Silvana Arbia speaks on VAW

IN PURSUIT OF THE TRUTH

At their interclub meeting in November 2013, SI Bassano del Grappa and SI Vicenza Club had the honour to host SIE Peace Prize winner Silvana Arbia to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In July 2013 the Italian magistrate was awarded the prize



Silvana Arbia (left), shown here with SI Vicenza President Isabella Cominato Di Lorenzo, is dedicated to bringing those committing crimes against humanity to justice.

in Berlin for her extraordinary achievement as Chief of Prosecutions for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in re-establishing justice in that country after the atrocities of 1994.

SI Italy Vice-President Patrizia Salmoiraghi, Chair of the SIE Extension Committee Maria Luisa Frosio, Italian Governor Luisella Bellinaso, Italian Extension Committee member Genevieve Henro, SI Italy Past President Wilma Malucelli and Soroptimists from several Clubs of Northern Italy attended the event. Silvana Arbia described the nine years she spent in Africa prosecuting those that were responsible for the genocide in Rwanda that led to the massacre of one million people. Among the six accused was the former Minister of Family and Women's Affairs, the only woman charged to date with genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes under international law as well as the first woman ever to be charged with rape as a crime against humanity and a war crime before an international tribunal. A Catholic priest was also charged with genocide and crimes against humanity. Both were sentenced to life.

As a true leader in the pursuit of truth, Silvana Arbia stressed the importance of the new Italian law and the progress made by jurisprudence as regards sexual crimes in time of war. Under certain circumstances, rape can also be considered a form of genocide and as such can be prosecuted and punished. However, the main problem is convincing victims to become active participants in prosecuting the perpetrators of the crimes they have suffered. She said that women are particularly courageous in such cases.

She concluded her speech by highlighting the role of the ICTR in the reconciliation process, noting that reconciliation is only possible if the truth is pursued. After all, genocide is never a single act of folly, but the fruit of plans whose premonitory signs dare not be overlooked.

SI Italy publishes a book

WHEN JUSTICE MEETS THE CHILD

Flavia Pozzolini, now Immediate Past President of SI Italy, initiated a project during her biennium to establish protected hearing rooms for children throughout Italy. The idea is to provide a safe environment for children who are victims or witnesses of a crime and therefore have to provide evidence in civil or criminal proceedings. Equipped with audiovisual recording systems, these rooms allow the child to be protected from methods of interrogation and also ensure the highest degree of reliable evidence for a just and fair trial. After all, the hearings with children can involve not only prosecutors and lawyers, but also



The then Italian Union President Flavia Pozzolini inaugurates a hearing room in Torino.