela Chivu, Convenor United Nations and Citizenship, Immigration and Global Affairs and Trish Masniuk, Convenor Justice and Legislation, had the opportunity to meet other Council members.

Sandra Cohen-Rose, the President of the NCW Canada was a part of the ICW’s panel, “Educating and Empowering Rural Women: Strategies to Eliminating Poverty,” presented NCWC’s Common Program for 2017-2019, “Eliminating Poverty Through Life Skills Education and Women’s Empowerment.”

<National News>

At the Vancouver Council of Women twelve candidates seeking election to the school board participated in an informative program. The Vancouver Council is attacking problems concerning the lack of appropriate homeless shelters and the persistent lack of a province-wide strategy to reduce poverty. Over 65 people joined the Niagara District Council of Women on January 10th, 2018, for its panel on “Homelessness.” The Canadian Government continues its consultation with the NCWC on sexual harassment and violence, while it struggles to empower women and close the gender-gap.

The NCWC is focusing on its campaign to convince the government to assure Life Skills Education from an early age in all schools. Our Common Program, advocating life skills education for boys and girls, will help decrease poverty and empower women, which will lead to true equality.

Sandra Cohen-Rose, President of NCW Canada

APWA: NCW Pakistan

<A Year for Looking Inward to See Outward: APWA>

This year, we are focused on improving our strengths and resources in order to move forward into the future. With this goal in mind, APWA has registered with PCP Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy. Our commitment to SGDs 3, 4 and 5 remain strong as we strive to advance our current facilities with the aim to extend the services we provide to our beneficiaries. New projects are on the horizon for next year and our new website is under construction with updated information and access.

We are pleased to say that we have received a grant for the securing the facilities of our school in Yousuf Goth, an extremely poor peri-urban area outside Karachi. In addition, one of our donors has kindly agreed to entirely rebuild a school in Korangi,
one of the poorest neighborhoods of Karachi. This school also has a non-formal education project, which began in response to one child who astounded all with his faith and temerity. His sheer determination and desire to learn sparked a whole new project towards non-formal education.

Through #MeToo Movement, the injustices of gender based violence has come to light and steps are being implemented to address this issue. In Punjab, APWA joined the Campaign for 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. APWA Punjab also launched a campaign for “Zero Tolerance – End Violence against women and girls” reflecting the core principle of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, our APWA Punjab branch has also been doing some excellent work for the recognition of domestic workers and has advocated for the inclusion of domestic workers into the recognised workforce by drafting legislation in this regard.

Next slated for upgrade are our urban healthcare facilities in Karachi some of which are connected to our many schools and provide mothers and families of our students with affordable healthcare. Costs of healthcare equipment are high but this update is something we hope to tackle in the near future, given responses from donors. Our health facilities in rural Sindh have already been updated and the number of beds and services increased where it is desperately needed.

In addition, we maintain the running of our vocational training facility at Karachi Women’s Prison. This project seeks to raise the morale of women prisoners by teaching a craft to utilize as a means of livelihood. The Jail Project also serves to provide health care check-ups to their children. Pakistan has a long way to go in many respects but it has a national culture of resilience through hardship. And, though the path has not always been easy for any of us who believe in the cause of our gender and of equality, our journey has always been necessary.

Zehra Laila Javeri Bukhari, Chairperson of International Affairs, APWA

**Lebanese Council of Women**

< Chamber of Commerce and Industry >

On January 19, 2018, under the patronage of Prime Minister Saad Hariri represented by the minister of state for women's affairs Jean Oghassabian, the Lebanese Council of Women (LCW) in partnership with The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Lebanon (UN Women), held today the Conference, "Impact of Political, Economic and Social Changes on women's realities in Lebanon", hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The conference gathered current and former ministers, academics, jurists and representatives of national committees, non-governmental organizations, LCW and UN Women. The panels discussed the three main pillars of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security and the importance of adopting a
National Action Plan to implement this resolution in Lebanon.

