

PROGRAMME NEWS

No. 6, April 2010

Dear Soroptimists,

Another issue of interesting news about our Programme work worldwide. Share this newsletter with your friends and colleagues!

Long Term Project

On **15 April 2010**, all SI Unions and Single Clubs will receive the packet for voting for the Long Term Project topic. Each club is required to vote for their selection of the topic that the SI LTP should address. The results of the votes from clubs around the world will be ratified at the SI Board Meeting in August 2010. Attached you will find two Summary Papers for the Topics “Violence Against Women” and “Education and Leadership.” More comprehensive background papers will be available on the SI website. The voting ballot has to be sent back to the Federation HQ by **15 June 2010**.

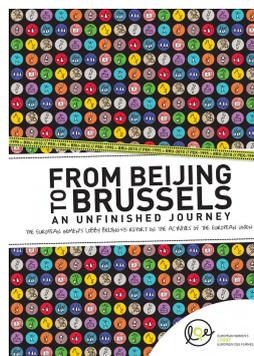
CSW 54

This year’s **UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 54)** in New York was dedicated to the review of achievements of the Beijing declaration and platform for action - the most comprehensive global policy framework for achieving gender equality in 12 critical areas, including health, education, employment and political participation.

Despite snow storms and extremely cold weather participants came in great numbers – over 3,400 individuals from some 460 organizations in 138 countries. Besides the ongoing high level discussions and interactive panels, over 90 parallel events were hosted by Permanent Missions and UN entities. Experiences and good practices were shared, achievements of the past years celebrated without forgetting to identify the gaps and to discuss priority actions to deal with persistent obstacles and new challenges.

Soroptimists participated in 5 parallel events and organized two of their own; both of them focusing on positive actions taken to fight trafficking of human beings. The highlight of our public involvement was the opportunity to contribute to the interactive panel “UNiTE to end violence against women”. You can find additional documents on our website: www.soroptimisteurope.org

Governments presented the achievements made during the past 15 years while NGOs often looked at the still existing gaps and identified challenges and looked at strategies for change. The European Women’s Lobby provided an excellent assessment “from Beijing to Brussels – an unfinished journey” http://www.womenlobby.org/SiteResources/data/MediaArchive/policies/beijing/PEKIN15full_EN.pdf which gives a great overview of all 12 benchmarks of the platform for action.



The call for action which was emphasized in all sessions looked at the importance of equal representation of women in all decision making bodies. It was generally acknowledged that those countries which have a higher number of women representation in public bodies have a higher chance

to achieve the Millennium Development Goals – so far it seems that only Rwanda might achieve the indicators for MDGs 3, 4 and 6 by 2015. This is also the country with the highest number of women in Parliament (56%). Participants agreed that as long as we still have many hurdles to jump to be recognized in public life, a quota might be the first step for equal participation. Ministers from Austria, Spain, Portugal as well as Nordic countries presented a variety of panels on gender equality as foundation for good governance. An interesting example was given by Austria, which has enshrined gender balanced budgeting in its constitution. This was seen as an excellent practice to redistribute financial resources to create a conducive environment for women’s and girls’ empowerment.

The importance of giving women a stronger voice was also acknowledged by the Secretary General, who announced the creation of a new UN organization for gender equality and women empowerment with an Under Secretary General giving the agency an enhanced authority. It consolidates the four UN organizations (UNIFEM, DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI) and will have an initial budget of 1 billion USD. The key function of this entity shall be to lead ambitious programming activities at country levels in close cooperation with

civil society. See www.newtimesforwomen.com for more information.

What was really impressive was the active and passionate participation of young women (below 30) during this assembly who had mainly been supported by the World YWCA through their leadership programme 'Women leading change'. www.worldywca.org. The positive impact of supporting girls as young leaders and the effect it shows on development of their communities and their nations at large is further strengthened through a new programme called "GIRLS UP" supported by an interagency task force of UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO.

Hilary Clinton ended the two week's event with a powerful speech and a clear commitment to making the 21st century the century of gender equality based on premise that 'The status of the world's women is not only a matter of morality and justice. It is also a political, economic, and social imperative. Put simply, the world cannot make lasting progress if women and girls in the 21st century are denied their rights and left behind.'

Study Tour to Moldova

From 17-22 March, 23 participants from Norway, Denmark, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Austria and Switzerland visited the project "Hopes and Dreams for Everyone" which is SI President Hanne Jenbo's December 10 Appeal. They travelled across Moldova to Napadova, Soroca, Balti, and Edinet. There they visited boarding schools where the beneficiaries of this project receive life skills education. SI Norway cooperates with the International Organization of Migration and other local organizations to implement the project. In particular, to identify vulnerable girls and boys. The participants were also part of the inauguration of a well in a kindergarten in Edinet.

World's Longest Toilet Queue

The WLQT has been a great success with Queues taking place in 80 countries. Many event participants, among them numerous Soroptimists, lobbied their governments or local decision makers, raised awareness of the water and sanitation crisis. They empowered citizens to push for change. Thank you very much for your participation and please send in your Queue pictures to suba@soroptimisteurope.org

6th Peace Marathon

To participate at the Peace Marathon 2010 on 23rd May will be a unique Rwandan experience. For one, you can witness the gigantic progress this country has made since the terrible genocide in 1994. You will be

inspired by the incredible enthusiasm of the youngsters who are the future of Africa participating in the Run for Fun. For more information, visit www.kigalimarathon.com. SI President Hanne Jensbo will be present in Kigali and we have also invited Rwandan President Paul Kagame to the Marathon. In addition, a special Children's Race will be organized on May 22nd, a day before the Peace Marathon. For the first time, American, British, and Danish soldiers in Afghanistan will run for peace simultaneously to demonstrate their commitment to peace.

European Meeting and Friendship Days 2010

The five clubs of Spain will be hosting the 8th European Meeting and Friendship Days in Mijas, Spain from the 15th to 17th of October 2010. The conference opens in the typically white hilltop village with a welcome session on Friday evening, followed by a full day conference on Saturday with guest speakers and round-table discussions. The conference will be offered in English, French and Spanish as there will be simultaneous interpretations. Saturday's programme will culminate with a Gala dinner where everyone will be able to appreciate the 'tastes of Spain'. There is an optional excursion planned to Malaga on Sunday as well as optional excursions planned for Monday and Tuesday. For more information and registration, please visit the website: www.si-es.org

Digital TIS

The new digital TIS – The International Soroptimist can be read on SI's website:



<http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/>

Enjoy! There will be four issues in 2010 – March, June, September and December.

UNIFEM's New Global Virtual Knowledge Centre



This first-ever global online programming site on ending violence against women brings together lessons learned and

best practices gathered from initiatives on ending violence against women and girls around the globe. Please visit <http://www.endvawnow.org/> to learn more.

Please send your comments directly to Suba Parthiban at suba@soroptimisteurope.org

Programme News, No. 6, April 2010

Contributors to this issue :

Ulrike Neubert, SI/E Programme Director

Suba Parthiban, SI/E Programme Officer; Megan Billings, SI/E Programme Assistant

Soroptimist International of Europe, 72 rte de Florissant, CH - 1206 Genève

Tel : +41 22 346 08 80 - Fax : +41 22 789 04 43 – e-mail: suba@soroptimisteurope.org

www.soroptimisteurope.org