The International Anglican Women's Network newsletter

IAWN news

Issue 10 October 2013

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African churches celebrate 50 years of the All Africa Conference of Churches at its 10th General Assembly in Kampala, Uganda. Photo credit: World Council of Churches/Naveen Qayyum

Women's Voices at AACC Assembly

By Claudette Kigeme, IAWN Provincial Link for Burundi

The 10th General Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) coincided with the celebration of its golden jubilee in the town it was born - Kampala, Uganda. This Jubilee Assembly was held 3 to 9 June and gathered delegates from across Africa representing 181 member churches and councils. While the theme of the AACC inaugural Assembly was '*Freedom and Unity in Christ*', the theme for the jubilee was *'God of life, lead Africa to Peace, Justice and Dignity'*.

Prior to the Assembly, women and youth met separately to prepare messages to the Assembly, highlighting gender based violence, poverty, climate change, unemployment and drug abuse – issues which deprive them from enjoying life with dignity and peace as God given rights.

Among the conclusions, delegates affirmed that violence in Africa, which has become diabolic, must be stopped because it targets women who are carriers of life, and children who are normally sacred and protected in African society. They also affirmed that for the next 50 years, justice, peace and dignity should be seen in the living situation of all people created in God's image, especially the marginalised.

According to AACC President, Rt Rev Valentine Mokiwa, 'The challenge for the AACC today is that of making a difference in the lives of not the 120 million Christians in 41 African countries that make its membership, but to the 900 million inhabitants of the African continent.'

Stop Press:
Three new women bishops

Congratulations and God's blessing on:
Helen-Ann Hartley, elected diocesan bishop of Waikato, Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia on 5 September.
Pat Storey, elected Bishop of Meath & Kildare, Ireland on 20 September - the UK's first female bishop.
Eggoni Pushpalalitha, appointed the first woman bishop of the Church of South India on 25 September.
Congratulations also to the **Church in Wales** which has opened the Bishops' Bench to women.
Read about the Provincial Synod of **Southern Africa**'s welcome of women bishops and wrestling with gender justice at bit.ly/16QW6jI

Below, at the AACC, left to right, Rose Musila and Asiwa Allahare, AACC staff; Edmond Bayisabe, Burundi Youth delegate, Chilambwe Mulenga, Zambia Youth delegate, Rt Rev Valentine Mokiwa, AACC President, Claudette Kigeme and Marie Josee Mukeshima, Burundi delegates.

Steering Group news

Elaine Cameron writes:

As many of you know, our Coordinator, Ann Skamp, has some health issues. Following successful surgery in July, she is having chemotherapy and is greatly strengthened by the assurance of IAWN's prayers. She trusts she will return to full health and strength in the not-too-distant future.

The Steering Group holds a skype conference call every six to eight weeks and will have a face-to-face meeting in London, UK, in November when we will work on supporting our Provincial Links and the implementation of ACC Resolutions on gender equality and the ending of gender based violence.

Enquiries to IAWN's Provincial Links about *IAWN Newsletter distribution* reveal a wide electronic circulation, as well as hard copy distribution. There was a plea for translation. Like an answer to prayer, our new Provincial Link for the Church in Wales, Helen Hall, has offered to do a one-page Spanish summary for those who wish it, emailed shortly after the full Newsletter. Any offers for translating into other languages?

Interestingly, the Primate of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines has asked all seven of his dioceses to name designated diocesan links to IAWN – maybe other Provinces might do likewise?

To be in more regular contact with IAWN members around the Anglican Communion, join our FB group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/IntAngWomen/ or email elaine.ging@gmail and ask to join the IAWN email listserv.

So that you can contact any IAWN Steering Group member when you wish, here are their email addresses:

Ann Skamp, Coordinator:	annskamp@aapt.net.au
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Congo: Challenging structural causes

Mugisa Isingoma, *IAWN's Provincial Link for Congo, describes how the Anglican Church of Congo works to respond to the needs of vulnerable women and girls.*

Conflict related sexual violence is one of the critical challenges faced by the Government and churches. A 2013 report states that 1,152 women are raped daily; 48 every hour. Over 12 per cent of children in the eastern Congo do not reach their fifth birthday; tens of thousands have been recruited as child soldiers; rape of girls and gender based violence, even in Kinshasa, the capital, is widespread. We need to understand the social construction of gender.

Faith groups are key in communities affected by conflict: they can influence behaviour, mobilize action and facilitate community-based systems. They are often central to strengthening resilience and reinforcing the local process of identity and connection in communities disrupted by conflict. The *Programme of Women United for Peace and Social Promotion* values the most vulnerable women and girls so they can participate in Integrity development and be messengers of peace. We organise training in peace building, technical training, small business, micro finance Loans, counselling, and HIV/AIDS wellness, etc. This programme addresses the structural causes of discrimination and violence against women and girls and ensures their equality before the law and their participation in public affairs, by challenging societal attitudes and behaviour. Pray for us.

