

Anglican Women at UNCSW 54

At the invitation of the Anglican Observer at the United Nations, Ms Hellen Wangusa, more than 80 women from across the Anglican Communion formed the Anglican Consultative Council delegation to the 54th meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in New York, 1 - 12 March, 2010.

This year's meeting undertook a 15-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. The BPfA, developed in 1995 at the 4th World Conference on Women, still remains the most comprehensive platform on issues of gender equity.

From **Pumla Titus (South Africa):**

"A lot of the focus this year was on advocacy and visits to country missions. Following a day of Mission Visit training, Ms Hellen Wangusa led the country Mission Visits with members from other countries joining the country's member.

"I was invited to attend visits to the Missions for The Seychelles and for Nigeria. These visits varied in the time made available to us and the level of informality and information exchange.

"After trying for two weeks I was able to confirm on the second last day a visit to my own South African Mission. There I met with the South African Minister of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities who is looking to connect with community organisations - non-government organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) especially those that are faith-based.

"Since returning home The Revd Plaatjies and I were invited to the maiden Budget Vote Speech of the Ministry. It was announced that a conference would be called to produce a Plan of Action for the ministry before the end of the year and all NGOs and CBOs would be invited to participate."



The South African Mission Visit

From **Karen Chane (The Episcopal Church):**

"I found the sessions led by Hellen Wangusa very informative and helpful in understanding the best way to approach the advocacy work that we were there to do. She was also very clear on the issues that were before us.

"I found the delegates' country reports shared many of the same themes of importance to women - violence against women, education, decision-making, the feminization of poverty, indigenous women. The presentation from 'Brothers to Mothers' was filled with the hope of a future of men and boys working together with women and girls for a better future for all.

"I was also able to attend two briefings from the United States Mission, several side events, plenary sessions at the UN and the special session for World Women's Day.

"What I loved most and remember most clearly were the stories told by the delegates from around the Anglican Communion. Having time to get to know these women over a cup of coffee or a meal is a real gift. Just to be able to sit together and to worship together is a gift. I am sure we will always remember to say 'I Love You'."

From **Mandy Manggurra (Australia):**

"Because this was my first time, I couldn't understand what I was going to do, and what was going on, and how I was going to participate in all the events. However when I first went to Sunday Worship that's where I felt comfort and I felt welcome being with all the other ladies. Because we have that one Spirit of God.

"I learnt women are working in their places as church people and God can use us in whatever job we have. Like me for example, I am a playgroup teacher, the mums bring their kids every morning to playgroup and I can share the word of God with them.

"For the future, my idea is to go out to school and teach the teenagers in the classroom from the Bible. Especially young mothers who are dropping out of school early. I see people fighting, stealing, smoking drugs, petrol sniffing -

I think they are lost. God is the one who can change our lives and give us peace, and teach us how to live with forgiveness towards each other.

"Take the love of God to people and tell them they are very precious to God - that's the most important thing."

April 2010: From Mugisa Isingoma

IAWN Congo Représentative, Democratic Republic of Congo

1. Child rights

We members of the Mothers' Union of the Diocese of Boga have been involved with awareness campaigns on child rights and have organised the following:

Importance of children in society and the church:

We often have workshops with couples to educate them about their duties towards their children, for example: not to ill-treat their children but to support them; fight against malnutrition; communicate well with their children.

2. Economic development and empowerment

For promoting economic development, we have a second organisation – the Union des Femmes pour la Paix et la promotion Sociale (UFPPS) which works for all women without bias. UFPPS helps women to promote themselves through integral development. As part of this, we have 15 acres of agriculture in different parts of our Diocese. We cultivate cassava, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, plantains... The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) helps us by providing seeds. We also teach women sewing, knitting, embroidery, making mats, to assist them in taking charge of their lives.

