

PACIFIC WOMEN'S WATCH (NEW ZEALAND) INC.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2009-2010

Introduction

We are delighted to report that during the year 2009-2010 Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand), PWW(NZ), reached two significant milestones in its development.

After conducting workshops throughout New Zealand in April – June 2009 to gather data for the 15th anniversary review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action PWW(NZ) prepared and published the New Zealand NGO Country Report in December last year. At the regular session of the United Nations NGO Committee in New York 25 January – 3 February this year PWW(NZ) was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to be ratified at the annual ECOSOC session currently in progress in New York.

Beijing + 15 Review and Appraisal

From the results of some 15 workshops and almost 500 responses to the Questionnaire *How are We Doing- New Zealand Women Together* we were able in 2009 to make longitudinal comparisons across three five-year intervals on how women were faring in their everyday lives. The longitudinal measure was the exciting outcome of the recent review which took a sampling during the same snap shot of time, April-June, as was used in 1999 and 2004. The results indicated that women were still disadvantaged economically in terms of spending money and being able to save for retirement, continued to suffer undiminished levels of violence and abuse especially in their own homes and faced many workplace issues including a steady 12 per cent gap in rates of pay compared to men.

For the fifteen-year review we also developed a questionnaire to gain data on women's access to health information as well as a Pilot Questionnaire on issues specific to girls. These questionnaires will be further developed as we continue to take up the challenge of gathering new data on women. Many organizations contributed to the data. We were again mindful that the review should reflect the views and concerns of women at the edges of society. Through our wide networks we were able engage with women at every socio-economic level. Women from many different cultures now calling New Zealand home were also encouraged to participate.

The Beijing + 15 New Zealand NGO Country Report was submitted for the review taken at the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in New York 1-12 March this year. Two members of PWW(NZ) attended CSW, Beverley Turner, Vice-Convenor, and Jane Prichard, Convenor. It was a very rewarding experience. The Report will provide valuable information for NGO reporting to the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) Committee later this year when the New Zealand Government's seventh report is due to be submitted.

We wish to acknowledge a generous grant from the Human Rights Commission to cover the costs of printing the New Zealand NGO Country Report

Data Collection on Portrayal of Women in the Media

Pauline Bennett, a PWW(NZ) Committee member, led a special project to collect data from newspapers at regular intervals during the last year on the portrayal of women in the media. She was very ably assisted by Joy Lewis, one of our members. Reporting by women journalists and topics relating to women and girls across a wide range of issues and topics were reviewed over a six-month period. We thank them for their effort to bring new information which will add to our future work of reporting on the status of New Zealand women.

Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council

Jane Prichard represented PWW(NZ) early this year at the regular session of the United Nations NGO Committee in New York. We had strong support for our application from the New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations as it was felt we were in a position to make a valuable contribution to the work of the ECOSOC. The recently published Report of our *November 2009 Conference Young Women of Tomorrow – Changes and Challenges and the PWW(NZ) Beijing + 15 NZ NGO Country Report* were highly regarded by members of the NGO Committee, a number of whom were gratified to be presented with copies.

In reply to the Committee's question on how our small resources could allow us to serve effectively the ECOSOC and its programme of work it is of interest to record the statement of our core activities that was presented to support our reply:

PWW(NZ) principally provides an advocacy and communication capability for New Zealand NGOs. Accordingly we play a niche role among NGOs in New Zealand as other NGOs have an operational focus. PWW(NZ) focuses on skills training and communication e.g. data collection and analysis and report writing and we have the sole responsibility for major NGO national reports under international agreements (Beijing Platform for Action, MDGs). Accordingly we do not have, or need, large operational budgets – the main resource we have is our people, and their skills, which they provide on a voluntary basis.

Our constituent NGOs have larger budgets and fund many of our core activities because of the value they place on our umbrella role. We are unique in working with all age groups and cultures.

Our special consultative status, expected to be confirmed this month, carries the mandate that we will continue these core functions and that we will provide a platform through which the voices of women in Pacific Island countries will be heard more clearly at the international level. We are committed to putting this mandate into practice.

Water Tank Project in Taveuni Island, Fiji

In November 2009 we were able to provide funding of \$1,600 to the Rotary Club of Taveuni Island for the purchase of a large water tank for installation at a pre-school in one of the villages. Provision of a reliable and safe water supply makes operation of the pre-school much more secure.