<Conference on “Not to kill and taunt women”>

The Lebanese Council of Women held a press conference on January 31, 2018 to reject the killing and violence of women following the heinous crimes against women. The LCW called on the families of victims of domestic violence to express their own experiences.

<Meeting with Beirut district NGOs>

On February 12, 2018, the LCW has organized a meeting with its Beirut NGOs to spread the awareness on the participation of Lebanese women in the upcoming elections and to highlight the election law by the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections LADE.

<Meeting with students in the Faculty of Arts-Lebanese University>

On March 14, 2018, The Lebanese University has hosted the President of the Lebanese Women's Council, Attorney Ikbal Mourad Doughan, in a meeting with the University’s students to discuss the empowerment of relations between the LCW and the Youth.

<Meeting of the LCW with the candidates in the parliamentary elections 2018>

On March 29, 2018, the Lebanese Women's Council organized a meeting to support Women candidates for the upcoming election. The President of the Lebanese Women's Council announced the launching of a road map to promote women's political participation in the upcoming parliamentary elections. She urges the Women voters to give their voice to the lists that include women and also to contact political parties to nominate Women on their lists.

Ikbal Mrad Doughan, President of NCW Lebanon

CWOI - The Council of Women Organizations in Israel

The Council of Women Organizations in Israel is pleased to submit its report about the activities and events which have been undertaken by its member organizations during Jan-May 2018.

Wizo Israel had initiated and promoted the submission of the proposals on laws discouraging employment of abusive caregivers in the field of education, implementing electronic supervision of abusive men, and
nominating a female judge at the religious court. Wizo & Naamat continue to raise awareness in the public sphere with campaigns against "sexist publicity". Training programs of Naamat and Wizo on several current topics providing women with managerial skills, continue to be part of on-going projects.

The Soroptimist Union of Israel continue with its tradition of granting scholarships to support female students pursuing the field of Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in fulfilling their academic and career achievements.

Hadassah Women Organization is very much involved in the Public Health Project in the Communities. Hadassah Doctors give lectures to spread awareness of various health issues such as breast cancer. Hadassah-Israel has set up “Hadassah Three C’s Café” nationwide to empower women experiencing abuse. Hadassah members also support and volunteer in after-school clubhouses for children at risk around the country, such as the Head Start (Nitzanei Orianut) programs for children at risk in kindergarten and at elementary schools.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that all women’s organizations in Israel are working and volunteering to ensure gender mainstreaming in all programs and arenas, and especially in educational programs, so that young people will be inculcated with the values of gender equality, equal allocation of resources and affirmative action.

Mazal Renford and Aviva Kohlman, CWOI

KNCW – Korean National Council of Women

The president of KNCW, Ms. Keum Suk Choe, held a press conference focusing on “#Me Too, #With You” on March 2, 2018, in front of Saejong Cultural Center in Seoul. In her talk, president Choe made strong remarks against gender based violence and urged implementation of effective nationwide policies and the creation of institutions to improve legal, psychological, and medical support for “Me-Too” victims.

Starting in early 2018, numerous women have come forward with their experiences of sexual violence in Korea. It is our position that violence against women stems from gender-discriminatory social norms, a distorted view of gender roles, and widespread sexual exploitation.

Thus, KNCW, together with its 17 affiliated organizations, has taken a proactive stance with regard to the elimination of various forms of gender based violence and injustices through nationwide support for #Me-Too.

The Korean National Council of Women (KNCW), the Korean Family Legal Service Center (Director Jeong Ja Yang),
the Korean Public Law Association (President Young Gweon You), and the Korean Women Lawyers Association (Chairman: Jo, Hyun-Wook), are actively involved in supporting victims at the “Office of National Support for #Me-Too”.

The Korean National Council of Women (KNCW) supports victims by providing counseling support in a broad range of areas, including legal, medical and psychological. The Council urges the establishment of measures, including revision of laws and policies, as a fore-runner of a powerful movement for the complete abolition of sexual violence.

