

International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) report to ACC-15, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand

'Anglican Women: Speaking globally, Acting locally!'

From Priscilla Julie (Seychelles, Indian Ocean), IAWN Coordinator, 2006-2012

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, from the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN).

During the period 2009 – 2012, IAWN has continued its advocacy work on issues of concern to Anglican women across the Communion. The Network looks to provide a prophetic voice in response to our faith in Jesus Christ and the Gospel as it is echoed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – with particular reference to MDG 3: Gender equality and the empowerment of women, and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

The IAWN website at www.iawn.org and the email listserv are resourceful and informative tools in the sharing of reports, resources, stories and matters of concern from Anglican women across the Communion.

IAWN provides reports to meetings of the Standing Committee and the Anglican Consultative Council, highlighting matters of concern to women, while members of IAWN have led and participated in numerous activities regionally and internationally to ensure women are influential and equal participants throughout the Anglican Communion.

However, IAWN is yet to receive full representation from all Anglican provinces, with a few Primates yet to nominate their Provincial Link to IAWN.

The Provincial Links have recently elected, via email, a new Steering Group for 2012-2015: Ann Skamp (Australia) as Coordinator, Elenor Lawrence (West Indies) as Secretary, Elaine Cameron (Scotland), Meenakshi Das (North India), Margaret Dempster (Canada), Kim Robey (TEC) and Pumla Titus (Southern Africa). I trust that Ann and her team will be accorded the same support, prayers and encouragement that the retiring Steering Group has enjoyed.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Primates for their time, prayers, support and understanding granted to me whilst in office; to Taimalelagi Matalavea (our IAWN Patron) for her continuing encouragement and wisdom; to the Revd Terrie Robinson, Anglican Communion Networks' Coordinator, for all her assistance; and to all members of the Steering Group, the Provincial Links and all Anglican sisters and brothers for their prayers, encouragement, support and fellowship.

From Ann Skamp (Australia), IAWN Coordinator, 2012-2015

The new Steering Group deeply appreciates the faithfulness and commitment of so many as IAWN continues to encourage and strengthen Anglican women's mission and ministry in God's world. On behalf of IAWN we give thanks for and especially recognise all that Priscilla Julie and Alice Medcof (Canada) have contributed to the strong and vibrant Network of today.

This report to ACC-15 highlights achievements of Anglican women through the grace of God and brings for notice gospel justice issues which particularly concern women and girls, from gender sensitization and equal representation in the decision-making bodies of the Church, to violence against women, human trafficking and extreme poverty – all matters raised in the Reports of the IAWN Provincial Links across the Communion. For more information please refer to the website where the full text of each Provincial Link Report are published.

Once again, IAWN welcomes the decision to include the presence of the Anglican Networks at the ACC meeting, giving us the opportunity to share our work and concerns. IAWN will offer draft resolutions to ACC-15, including in conjunction with other Networks, and with briefing papers that will be available at the Networks' display and presentations.

Activities of IAWN 2009 – 2012: Speaking globally!

IAWN contributions within the Anglican Communion and wider world include:

- Upgrading of the IAWN website www.iawn.org including uploading of resources and information, issues and stories on provincial pages and a downloadable brochure.
- Regular reporting from IAWN to meetings of the Standing Committee.
- Annual participation at UNCSW and sponsoring of parallel events by the Anglican women attendees.
- Encouragement and resourcing of participation in the White Ribbon Day programme and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence each year, 25 November – 10 December.
- International Women's Day marked and celebrated as a time of reflection on the role and place of women in our societies, each year on 8 March.
- IAWN representation at the Consultation on Trafficking in Hong Kong, November 2009.
- Commencement in December 2009 of the production of a twice yearly IAWN Newsletter, emailed to members and available online.
- IAWN representation at the meeting of the Anglican Peace and Justice Network, Geneva, March 2010.
- IAWN representation at the International Anglican Family Network Oceania Consultation, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, November, 2010.
- Submission to the proposal for the Global Anglican Relief and Development Alliance, February 2010.
- IAWN Statement issued on the matter of injustice of blasphemy laws and encouragement for the Statement to be sent to Church and community leaders, November 2010.
- Distribution of Primates' Letter to the Churches on Gender-based Violence, January, 2011.
- Submission to the review of the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations led by Bishop Michael Doe, November 2011.
- Meeting of members of retiring and current IAWN Steering Groups, Auckland, October 2012.