3. Gender and women's empowerment

We organised a seminar on gender for women and men. We encourage women to return to school and pursue various types of training; in Diocesan Synod we also stress the participation of women in decision-making in all areas. [We encourage women] not to be shy in communicating. We also have a literacy programme for women and single mothers.

4. Sustainable Development (loans)

We strengthen the capacity of women to generate income through Microcredit, with a monthly contribution from each participant. We praise the Lord for this activity because it enables a woman to rent a house, pay the costs of child care, feed and clothe the family...

5. HIV/AIDS

We have already finished our HIV/AIDS sensitisation programme and each person has been made aware. Now we are motivating and raising awareness of voluntary testing among couples, single mothers, women and men. The difficulties are that health centres don't have the test product, and our church pastors haven't put any emphasis on HIV / AIDS – and so need sensitisation themselves.

News from England

Diocese of Liverpool established a Women's Issues Forum and a *Faith in Partnership* Lecture sponsored by the Diocesan Council for Social Aid whose principle role is running a bail hostel (a small open prison for women in simple language!)

The Annual Faith in Partnership lecture was given by Gill Hurley who has worked with women offenders and had been involved in helping women about to be

released from Prison to produce a video on their experiences. This was moving and reminded those present that women offenders are often victims of sexism with prostitution and drug addiction forced upon them - many are also victims of abuse by family members at a young age.

The Women's issues Forum has looked at issues like domestic violence, sexual grooming of teenage girls and genital mutilation as well as women in leadership. In June they will welcome Bishop Cathy Roskam who is visiting Liverpool to preach at the Centenary of the Cathedral Lady Chapel (which has stained glass windows dedicated to great Christian women).

Canon Dowdle chairs the Forum assisted by Helen Clarey Diocesan Women's Adviser (the first such post in any Anglican Diocese). In addition to servicing the forum Helen is involved in revising and updating the diocesan Equal opportunities Policy and in working on domestic violence awareness.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Loweth on receiving the Award of Merit from the Anglican Church of Canada!

For more information see the IAWM website:

<http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm>

News from Scotland - From Ann Glenesk

In Scotland, there is an Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse – mostly Christian, but also some Jews and Muslims. Ann Glenesk, President of the Glasgow diocese' MU, writes about one shoot of optimism emerging from this Group.

The Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse is planning an exhibition of 104 shoes, representing the two women who die per week in the UK, as a result of domestic abuse. Each pair of shoes, female and male, will be accompanied by a caption indicating how the owner's faith influences their views on domestic abuse. Contributions of shoes and captions will come from Muslims, Jews and Christians from a range of organisations including Mothers' Union.

The exhibition will be available to all faith community buildings, in Scotland, from June 2010, with the hope that it will raise awareness to the issue. It is also hoped that it will encourage sermons and prayers, sending a message that places of faith can be not only sanctuaries for victims/survivors but also places where sanctions are applied until perpetrators repent, cease their abusive behaviour and seek forgiveness from God.

One caption reads **'Jesus said 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Domestic abuse affects rich and poor, anywhere and everywhere, even on your own doorstep. Are you a good neighbour? Are you aware? Commit your concerns to prayer and always be aware.**

Girls Friendly Society Supporting Refugees

G.F.S. Project for Women refugees from North Korea

This is the project to support women refugees from North Korea and to help them to be healthy members of our society. This is operated by G.F.S. (Girls' Friendly Society). They had held G.F.S. World Council in 2008 and the project U-Mul-Ga (Wellside) was selected as the World Project.

Operating counseling café "U-Mul-Ga": As a physical and psychological space to talk and listen to each other between GFS members and women refugees.

Operating Internet café: To share the difficulties of the refugees, Regular meetings with the customers of the café, Establish a social safety connection for refugees in emergency

Operating "Drop-in Center": To help refugees to be self-support financially.

