Soroptimists go for water
safe water = safe life
Soroptimist International of Europe

PROGRAMME NEWS

No. 8, June 2010

Dear Soroptimists,

It is our pleasure to bring you news about our Federation, international campaigns and upcoming events. Share the Programme news with your fellow Soroptimists, friends, and colleagues!

Long Term Project (LTP)



We are getting closer to knowing the topic of the Long Term Project for our organization. In April, all SI Unions and Single Clubs received the packet for voting for the Long Term Project topic. The SI Board asks each club to vote for their selection of the issue that the SI LTP should address. Please read the two background papers for the topics "Violence Against Women" and "Education and Leadership" on www.soroptimisteurope.org. It is important that all clubs within Unions send their choice to the Union and All Unions and Single Clubs are required to send back the final results to SI/E HQ siehq@soroptimisteurope.org by **15 June 2010.** Please act as soon as possible!!! Your participation in this process is crucial to decide on the future image of our organization!

11 July – World Population Day

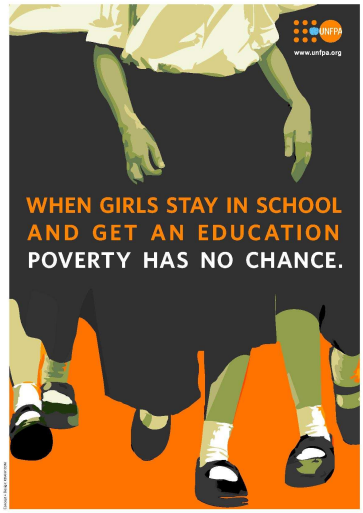
On 11th July 1987, when the globe's population reached five billion, the UN marked the day with a special commemoration as the Day of Five Billion. The positive public response to the event led to the initiation of the World Population Day celebrated annually on 11th July.

The occasion of the World Population Day creates public awareness on various issues and carries a different theme every year. Last year's theme was "Join the Anti-Poverty Movement – Educate Girls" and put emphasis on the need to invest in women. It also encouraged all countries to implement policies that bolstered women's roles in the economy, by primarily investing in education to increase national productivity and income.

Women and girls were the majority of the world's poor even before the recent fiancial crisis. Unfortunately, this crisis has been weakening women's economic situation and they are falling deeper into poverty. Thus it is crucial for developing countries to make the education and health rights of women a political and development priority.

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, in his World Population Day 2009 message called on decision-makers "to protect women's ability to earn income, keep their daughters in school, and obtain reproductive health information and services, including voluntary family planning." Advancing the rights of women and girls and empower them as hightly productive members of society prove to be vital.

Every year, World Population Day is marked by a variety of activities and events. The theme of World Population Day 2010 has yet to be announced. Watch the website of United Nations Population Fund www.unfpa.org for suggestions of activities to mark this year's World Population Day. You can also download fact sheets, posters and videos from there.



6th Peace Marathon in Rwanda

The 6th International Peace Marathon was held in Kigali on the 23rd of May 2010 and was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Sports and Culture and the Athletic Federation of Rwanda. The idea of the marathon originated from the former SI/E President's slogan of 2003-2005, "Women Building Peace." The first marathon was held in 2005. This year, 20 Soroptimists and their friends from Europe were present, with SI President Hanne Jensbo and SI/E President Elect Kathy Kaaf among them.

The Marathon itself has been recognized by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races, which also subsidized a Run For Fun for children. The race was as successful as usual having runners coming from 25 different countries. SI/E

President Eliane Lagasse, in remembering the first Kigali Marathon, recalled a memorable quote from a runner at the event, "We certainly deserved the flowers, as this [encouragement] which people shouted at us all along the route was really necessary. But the arrival in the stadium where the crowd cheered us so enthusiastically was a true reward. An unforgettable experience, a magnificent journey, an abundance of friendship - in short, a marathon I will never forget." The peace marathon continues to be an event representing solidarity and common determination. After attending the marathon, SI President Hanne Jensbo declared that "the marathon is a GREAT manifestation of Soroptimists Working for Peace, and a big thank you to SI/E, European and local Soroptimists for funding and supporting this big event which now is highly appreciated in Rwanda."

We hope that more Soroptimists will be able to attend next year's marathon. For more information on the International Peace Marathon, you can go to the website http://www.kigalimarathon.com/.

European Women's Lobby 12 Priorities for the Belgian Presidency of the European Union

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) will soon be passing from Spain to Belgium on the 1st of July. For this occasion, the European Women's Lobby has generated a list of 12 priorities for the Belgian Presidency to continue to work for women's rights. SI/E has a very special connection to all of this as our current president is also from Belgium and because we are one of the member organizations of the European Women's Lobby.

We can especially commit ourselves to promoting these 12 priorities and encouraging European officials in supporting them as well. The objectives speak directly to the mission of SI. Some include ensuring the adoption of an ambitious EU maternity leave directive, taking steps towards measures for the equal representation of women and men within European Institutions, creating proposals on a European Strategy to end violence against women, and leading the adoption of a strong Strategic Plan for Effective Equality between men and women. The EWL hopes to influence the Belgian Presidency to work for legislative that will encourage gender equality. SI/E, as an important European women's organization and member of the EWL, can too influence European legislators to work for the twelve points outlined by the EWL and create a culture of gender parity. To learn about the rest of the 12 priorities, you can view them all at http://www.womenlobby.org/SiteResources/data/MediaArchive/policies/gender%20equality/EWL%2012%20priorities%20Belgian%20Presidency%202010.pdf

8th European Meeting and Friendship Days, Mijas, Spain, 15-17 October 2010

In recent years, the Spanish clubs have been working together more frequently. There is a also a good feeling between the clubs, which is a great starting point to organize such a major event. We have chosen the theme 'The Power of Optimism' in order to infuse everybody with renewed energy. Our speakers will be focusing on our theme during their talks. It is our greatest pleasure to introduce our speakers here: Eva Levy, Business woman; Pilar Oriente, Director of the 'Instituto de la Mujer' of Andalucía in Malaga; Carmen Sebastián, sociologist; Marta Rodríguez, neuroscientist and Carmen García Ribas, journalist and expert on female leadership. We are working on the final details of our programme. You can keep up-to-date with our latest programme news by following the special pages on our website www.si-es.org. So sign up today! Early bird rates apply until the 30th June! Hasta la vista!

Governors' Meeting 2010

At this year's Governors' Meeting in Ghent, Belgium, all representatives are welcome to bring photos and posters displaying their Union / club's projects. The images and posters will be displayed throughout the meeting in order to share project ideas and successes amongst the participants. If you have any questions, please email suba@soroptimisteurope.org

SI Programme blog

Ever wonder where you could find up to date information about our international work, including study tours, advocacy, UN activities, notes from the field, and more? Please visit the Soroptimist International blog (if you haven't already) at http://siprogrammeblog.blogspot.com/ for all the latest news, updates, and exciting reports!

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