Activities of IAWN 2009 – 2012: Acting locally!

The many activities and events at provincial level included:

- Follow up, data collection and presentation of gender audits to provincial synods on gender representation on decision-making bodies (Ireland, Philippines, Scotland).
- Formation of a Women's Issues Forum which meets regularly and provides advice and training to the wider Church (England).
- IAWN representation at the Women's World Triennial International Feminist Conference, including hosting a parallel event on homelessness (Canada, 2011).
- Highlighting matters of concern to Anglican women in presentations to meetings of provincial synods (Canada, England, Ireland, Japan, Scotland).
- Tenth anniversary of the ordination of women (Korea, 2011).
- Involvement with the 'Called to Serve' report to The Episcopal Church.
- Provision of employment and integration programme for women defecting from North Korea (Korea).
- An International Women's Day Conference held by the Episcopal Women of the Province of Jerusalem & The Middle East.
- Promotion of resolutions to eliminate gender based violence and address the issue of trafficking at provincial synod (TEC, 2012).
- Twentieth anniversary of the ordination of women as priests (Australia, 2012).

Priority issues

The following are considered by IAWN to be most pressing and current matters of concern for Anglican women and for the whole Communion as we seek to witness to the Christ among us.

Gender-based violence

The universality of gender-based violence has caused IAWN to prioritise this issue. Violence which targets women and girls is present in all our communities whether we are part of a developing or developed nation, in some places as a weapon of war, in others taking the form of domestic or family violence. It can be physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual or economic. It can be obvious or hidden; recognised or unrecognised; rationalised on cultural grounds or simply denied. Factors such as illiteracy and access to education and economic security have been identified as exacerbating factors for women remaining in vulnerable positions.

The Church's response has been varied. Esperanza Beleo (Philippines) writes: 'Unfortunately the church is not considered as a haven as the local priest is known to the family, especially the perpetrators of such violence.' Some provinces have developed programmes of gender awareness and sensitivity for their church leaders and how better to respond to gender and home-based violence in their own churches and communities. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Anglican Church has been instrumental in addressing gender-based violence as a weapon of war. The Diocese of Liverpool (England) has a designated Domestic Abuse Advisor providing advice and awareness training.

A first step in seriously addressing the issue is the further promotion of and participation in White Ribbon Day (25 November) and the 16 Days of Activism (25 November-10 December) by every Province, Diocese and church. Such programmes afford us as Christian people the opportunity to speak to what is necessary for healthy and wholesome relationships. Resources are posted on the IAWN website.

Despite reporting a growing trend in gender-based violence in their communities, many Provincial Links noted a growing awareness and preparedness to speak out by church leaders across the Communion. There is clearly a challenge for us all to continue to develop some clear thinking and teaching and modelling of right relationships under God, including the work of providing worship resources which, for example, embrace inclusive language. Liturgical resources that embrace the experiences of women as well as men, of girls as well as boys are needed. We can never underestimate the power of language when we meet in worship.

The Primates' Letter to the Churches, January 2011

Anglican women across the Communion have strongly welcomed the Primates' Letter to the Churches, sent from their 2011 meeting in Dublin, concerning the nature and prevalence of gender-based violence and their commitment for the Church to be active in its elimination. In particular, the acknowledgement of the Church's 'own part in perpetuating oppressive attitudes to women' has been welcomed, as have the commitments by the Primates to work together with other groups in the Anglican Communion to eliminate violence – especially violence which targets women and girls.

IAWN sees this Letter and the areas identified for action as priority work not only for the Network but for the whole Communion. We look forward to working in partnership with the all the Churches to implement the stated commitments. In doing so, our hope is that the Anglican Communion will be recognised widely as being serious in exhibiting best practice in the elimination of violence that is gender-based as part of the transformative and restorative Gospel we preach.

IAWN also recognises that in taking up this major work, we will need continually to monitor and correct our own thinking, our own speaking and our own practices which can contribute to the perpetuation of violence against women and children.

See <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/documents.cfm#s3> for the text of the Primates' Letter in English, French and Spanish.