Purposes of operating the café "U-Mul-Ga"

- ✧ To operate an actual business for helping the women refugees
- ✧ A business of selling bread for hiring employees, not hiring employees for selling bread
- ✧ Expecting the role of incubator to acclimate themselves to South Korean society
- ✧ Plan to expand it to be an employment bank, to supply professional trainers, and to support the person establishing a business
- ✧ To be a place for exchanging cultures between North and South Korea
- ✧ Changing the consciousness of Korean people for the refugees as coexisting members of our society without any gap.

The Café U-Mul-Ga finally opened on the 12th of March and named "café grace".

Resources

Terrie Robinson Recommends the following web site: UNIFEM's newly launched Global Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls at <http://www.endvawnow.org/>

It's a fabulous resource with recommendations for good practice, etc.

(Also look at the BBC website www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/domestic_violence who have a very simple test to see if you are someone you know may be living in an abusive relationship).

Anglican Women Clergy

Anglican women clergy in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa have set up a Facebook group for ordained Anglican women. The group is intended to help women clergy to connect around issues that concern them, to form friendships across the globe, and to share news. If you have your own Facebook page, simply log in, search for 'Anglican Women Clergy' and request to join.

5th March 2010: International Women's Day celebrated by Churches in the Philippines (ECP) In the morning of 5 March 2010, the Ecumenical Women's Forum (EWF), a network of Filipino Protestant, Catholic and Muslim women's organisations, came together for a liturgical celebration of International Women's Day, in one of our parks here in Quezon City. About 150 women

and a few men, representing all member churches and organisations, were present - including the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP), represented by Francisca Bawayan, Esperanza Beleo and Zena Caytap.

This year's celebration focused on the theme: 'EWF Calls for Ecological Justice: Defend Patrimony'. Presentations on the oppression and subordination of women in the Philippines were depicted through biblico-theological reflections, cultural songs and dances and theatrical plays. This year's programme paid tribute to the struggle of women who have always been in the forefront of struggles and protest against the destruction of our ecological sources of sustenance.

Excerpts from a statement released to the various media by EWF, read:

We, women of faith from the Ecumenical Women's Forum, affirm the biblical imperative to uphold the sacred nature of all life and take great care of the whole of creation. We are called to exercise the profound option of the Christian faith, shared by other religious traditions, for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized ... Therefore, before us lies the difficult, but crucial task of cultivating awareness and building movements advocating and demanding for deep-seated transformations in our economic systems as well as the dismantling of patriarchal ideologies towards a truly eco-just world order. As weavers and defenders of life, we, women from the EWF, cannot but rise up to this challenge. On the occasion of the International Women's Day, we, women of faith, are called to solidarity with our struggling sisters in the other parts of the world. Together let us defend our patrimony and work unflinchingly for eco-justice.

(What would women of faith in your region put into a statement for International Women's day 2011? Why not talk about it now in your small groups.)

Women's World Day of Prayer March 2010, prepared by the women from the Cameroon

In the late afternoon of 5 March, the Church Women United of the Philippines (CWUP) - of which the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) is a founding member - celebrated the **World Day of Prayer 2010**, and the theme of the Worship Service was, 'Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God'. The service was held at the IFI (Iglesia Filipina Independiente) National Cathedral in Manila. About 100 women from the participating women organisations were present, including Francisca Bawayan and Esperanza Beleo for the ECP.

The women attending the service joined the Cameroonians in reflecting on Psalm 150 from the perspective of Cameroon and from our own country, the Philippines. The psalms contain "prayers for help and salvation, pleas for forgiveness, songs of thanksgiving for God's blessings and protection from enemies ..." It is in the psalms that we also learn of God's special concern for the poor and the powerless and of God's love and call for generosity and justice.

It was such a joyous celebration as the worship service's procession was accompanied by instrumental music as well as joyful women and young people singing altogether such hymns as, To God Be The Glory, and Wonderful Grace of Jesus.

