

PACIFIC WOMEN'S WATCH (NEW ZEALAND) INC.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2010-2011

Introduction

It is with much pleasure that we report on the activities of Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) (PWW(NZ)) during the past year. Our programme has been particularly busy and productive. A record of concrete outcomes has taken our action to a higher level of achievement. Highlights have included the celebration of our tenth anniversary at the half-Day Conference last November entitled *Celebrating 10 Years of Diversity – People and Action for Gender Justice*, coordinating a tremendously successful side-event at the 55th session of the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women *Claiming Space for Pacific Women in the International Arena*, receiving the Government final report on our Petition on forced underage marriage and elaborating a Strategic Plan.

Tenth Anniversary Celebration

Our fifth Annual conference recognized our first decade of development as a leading organization for women. Under the title *Celebrating 10 Years of Diversity – People and Action for Gender Justice* we brought together the strands from ten years of developing our core function, monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the status of women, especially New Zealand women. The review of milestones in our first ten years was timely, allowing us look back over successful initiatives and to plan for the future. Held on 20 November 2011 the conference featured as keynote speaker Carmel Sepuloni, Principal Advisor, Auckland, to the Children's Commissioner. Workshops on aspects of diversity in New Zealand included Social Diversity, Economic Wellness and Deprivation; Diversity of Sexual Preference; Youth Issues Requiring Legal Intervention; Diversity of Health Issues for Disabled Women and Girls; and Communication on Health – the Multicultural Dimension.

The conference also recognized Universal Children's Day and the 21st Anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our ongoing concern for the well-being of the girl child fitted well with these anniversaries.

United Nations 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York 27 February – 9 March 2011

This year we were able to participate vigorously in the name of PWW(NZ) to take up our special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Jane Prichard led a delegation which included Beverley Turner and Isabella Tedcastle, PWW(NZ) committee members and our colleague Rosslyn Noonan, Chief Human Rights Commissioner of New Zealand.

We organized an NGO side-event on the second day entitled *Claiming Space for Pacific Women in the International Arena* thereby pushing forward our mandate to make the voice of Pacific Island women heard more loudly at the international level. Jane moderated the speakers' panel and subsequent discussion to plan strategies to take forward the advocacy on ensuring that the Pacific Islands gain at least one seat on the Executive Board of UN Women in the election due next year. Speakers were Rosslyn Noonan, Chief Human Rights Commissioner in New Zealand, Emmy Galama, UN Habitat and Huairou Commission, Tara Chetty, Fiji and Charlotte Bunch, Founding Director Centre for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University. Charlotte drove the NGO GEAR (Gender Equality Architecture Reform) Campaign in New York which spear-headed the successful advocacy for the formation of a single UN entity for women, UN Women, launched at this year's CSW. Robust discussion by the full gathering present guaranteed the workshop was a triumph, placing Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) at the forefront of advocacy by NGOs.

A highlight of the session was the impressive evening launch of UN Women, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women which replaced UNIFEM, INSTRAW, The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI). PWW(NZ had lobbied vigorously for support by the New Zealand Government for the establishment of a single entity through GEAR discussions for Auckland women in 2008 and 2009. At CSW the newly appointed Executive Director of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet impressed with her plans and also her availability throughout the session to connect with women to hear their hopes and aspirations for the future. We were able to attend discussions with her to bring concerns from all of the UN regions as she began to prepare a Strategic Plan for the first two to three years of operation. Jane Prichard was able to bring a question to the keynote speakers' panel at the NGO Discussion Day prior to the session opening on the urgent issue of a lack of a seat for the Pacific on the UN Executive Board, thereby placing it firmly on the agenda.

Petition on Forced and Underage Marriage

Following consideration of the Report of the Justice and Electoral Committee on our Petition in the name of Jane Prichard and 46 others arising from our Fourth Annual Conference in November 2009 the Government delivered its Final Report and conclusion. The view was that further legislation is unlikely to have a significant impact on the incidence of forced marriage but it "will review the relevant legislation to identify whether further legislative change would increase the protection provided to those at risk of forced marriage, and, if so, how changes may be progressed." The Government also considered education and building relationships of trust to be important. We have urged prompt action on the review of legislation which we see as the vital step in protecting those currently at risk of such marriage.

Other Activities

Discussion Forum, Monday 16 August 2010

Carmel Sepuloni, Principal Adviser, Auckland, to the Commissioner for Children spoke on *Effects of Welfare Reforms on Single Parents* and led the discussion which added to our work on the continuing impoverishment of New Zealand children.

Strategic Plan for Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand)

A small group of Committee members drew up a Draft Strategic Plan for our consideration and discussion. The Plan, now ready to be presented at this 2011 Annual General Meeting, will point us to the future and will focus on measurable outcomes from our programme.

63rd Annual UN Department of Public Information/NGO Conference - *Advance Global Health, Achieve the MDGs*

Jane Prichard was invited to participate and since the conference was in a location near to New Zealand she was pleased to take up the opportunity on 30 August – 1 September 2010. The aim was to streamline communication and coordination of agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in activities to improve the health of people, especially the impoverished and those living in inaccessible areas. High on the agenda was the improvement of maternal and child health. Barriers impeding the delivery of quality health care within the many projects currently being undertaken were reviewed. The problems involved in translating the results of health research to improved outcomes on the ground were the subject of much discussion. The conference drew a large audience from every region of the world with expert speakers from a variety of health disciplines. It was a privilege to be part of those discussions. Many areas of need were identified, some of which might be where PWW(NZ) could make an intervention.

Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW)

Isabella Tedcastle has continued as a Steering Committee member of APWW throughout the year, attending a Committee Meeting during CSW in New York. We thank her for representing us on this regional Watch to which we link.

International Council of Women's Fourth Asia-Pacific Regional Council Seminar and Training Workshop 7-9 November 2010 in Auckland

Tremendous support to arrangements for the Seminar were given by PWW(NZ) Committee members who took up positions on the Local Committee. Their many hours of effort helped to ensure the success of the event. As President of the Regional Council, I could not have organized it without their outstanding assistance. Thank you sincerely to those involved in the work.

Conclusion

My thanks are due to the Committee members who have this year all given of their best to ensure the success of our events and activities. We work at the highest level of affairs for women both in New Zealand, regionally and internationally. Deputy Convenor Beverley Turner has given tremendous support and advice. Special thanks are also due to Secretary Jaclyn Bonnici for recording our meetings and Treasurer Nicky Spicer for her very efficient financial management. Thank you, too, to Christine Knock for standing as Acting Treasurer while Nicky is overseas.

We finish with a reminder from Michelle Bachelet at the UN Women launch when she spoke of the hard work to realise the dream of millions of women and girls ‘to have a global “champion” at the UN who can lead the efforts to translate their hopes of a better world into reality.’

All who work for the betterment of society are striving towards that same goal. Pacific Women’s Watch (New Zealand) joins wholeheartedly this campaign to realise the dreams of women and their families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Prichard'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

Jane Prichard QSO

20 July 2011