Trafficking

Trafficking also is a universal issue, whether our communities are sources of victims or sources of perpetrators. It is the second most lucrative illegal activity across the world. Trafficking can be rural or urban based and takes many different forms, such as drug carrying recruitment, overseas domestic workers, and false employment offers masking sex trafficking. It often only comes to light when a victim has escaped and reported to authorities.

Many IAWN Provincial Links request an effective response from the Churches. As a receiving country for victims of trafficking the Anglican women of Japan ask that the Communion be involved with the wider community in awareness raising and actively seeking the end of such practices. Elaine Cameron (Scotland) suggests the need for the Communion to make a theological response to trafficking and associated activities.

The Episcopal Church in the Philippines has participated in government awareness programmes and IAWN Canada provides specific support to those who work to assist women who have been trafficked. Resources to raise awareness and find ways of addressing the issue of trafficking have been developed by The Episcopal Church and also by the Diocese of Melbourne (Australia). Information about these and other resources can be found on the IAWN website.

IAWN is working with the Revd Catherine Graham, Coordinator of the Anglican Refugee and Migrant Network (ARMN) to bring a joint resolution to ACC-15.

Equal representation in decision-making bodies in the Churches

Resolutions ACC-13/31 and ACC-14/33 already indicate the commitment of the Anglican Communion to equal representation of women and men in decision-making bodies across the Communion. Provincial Links reported a noticeable, albeit slow, improvement in achieving this, and the need for continued monitoring. Many Links reported rates of around 30 per cent representation by women in provincial councils and synods. Other provinces where there exist strong cultural barriers to having women on decision-making bodies reported rates below 20 per cent, and for some women they have a seat and voice but no voting authority. Rates of full, equal participation are higher at parish and diocesan levels in most provinces.

Leadership training and development, gender awareness, and sensitivity programmes have been developed in some provinces as resources to assist more representative membership on councils and other bodies. Even where equal representation has increased in some decision-making bodies of a province, Provincial Links reported that the stereotyping of certain roles in church structures – particularly finance – were still barriers to women and showed the need to challenge outmoded perceptions of women's abilities and leadership styles. Provinces may also need to address the working model of church workers at all levels to include a level of flexibility in expectations and demands in order not to preclude women from roles. Consideration may need to be given to a quota system that is supported by the above strategies.

Ruth Choi (Korea) has signalled that the way the role and place of women is seen within the church may need to change, for example, more appointments of women in paid staff leadership positions in provincial offices, theological colleges, etc. Encouraging women to apply for positions and resourcing them to do so have been named by Provincial Links as issues in Canada, Central Africa, and Japan.

Provinces such as Bangladesh, Japan and Korea have developed 'women's desks' at provincial level, while others, such as The Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Church of the Philippines, have lost these facilities.

IAWN strongly suggests that a regular reporting system on equal representation in provincial and ACC decision-making bodies form an integral part of provincial reporting to each meeting of the ACC.

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)

2014 will mark the 10th anniversary of Anglican women from every province being invited by the Anglican Communion Office at the UN (New York) to form the Anglican Communion delegation to UNCSW. The ongoing effect on ministry and mission by those who have attended cannot be underestimated.

Provincial Links all reported on the attendees' experience of a new confidence in, and understanding of the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the ministry and role of the Churches of the Anglican Communion in every part of the world; a new insight into the universality of our situations, concerns, hopes and responsibilities; and a new appreciation of the connectedness and partnership opportunities between Christian women and government entities and other civil society groups.

In a lasting and continuous way, attendance at UNCSW has been powerful and important in developing voice and leadership, giving women confidence in our faith and understanding the capacity for the Gospel to bring real transformation to the world and the communities in which we live. As attendees have brought back to their communities examples of best practice and knowledge to develop practical strategies, they have also been able to take up opportunities to pursue partnerships with other organisations.

Faith-based non-governmental groups such as the Anglican Communion delegation bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the UN and have become highly valued contributors and sought after and respected partners in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as set out in MDG 3 and the BPfA.

Church leaders who have followed up the attendance of women from their province have seen the continuing worth of the experience and the engagement of these women in local programmes. Our IAWN Newsletters highlight these outcomes. IAWN Provincial Links and the Steering Group ask this meeting of the ACC to consider the value of Anglican women's continuing attendance at UNCSW with all its missional and ministry implications and consider how the Communion can help financially resource the programme.