KNCW is taking the lead fighting for gender equality in the battle to end all forms of discrimination against women in Korea. Some of the many areas of concern include discrimination in the workplace, the glass ceiling, the gender wage gap, and sexual violence. The level of success resulting from their efforts will be the extent to which society recognizes the importance of the movement and wholeheartedly supports necessary change. 

Keum sook Choe, President of KNCW

KOWANI

< Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK),"Anti-Corruption Women"> 

On April 23rd 2018, Kowani, in cooperation with KPK, held a socialization event themed "The Role of Women in the Elimination of Corruption".

In her opening speech, Dr.Ir. Giwo Rubianto Wiyogo, M.Pd said that the role of women is very significant in preventing corruption. She said, "The spirit of eradicating corruption starts from the home. Women as a wife and a mother… can plant a value system in their family".

Among the invited speakers, there was Inspector General. Pol. Basariah Panjaitan, SH, M.H, the first female-elected Commissioner of the KPK. KPK is an independent state institution that is committed to corruption eradication.

Irjen. Pol. (Ret.) Basaria Panjaitan, S.H., M.H. stated that one of the biggest problems of corruption eradication in Indonesia is the lack of commitment and integrity of leadership in an institution and that stakeholders need to work together to prevent corruption while improving the existing system.

Mrs. Basaria further explained that women can act to eradicate and prevent corruption. She stressed that "Women play a role in the social sphere and can set an example and a call for an anti-corruption movement starting from the smallest scope around the house".
The President of International Council of Women (ICW-CIF), Dr. Jungsook Kim, visited Indonesia to meet with various officials to oversee the preparation of the 35th ICW-CIF General Assembly of the ICW to be held from September 13 to 19, 2018 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Kim visited two sites managed by KOWANI: a kindergarten named TK Cempaka and the elderly care center named Panti Werdha Wisma Mulia.

Dr. Ir. Giwo Rubianto Wiyogo, emphasized the efforts of KOWANI in contribution to empowerment of women. Dr. Kim acknowledged the contributions that the organization has made in achieving equality in various fields.

Dr. Kim, together with KOWANI members, also paid the visit to the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia and the Ministry of State Owned Enterprises of Indonesia. On May 7, 2018, Dr. Kim was received by Mrs. Rini Soemarno, the Minister of State Owned Enterprises of Indonesia, in her office in Central Jakarta.

The meeting was arranged for Dr. Kim to be introduced and to ask for the support of both ministries for the upcoming GA. KOWANI team and Dr. Kim elaborated on the GA activities and stressed the significance of GA as an international event to garner all women’s support towards progress. The Ministry of State Owned Enterprises of Indonesia has given lot of supports for the various activities of the General Assembly in Yogyakarta in September.

On May 8, 2018, Kowani and President of ICW visited Yogyakarta to monitor the progress of the preparation for the General Assembly. Dr. Kim and KOWANI team met some local craftspeople and also the queen consort of the Kingdom of Yogyakarta, Gusti Kanjeng Ratu Hemas. She expressed great enthusiasm for working to promote women’s participation in politics. In the afternoon, Kowani and Dr. Kim Jungsook also visited Balkondes (tourist village) to hold a press conference. Afterwards they went to 4 villages near the Borobudur Temple where delegates will stay for a night and learn about traditional Indonesian (Javanees) culture.

Ir. Giwo Rubianto Wiyogo, Chairperson of KOWANI
Mary Gaerty stressed the need to address poverty and the means to overcome it through education, knowledge about financial independence and financial capability. She also referred to other important areas that the Council is working on including harassment at the workplace, equal pay for equal work, prostitution, pro-life initiatives and not least NCW’s stand against abortion.

She also spoke about NCW’s position on the Consultative Council for Women’s Rights which Hon Helena Dalli, Minister for Equality and Civil Dialogue and European Affairs has recently launched to ensure a holistic approach to women’s social, economic and political rights. She highlighted the involvement of NCW through its three-year project, providing a full programme for women of all ages to start their own business.