We ask that IAWN's Steering Group:

- organise a strategic plan for IAWN region by region, to help us follow what is happening and respond
- arrange IAWN Links' exchange experiences
- ensure the Anglican Communion Office at the UN speaks at the highest level for IAWN
- ensure that all action taken be effective, with good grass-roots results.

Prayer Quilt Please pray with us

Pray for...

Implementation of suggestions from a conference of the Council of Women's Group United in the Anglican Church of Korea - gender budget, space for the women's mission centre, prayers for women, especially during pregnancy.

Our friend facing a serious financial problem closely related with women's issue in the Church.

Ruth Choi, Anglican Church of Korea

We in Jordan and the Middle East do not know what the future has, and what surprises will arise in a few days, a week, a month or a year, but we will still need prayers. We pray for peace in Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt and the whole Middle Eastern region. We pray for wisdom to rulers to act with good judgement. Recently many Christians were killed in Maaloula, Syria, where Christians and Muslims visit for prayers. Many families lost their children.

Leila Diab, Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East

The people of Goma in the DRC, especially the extremely vulnerable women and children trying to shelter from weather and potential violence in flimsy plastic lean-tos.

Mugisa Isingoma, Province de l'Église Anglicane du Congo

Please remember the victims of 'war' in Zamboanga City in Southern Philippines, where victims are the innocents - women and children - always at the receiving end of this human-made terror.

Alicia Sabaen, Episcopal Church in the Philippines

Following the Westgate shopping mall terrorist attack in Nairobi, Kenya: Let's join in prayers for families affected.

Claudette Kigeme, IAWN steering group

My sister Aliya, about to have a baby.

Alice Garrick, Church of Pakistan

All Saints Church, Peshawar, Pakistan - those who died, are bereaved or injured following the bombing of the church in September. Lord, hear our prayers.

Our Provincial Links: *Continuing the introductions*

Ruth Choi

Anglican Church of Korea

I am Director of the Gender Equality Bureau in the Anglican Church of Korea. Previously I worked for the Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) and served as World President. Attending three ACC meetings and one Lambeth Conference, I became motivated to work for women's issues. I was allocated to the 'women's ordination committee' at my first ACC meeting. As Director of the Women's Desk of Seoul Diocese, I was soon ecumenically involved in various women's domestic and external issues. I am a board member of Well-side Project for women defectors from North Korea. I am a vestry member in Seoul Cathedral. I am committed to including women in decision making and making gender equality a reality in the church. I am honoured to serve as IAWN provincial link for Korea. I hope to encourage and empower vulnerable women and girls.

Doris Clements

Church of Ireland

I live in the west of Ireland, am married, with one son and one granddaughter. I was a Primary School Principal before retiring in 2007 and am still secretary of the Diocesan Board of Education. In 1996, I was priested to a team ministry in a mainly rural parish with five churches. I have had multiple MU diocesan roles, including Prayer and Spirituality/Faith & Policy Coordinator and Vice-President. Nationally I have served as Coordinator of the Faith and Policy Unit. In 2007 I was appointed IAWN Provincial Link for the Church of Ireland and attended UNCSW as delegate for three years. Spreading information about ACC 13/31 and the MDGs, especially MDG 3, collecting statistics from all 12 dioceses on gender representation on all Committees, have highlighted the need to encourage more participation and representation of women and youth.

Kaoru Yoshitani

Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Church in Japan)

'Kaoru' means 'fragrant'. It is Japanese custom to be given a new Christian name at baptism – mine is Clara. My field is feminist theology and I am making efforts to introduce literature in English to Christian women in Japan. I became a member of Gender Project (Peace and Justice Committee), a working group to deal with gender issues, in 2002. In 2006, Provincial Women's Desk was set up and two women were appointed to it. I have been working at Women's Desk since 2010, with a dependable partner, Michiko Kikawada. We are trying to empower Anglican women in Japan through making contact with various networks, especially IAWN. The main task before us is to encourage the equal participation of women in decision-making bodies in our Province.

To get in touch with the Provincial Link for your Province, email the Editor, elaine.ging@gmail.com

Harriet Baka Nathan

Episcopal Church of Sudan

I was born in South Sudan, married Nathan Wojia Pitia and have five children. I am Mothers' Union Provincial Development Coordinator and Chair of interfaith South Sudan Voice of Women for Peace and Faith. I established a Literacy Programme for Women, am Treasurer for the South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections (SSuNDE), a trained Counsellor for HIV/AIDS and was the Provincial delegate at UNCSW 57. I advocate and lobby for women's empowerment in church and community, do much peace-building work, and travel widely offering presentations locally and at international conferences.

Helen Hall

Church in Wales

I am a priest in the Church in Wales but was a solicitor beforehand. I have just completed a PhD in law and have an active interest in law, religion and human rights. The belief that all human beings have the right to justice and an opportunity to fulfil their God-given potential is important to both my priestly and legal vocations. This attracted me to IAWN and naturally I am very excited about my new role.

Edidah-Mary Mujinya

Church of the Province of Uganda

I began teaching in primary schools aged 20 and married Abjaz Mujinya two years later. We now have six children and three grandchildren. I studied further, gaining an MA degree and then in 2013 a PhD in Religious Studies from Makerere University. As well as serving as a Senior Lecturer at Bishop Stuart University, I have served the Mothers' Union in numerous capacities, and have been MU President of the Province of Uganda since 2006. I was priested in 1999, and made an honorary canon in September 2005.