Gender budgeting

In many ways a reading of a budget will illustrate where the priority lies for an organisation. This was the message of UNCSW 52 in 2008 where the theme was 'Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women'. Anglican women attending UNCSW 52 stated:

We believe that the Church has a moral imperative to join with the United Nations by committing to the equitable distribution of resources between men and women within our church community. It can then become a model which the private business sector, governments and other institutions might follow.

Maud Patten, Provincial Link for the Indian Ocean, met with her Archbishop after attending UNCSW 52 and now reports how the church has responded by employing principles of gender budgeting. Such gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) can be achieved by careful and intentional planning and programming in the budget processes of provinces, dioceses, parishes and other church entities. In seeking gender equality in distribution of financial and other resources, churches can display a proactive commitment to gender equality and an end to economic discrimination.

IAWN encourages all church bodies to implement gender-responsive budgeting and has sourced further information and resources which will be available at ACC-15 at the Network's display as well as on the IAWN website.

Indigenous women

IAWN wishes to record its full support of the Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN) and especially issues of concern for Indigenous women. We fully support the building of relationships which acknowledge and honour the 'otherness' of people from different backgrounds, and which recognise and incorporate positive practices from other cultures.

Provincial Links from Australia and Canada have raised concerns about the isolation of many Indigenous women and the lack of facilities and services especially in the areas of violence and health. IAWN looks forward to working with AIN to find more effective ways to address those matters and others of concern for Indigenous women.

Regional priority issues

In addition to the above, IAWN Provincial Links have identified the following urgent and emerging issues in their regions.

Christians minorities living in non-Christian societies

Provincial Links from Bangladesh, North India and Pakistan increasingly report on the every day struggles and fear faced by Christian minorities in their countries. Women are especially vulnerable to harassment and violence in these situations.

The Anglican Communion has been blessed by the courage and journalistic work of Ayra Inderyas of the Church of Pakistan.

Wellbeing and Healthcare programmes

Joy Mumbi, Provincial Link for Central Africa, has reported on poverty elimination projects in Zambia. She also reports on diocesan-based training programmes for care givers in HIV/AIDS,

TB primary health care and the prevention and treatment of malaria to ensure better health outcomes.

In the Philippines, where the rate of HIV infection has been increasing, in part because of larger numbers of Filipino citizens working overseas in jobs or in regions with high rates of infection, the Church has formed partnerships with government programmes. The development of theological resources for use in parishes is addressing awareness raising, supporting people living with HIV/AIDS, and working towards elimination of discrimination of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Many regions report the need for education for sexual health targeted at adolescent girls and boys as a way to reduce unwanted pregnancy in girls.

Women in rural areas

Rural women everywhere bear an extra level of disempowerment. This includes rural women in developed countries – even if their disempowerment is more subtle and unnoticed than in developing countries.

Women in disasters

The Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011 have highlighted the high level of hardship experienced by women in the aftermath of such disasters.

Ageing issues

Ageing populations, particularly in the more developed countries, have highlighted an added burden on older women with regard to economic disadvantage including increased poverty and in some cases an increase in vulnerability to violence.

2012 – 2015: Moving into the future

As IAWN and its Steering Group move into the next triennium our priority work will be based on the issues already highlighted above:

- Ensuring that IAWN is an effective voice for the encouragement and strengthening of women's ministries, and that women are influential and equal participants throughout the Anglican Communion and the world.
- Advocating for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence in our homes, communities and nations, including trafficking.
- Working with the whole church to facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring of the commitments for training, advocacy and resourcing as set out in the Primates' Letter to the Churches on Gender-based violence.
- Promoting and monitoring the fulfilment of Resolutions ACC-13/31 and ACC-14/33.
- Encouraging the use of gender budgeting principles throughout the Anglican Communion.
- Continuing to ensure and explore resourcing for a significant Anglican presence at UNCSW.
- Developing financial strategies to support IAWN.

- Exploring ways for IAWN Provincial Links to meet together and members of IAWN to meet face to face regionally.

IAWN will also look to the development of:

- relationships with the Anglican Alliance, other Anglican Networks and groups in the Communion and in our own communities to form partnerships to advance gospel-based justice for all
- theological and liturgical resources to keep us focused on God's call on all of us in bringing forth the Reign of God across this world.