Through this year's WDP, the women participants, together with the multitude of people around the world were in praise and thanksgiving of the fellowship they had. The service ended by clapping to the music of a song about this year's theme 'Let everything that has breath praise God'

SEYCHELLES

Seychelles was one of the many countries that joined in the prayers of the Women's World Day of Prayer. The organising team in our country are the women from the Roman Catholic Church "Mere des Famille" and the Mothers Union of the Anglican Church. However, the Service is also attended by people from other denominations. They are specially invited to the celebration each year.

The Service was held at St. Paul's Cathedral – the Anglican Church, as last year was in a Catholic Church. Women were dressed in colourful Cameroonian/African outfit, held out banners as they processed in the Church, lively singing the hymn "We are marching in the Light of God". A beautiful Cameroonian tablecloth was laid on the Altar and on each side of the Altar lay the Flag of Cameroon on the one end and Seychelles on the other. Women and young people took active part in the Service and the address was delivered by a former Member of Parliament. The hymns were joyfully sung. The Women's World Day of Prayer was well attended with a headcount of 170 approximately. The organising team did a good job to depict the service in a "Cameroonian style". The flag of Cameroon was specially sewn for this occasion. We look forward to the next Service, which will be prepared by the women of Chile.



Two of the women – with flags and in Cameroonian/African attire

News from Korea

Mrs. Phoebe Griswold visited Korea right after the "Consultation in Hong Kong" Nov. 2009. She had met women leaders in all three Dioceses: Seoul, Daejeon, Busan. She lectured in the meetings of women's group (MU, GFS), and Via Media which is a Bible and Spiritual program for lay people in the Diocese of Seoul. She talked about her visit to Korea in her blog. It was a fruitful meeting for us.

Council of Women's Organizations which was formed in accordance with ACC 13/31 and IAWN's suggestion and functioning as Women's Desk, hosted "The leadership Training Program" in Feb.19- March

25 for women leaders in Anglican church of Korea. Four priests include one women priest and two women (one from NCCK-National church Council of Korea, the other was IAWN link for Korea-Ruth Choi).

A Good news story from The Frontier News, Diocese of Peshawar, Church of Pakistan

Ms. Ghazala is a promising young Christian lady always ready to accept new challenges. She is well skilled and has opened her own Reproductive Health and Family Planning Clinic. She took a loan from the Diocesan Micro-Credit Scheme and started her Clinic. Ms. Ghazala at her Clinic.

Here is Ghazala's success story "I achieved management training in specific field of Reproductive Health and Family Planning from Karachi, and Bangkok. During my Field work in Gulbahar Colony, Peshawar city, majority of the women complained that they were unable to reach the centers, which are very far from their homes, and expressed their need to have a clinic in their own area. A landlady offered her newly built apartment, to be hired on reasonable rent. Keeping in view the demand of the neglected women and vague of the landlady, all these facts inspired me to give a serious thought to this proposal. I shared this with my friends, a Doctor and a Lady Health Visitor. We surveyed the area; my friends encouraged me to open my own clinic and agreed to offer their part time services. Another hurdle was the finances, my brother in law informed me about the Diocesan Micro Credit Scheme. After, having fulfilled all required formalities. I received a loan of Rupees Thirty thousand (Pak Rupees). Now, with the help of Diocesan Development office, I run my own responsive clinic of Reproductive Health and Family Clinic at Gulbahar Colony, Peshawar. I feel happy and contend by offering my services to the underprivileged women. It is also a source to uplift my own family, financially. My gratitude to the Diocese of Peshawar, for their kind assistance."



This lovely picture was taken at the United Nations Church Centre Anglican Worship. Were you there? Do you have any memories to share about this occasion? Send them to:

cynthia.dowdle@liverpool.anglican.org or write to Church & Society, Diocese of Liverpool, St James' House, 20 St James Road, Liverpool, L1 7BY, England

If you have comments or an item you would like to be considered for the next issue, which will be focussing on gender issues, please send them by email to cynthia.dowdle@liverpool.anglican.org by 1st November 2010.