NCW is also contributing to the President’s Empowerment Foundation targeting the promotion of Women in Leadership. The President stated that the Council has been closely following crucial current and future social and economic developments in a number of areas at National and EU level. The 2018 AGM resolutions will form the basis of the policies of NCW, in line with these developments for a sustainable future.

The General Assembly discussed and approved a number of resolutions, including those submitted by the affiliated organisations. The Role of Women in the Sustainable Development Goals from a Maltese perspective was one of the key areas of the AGM providing International and European policies to be adapted to the Maltese situation: eliminating the obstacles to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political social, economic and cultural life of their countries.

The AGM also addressed issues concerning different forms of harassment at different levels of the workplace and the importance of improving the status of Vocational Education and training to meet the future needs of Industry. Other areas addressed were euthanasia, abortion and prostitution. The importance of extending Personal and Social Education beyond Secondary School level was also debated.

With regards to women’s health the AGM focused on the importance of ensuring informed consent to meet the holistic needs of women undergoing Gynaecological Surgery. Ms. Catherine Tabone, Executive Director
Valletta 2018 Foundation was guest speaker at the AGM and gave a presentation about the many cultural and artistic activities, which are being organized during this year.

**The newly elected Executive Committee Members for 2018 are:**

President Mary Gaerty, Hon. General Secretary Doris Bingley,
Vice Presidents: Grace Attard, Amy Camilleri Zahra, Diane Xuereb, Hon. Treasurer Therese Cassola,
Members: Nadyanne Mangion, Doris Caruana, Ritianne Ellul, Tamara Gauci, Mandy Mifsud,
Gertrude Abela, Lara Gail Dougall, Josette Barbara Cardona, Dr Fransina Abela,
Rebecca Wellman and Dr Claudine Zarb, NCW Legal Advisor

Mary Gaerty, President of NCW Malta

**NCW Thailand**

*<National Children's Day celebration>*

The National Council of Women of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen (NCWT) and Affiliate Member Associations held the National Children’s Day Celebration on January 13, 2018 at the Manangasila Mansion in Bangkok. Over 1,000 children from nearby communities, children from the School for the deaf, the school for the blind and other schools for special-need children participated in the activities.

Every year, NCWT organizes the Children’s Day celebration, in recognition of the importance of children, to guide them to be good quality members of the society. Besides the fun-filled and edutainment activities taking place, there was also a ceremony whereby over 170 students with good academic performance but lack financial support for study were granted educational scholarships.

*<NCWT and Madame Chinese Ambassador visiting Thai Silk Community>*

The National Council of Women of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen (NCWT) with Madame Pan Peng-Wife of Chinese Ambassador to Thailand, and the group of Chinese dignitary women, recently visited Nakhon Ratchasima Province.
The visit was made to the local community working in the total cycle of weaving, from growing mulberry trees-food for silkworms, raising silkworms, making silk thread, dyeing and weaving Thai silk.

<NCWT joined the sixteenth Women’s Sports Festival 2018 in Macau>

The National Council of Thailand (NCWT) recently participated in the sixteenth Women’s Sports Festival 2018 in Macau. The Thai delegation proudly presented the Thai cultural performance at the Mass Sports Fitness Exhibition in Senado Square, joining with other wonderful performances by women delegations from different countries and different parts of China. The Women’s Sports Festival was organized by the Women’s General Association of Macau, to impel female participation in sports and promote friendly relationship among women of all states and regions.

Dr. Wandeek Khunchornyakong Juljarern, President of NCWT

Upcoming Events

◆ ECICW General Assembly in London, UK.
  • Date: June 28- July 2, 2018
  • Venue: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel London - Westminster

◆ The 35th ICW General Assembly in Yogyakarta, Indonesia
  • Date: September 13 - 19, 2018
  • Venue: Grand Inna Malioboro Hotel
  • Theme: "Transforming Society through Women's Empowerment"

※ Sign up for Early Bird Registration by July 15, 2018
ICW - CIF
The 35th General Assembly
Yogyakarta - Indonesia
September 13 - 19, 2018