Annual Conference 21 November 2009

The Conference theme *Young Women of Tomorrow – Changes and Challenges* attracted much interest with over 80 attending this outstanding event. The Keynote address

Marginalisation of Girls – the Girl Child was given by Nura Taefi, a Human Rights lawyer and member of the PWW(NZ) Committee. Other presentations were: Sexualisation of Children; People Trafficking – Impact on Women and Girls; Violence against the Girl Child; Issues of Consent for Medical Treatment of Children; and Clash of Cultures. Outcomes from the Conference informed the NZ NGO Country Report for Beijing + 15. Information from the Conference is also guiding NGO reporting for 2010 reporting on CEDAW.

Half-Day Conference Report Back on the Beijing + 15 Review

Entitled *Beijing + 15 - The Way Forward: Gains, Gaps, Challenges and New Issues for Women and Girls* we heard from Dr Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop how, over a period of some years, the women in Pacific Island countries had come together to map out and formulate a Pacific Plan of Action to take them forward in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for action. Jane Prichard and Beverley Turner from PWW(NZ) reported on the review taken at the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York. With the very short outcome declaration being agreed by governments on the second day of the session NGOs felt the review had fallen short of the expectation that it would move forward substantially the process of implementation. There is still much to accomplish in action to meet the objectives in all of the twelve critical issues. We still await any plans to hold a Fifth World Women's Conference, so necessary to bring renewed energy to the women's movement.

Participation of PWW(NZ) in Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW) Activities

Jane Prichard continued in the role of APWW Steering Committee Member, but because of responsibilities as a Vice-President of the International Council of Women she was unable to attend the Asia Pacific Beijing + 15 Forum in Quezon City, Philippines held 22-24 October 2009. Because PWW(NZ) were very much involved in the review process Beverley Turner attended the Forum as proxy for Jane. The Forum which took the theme *Weaving Wisdom, Confronting Crises, Forging the Future* attracted over 600 women from the region and prepared input to the United Nations Beijing + 15 Review.

At the APWW Committee Meeting in New York held during the Commission on the Status of Women Jane attended as Steering Committee Member and Beverley Turner attended an alternate. At the PWW(NZ) Annual General Meeting held 17-21 June in Chiang Rai, Thailand, we were not represented as the political situation had been so unstable prior to the meeting which was to have been held at least in part, in Bangkok, that we were advised against travelling. Because Jane had been a Steering committee Member since APWW restructured in 1999 she decided to take a break. We therefore proposed Isabella Tedcastle, a PWW(NZ) member of long standing as a member of the Steering Committee and she was elected at the AGM to serve 2010-2012. Jane continues as the alternate.

Other Activities

The PWW(NZ) web site has been further developed thanks to the effort of Rachel Lewis, our web mistress. **Signage has been placed** on the side of the St Davids Hall near to the office we share with the Bridgebuilders Trust.

Following our last AGM **Dr Marilyn Waring**, Professor at the Institute of Public Policy, Auckland University of Technology, agreed to be a **PWW(NZ) Patron**. She will continue in that role in the coming year.

We continued to support the UN GEAR (Gender Equality Architecture Reform) Campaign to establish a single entity for gender and women's empowerment. After some four years of advocacy effort the UN General Assembly resolution, agreed to on 30 June, was finally adopted by the General Assembly on Friday 2 June. It established UN Women to consolidate four small fragmented agencies (DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM) working on women's issues, with much duplication, into a single entity. UN Women will be headed by an Under Secretary-General expected to be appointed by September this year, and will be operational by January 2011. We celebrate with the world's women the creation of UN Women to give women and girls the strong, unified voice they deserve on the world stage.

Future Programme

In the coming year PWW(NZ) will focus on

- action to enhance our support of the UN ECOSOC within our mandate of special consultative status – attendance at CSW 2011 and presentation in a side event showcasing the empowerment of young women
- collection of new data on women and girls
- facilitation of discussion forums
 - (1) 26 July 2010 - critique of Government Draft CEDAW Report
 - (2) 16 August 2010 – Carmel Sepuloni M.P.: *The Impact of Welfare Changes on Single Parents*

Conclusion

The year 2009-2010 has seen some outstanding achievements for PWW(NZ). We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to be more fully involved in UN ECOSOC activities. Our annual Conference on the Saturday nearest to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls and White Ribbon Day, 25 November, is now well established. We are committed to advocacy for implementation of CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Our programme of action can only be carried forward by the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of the PWW(NZ) Committee. My thanks go to them for their unfailing energy in supporting our rigorous agenda. I wish especially to thank Beverley Turner, PWW(NZ) Deputy Convenor, for her tireless support, Christine Knock who is retiring as Treasurer after two years of intense effort to ensure our finances are on a sound footing and Pauline Bennett, Manisha Saini and Debbie Hager who are retiring as Committee Members.

Our wider network of members provide the solid foundation for all that we achieve. Thank you!

In the next year we will move forward with energy and vision to enhance and report on the status of women.