Esperanza Beleo & Francisca Bawayan

Episcopal Church in the Philippines

Esperanza and Francisca share the IAWN Link role. Early professional retirees, they collaborate and give out news on women and children's issues, holding discussions on gender equality and other topics to build women's self-confidence. Alert to local customs, they seek to ensure new learning is open to all. Both have served as IAWN Steering Group members, as their Province's delegate to UNCSW, and on the Board of the Province's Episcopal Church Women. Each attends meetings in their own capacity or as representatives to Church Women United of the Philippines and the Women's Committee of the National Council of Churches. They share information with the various groups, including reporting IAWN news and inviting members in the far island dioceses to visit the IAWN website.

The Way Ahead *Seeds of Hope*

Working for gender justice, Diocese of Calcutta

In 2012 Bishop Ashoke Biswas initiated the role of Women and Gender Justice Coordinator for the Diocese of Calcutta in the Church of North India. Moumita Biswas, the present Coordinator, describes her role.

The Diocese of Calcutta, the oldest in the Church of North India, has taken the issue of increased violence against women and children seriously. A campaign was launched on International Women's Day 2013 to 'End Culture of Violence on Women and Children', and is now in full focus.

Moumita Biswas, centre left

This Desk aims not merely to enhance women's capacity to reflect their faith in action but also aims to equip everyone, ordained and lay, about gender justice through programs, positive masculinity trainings, and liberation Bible study. In India there is a gross misunderstanding that women's empowerment will alone end patriarchal violence. But promoting gender justice is about empowering the entire community. Patriarchy affects both men and women - the entire family suffers. Violence is rhythmic and viscous. Women also perpetuate violence when giving a daughter less food than a son.

Coffee and Adda is the diocesan youth Gender Justice sensitization program. Youth are invited to come with friends for coffee to discuss Gender Justice issues affecting them. Biblical inspirations help strategy. We started the campaign to 'STOP RAPE, Murder of Minor Girls and Paedophilia'. The Gender Justice desk also helps victims of domestic and other violence. On 21 September 2013, World Peace Day, after a contextual Bible study, participants in a Christian artists' forum expressed their spirituality of justice and peace, especially gender justice, and theology of life, through artwork on the theme 'Splashing our Colours of Shanti (Shalom)'. Do keep our pilgrimage to promote gender justice in your prayers.

UNCSW 57: Bringing it home

Ann Glenesk, Scottish Episcopal Church delegate to the 57th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013 (UNCSW 57), describes how she and five other Scottish delegates have collaborated to bring their experience home:

Six Scotswomen - myself, and CSW 57 delegates from the Scottish Women's Convention, Women's Aid, Soroptimist International, World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts and the YMCA, organised a 'Bringing it Home' follow-up event which took place in June, in the city of Edinburgh. Eighty participants listened to our experience and our learning, and then we gave time for folk to share how the CSW 57 theme of ending and preventing violence against women and girls might be kept alive.

Within the Scottish Episcopal Church, I am supported by the diocesan Prayer and Spirituality Group who are developing church resources on responding to violence against women and girls. The support of the church leadership is evidenced in financial backing. Seeds have been planted. However, partnerships between church and civil society need to be formed to promote and encourage positive action within and beyond faith communities in Scotland. Full report at http://bit.ly/17Vkajj.

UNCSW 58 focus on MDGs

The priority theme for the next session of CSW in New York in March 2014 (UNCSW 58) will be 'Challenges and Achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for women and girls'. A delegation of Anglican women has been appointed from around the Communion and they are already preparing to take their local knowledge and insights to New York where CSW 58 will be held.

If you or your local women's groups have experience in your region or country of the impact of the MDGs in relation to women and girls, and would like to pass on your information and views to the Anglican delegation, please write to Elaine Cameron at elaine.ging@gmail.com and we will make sure your messages are passed on.

Reflection on the priority theme during CSW 58 will feed into UN discussions about the shape and content of the development goals that will supersede the MDGs when they conclude in 2015.

Reconciliation: A tale of two women

In 1969, Beth Marie Murphy served as an American Navy nurse during the war in Vietnam, attending American soldiers and injured Vietnamese. The children left an indelible mark on her; when she returned home, post traumatic stress surfaced.

For the past dozen years, she has regularly journeyed back to Vietnam - a healing experience. In August, Beth Marie and her group stopped at a restaurant for lunch. The owner, Tuyet Ngoi, also served during the war, but for the Viet Cong. The most highly decorated Viet Cong woman in her district, she showed photos receiving medals from the president of Vietnam. Tuyet was extremely friendly and hospitable.

Beth Marie expressed sadness and regret over the war. She asked, "How did the Vietnamese people persevere?" The answer was "The women - they are called the household generals." Wherever Beth Marie travels in Viet Nam the response is always the same, "The war is over, you are my friend, come in, have tea."