



# International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN)

Report to ACC-16, Lusaka, April 2016

This Report outlines IAWN's work since ACC-15, and indicates achievements and challenges still to be faced.

## **Intentional Discipleship: Achieving Gender Justice**

Genesis 1:27 tells us that women and men are equally made in the divine image. When being woman is experienced as oppression – whether spiritual, domestic, economic or cultural - we are challenged to be co-creators in God's transformative work to reclaim just relationships between men and women, boys and girls. Gender justice is critical to poverty reduction, to climate justice, and to the human flourishing which is God's will for all God's children.

The IAWN Steering Group celebrates the encouraging progress made across the Anglican Communion to address the key challenges to gender justice. We applaud the [commitment of the ACC to gender justice](#) expressed through Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) Resolutions 13.31 and 14.33 calling for equal representation of women in decision-making bodies; 15.07 on gender-based and domestic violence; and 15.10 on the trafficking of persons.

We especially welcome and celebrate the appointment of the Revd Terrie Robinson as the Director for Women in Church and Society.

## **IAWN's work since ACC-15**

**Consultations** provided opportunities for sharing experience, celebration and challenges. They helped strengthen women's ministries globally and energised women locally to be influential practitioners and policymakers as a living out of faithful discipleship.

The **IAWN Steering Group Consultation** in November 2013 in London, UK, strengthened our ability to work cohesively and increased our understanding of how to support IAWN's Provincial Links engaged in taking forward ACC Resolutions 13.31; 14.33; 15.07; 15.10.

**IAWN UK & Ireland Provincial Links Conference** 8-11 September 2014 in London, UK. Provincial Links from the Church of Ireland, Church in Wales, Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church met with representatives of the IAWN Steering Group. We decided contextual approaches to taking forward Resolutions 15.07 and 15.10. We hosted a humbling and informative skype call with Shafeeqa Dawani, Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

**IAWN South Asia Regional Consultation** 6-8 October 2015 in Hyderabad, India with participants from the Church of Bangladesh, Church of Ceylon, Church of North India, Church of South India. Unfortunately women from the Church of Pakistan and the Church of the Province of Myanmar were unable to attend because their visa applications were refused. Women leaders in church ministries explored gender, theology and the church, looking specifically at power and power-holders, gender-based violence, and women's economic empowerment. Together they developed a '[Message to Our Church Leaders and the Anglican Consultative Council](#)' which we will bring to ACC-16.

For a full report and resources from the IAN South Asia consultation, see <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/iawn-south-asia-consultation.aspx>

## Recurring Annual Events

- **UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):** Anglican women from around the Communion actively challenge gender injustice through participation in the annual sessions of CSW where faith-based organisations are increasingly perceived as key in the achievement of gender justice, recognising that discrimination is rooted in negative social and cultural norms. Attendance embeds IAWN understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5, *Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls*.

The Anglican Communion delegation to the 59<sup>th</sup> session of CSW (2015) released a [Statement addressed to the ACC](#) and challenging the whole Anglican Communion to step up to the challenge of SDG 5 by 2030 and to take seriously the Church's mission to stimulate and support the social change required to achieve such a goal. We commend this statement to ACC-16 for endorsement.

- **International Women's Day**, 8 March.
- **16 Days of Activism to End Gender-based Violence** [programmes held across the Anglican Communion](#), 25 November – 10 December.

## Communications

This Steering Group believes good communication is critical to moving the gender justice agenda forward around the Communion. We have met regularly over Skype and reported to each Standing Committee meeting. We have also been committed to:

- the regular production of IAWN Newsletters. See <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/newsletters.aspx>
- maintaining a 'closed' [IAWN Facebook group](#) (started in 2013) which currently has 486 members
- ongoing updating of the IAWN website <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org>.

## Collaborative Work

We have sought opportunities to work with other Networks and agencies. For example, we joined with the International Anglican Family Network to produce a Newsletter on Church responses to human trafficking:

[http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/media/106026/iafn\\_church\\_response\\_trafficking.pdf](http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/media/106026/iafn_church_response_trafficking.pdf).

## IAWN Provincial Links

We wish to express our gratitude to IAWN's Provincial Links' continuing commitment and enthusiasm. The Provincial Links, nominated by Primates, are central to IAWN effectively promoting gender justice within Provinces. It has been a joy to support and encourage the Provincial Links through the above-noted good communications. We have requested each Province to consider including financial support of IAWN through provincial budgets, so far with little success.

## Achievements

The Provincial Links have noted the following amongst many achievements:

- Women's leadership training often supported and initiated by church leaders.

- Increased numbers of women in lay leadership.
- Decision to admit women to the Episcopate (Church of England), and the respectful processes of this decision-making.
- Responses of churches to trafficking and other forms of gendered violence.
- Increased level of excellent resources for the elimination of family violence.

### **Challenges Going Forward**

- Ending rape and sexual violence as a weapon and legacy of war.
- Addressing the multiple challenges for women in multi-faith cultures where Christians are in a minority.
- Increasing awareness of the Church's role in combating harmful attitudes and providing safe space for victims of gendered violence.
- Increasing the numbers of women in decision-making bodies – in churches and in civil society.
- Increasing further exploration and promotion of equal and respectful relationships between men and women, boys and girls.
- Promoting theological discussions among women, discerning their identity in Christ,
- Understanding the interrelationship of gender, economics and poverty.

See <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/around-the-world.aspx> for reports from the IAWN Provincial Links.

### **Conclusion**

We call upon all members of the ACC, as leaders within the worldwide Anglican Communion, to use your position and influence to help make gender justice a reality. You have a particular role in the achievement of gender justice within your own Province: monitoring the full implementation of ACC resolutions associated with gender justice, including equal numbers of women in provincial decision-making bodies; supporting your IAWN Provincial Link, or securing the nomination of a Link if one has not been chosen.

Because we are disciples of Jesus Christ, gender justice challenges us all to be co-creators in God's transforming work. [Luke 4:21](#) reminds us that the time to do this is now!

The current **IAWN Steering Group** concludes its term of office at ACC-16. We hold the meeting of ACC 16 in our prayers.

For more information see <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports.aspx> and <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/newsletters.aspx>

*Report submitted by the IAWN Steering Group: Ann Skamp, Coordinator (Australia), Elaine Cameron, Newsletters, (Scotland), Margaret Dempster, Treasurer (Canada) Pumla Titus (Southern Africa), Meenakshi Das (North India), Claudette Kigeme (Burundi), Elenor Lawrence (West Indies, until mid-2015), Kim Robey (The Episcopal Church, until mid 2014).*