



WORLD FOOD DAY 16.10.16

Eliminating iron deficiency in women subsistence farmers A public statement from the Associated Country Women of the World

At the commencement of each Triennium, ACWW sets a theme for the three year period. This has, in the past, been an inspiring message: a call for collaboration or a mission statement. In this Triennium, with clear guidance from the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted at the 28th Triennial Conference in August 2016, it is apparent that ACWW must call for effective and significant work on the topics of education, responsibility and global sustainability. We recognise the achievements of the past 90 years and, incorporating the 2030 Agenda, look to the challenges and opportunities of the next 90 years. We have identified the following three elements as crucial to this goal:

1. Access to healthcare, disease prevention and well-being globally
2. Sustainable energy – in terms of food security, water supply and access to affordable, sustainable energy sources for societies and industry
3. Greater awareness of our responsibilities as one human-kind sharing this planet – both in terms of humanitarian actions and global responsibility through industry, agriculture and societal behaviours

The past three years have been hugely positive, and I am proud of all that ACWW has achieved in this period – but we must not be complacent. The last three years saw ACWW members collaborate under the banner of ‘Working Together for a Better Future’, with the vision of an improved quality of life for women and communities. This work was undertaken with respect for ACWW’s values of Friendship, Transparency, Understanding, Recognising Diversity, Inclusivity, Excellence, Openness and an intent to Enable and Empower women around the world.

Between 2013 and 2016, our Members and Member Societies have made a major - and positive - impact on their countries. Significant funds have been raised towards ACWW’s work, both core costs and projects. More than £285,000 has been awarded internationally in project funding, all of which - of course - comes with an attached administrative and staff cost.

We will continue to work alongside the Sustainable Development Goals and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s Zero Hunger Challenge and report - with new levels of detail - not only on our funded projects but also the status of, and impact upon, the nine million women we represent as an organisation. Our work with the Zero Hunger Challenge central team has made ACWW one of their model partners, and one of our project benefactors was featured on the UN homepage for International Women’s Day 2016. Our work is being recognised internationally and, with further development, will strengthen our worldwide network.

To secure the future of this development, it is necessary to position ourselves to fully take advantage of global funding – not merely as a reactive adjustment of existing projects in a hurry, but rather as a pro-active and pre-planned framework allowing us to facilitate area-wide, cross community funding needs. This reformed approach, in conjunction with our new constitution, will strengthen the pre-existing nature of ACWW, ensuring that we can go forward together into our 90th year safe in the knowledge that we are striving to serve our members, their societies and women worldwide to the very best of our ability.

The successes of ACWW’s member societies are vast and broad-based, but in the past three years have included:

- Significant and successful lobbying on the use of Bisphenol A by the Alberta Women’s Institutes of Canada
- The Country Women’s Association in Tasmania, Australia has, through lobbying the State Government, secured a ban of plastic carrier bags on the island
- Action on E-Waste, recycling and responsible re-use of technology has been taken at the local, national and international levels by ACWW member organisations and societies
- The SSUK society in Bangladesh reports more than 3000 healthy and safe latrines created in the past Triennium

It is crucial that we build on the strong position we are in with renewed energy and drive – our Members, Societies, Officers and Staff combining their efforts to assess and report on the current state of our societies, and work to improve the quality of life of women and communities globally. Central Office will support this with a range of new resources and information, targeted to help Members further their efforts in implementing, and monitoring, real success. Members and societies may consider a few issues that will be relevant to them to differing extents.

This Triennium has presented challenges for the Central Office staff, with several members of the team moving on to new educational opportunities, professional development and retirement. Our staff have, in all but one case, joined ACWW in the 2013-2016 Triennium, with Operations Manager Tish Collins appointed in May 2014. She has since shepherded the restructuring of the new constitution in conjunction with the Ad Hoc Committee, overseen a vast overhaul of the Office’s procedures and has spent the last three months additionally covering the role of Finance Manager after the incumbent retired. My sincerest thanks, and those of the Board and the whole of ACWW go to Tish and her team, particularly Conference Manager Nick Newland and Assistant Manager Nicky Enderby who have, with Tish, been working tirelessly for months to ensure the success of the 2016 Triennial Conference.

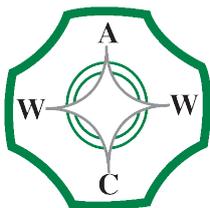
Our outgoing Board and Committees have been successful in large part because of the unity and vision with which they have approached their work – I thank each and every one of them for their service and unanimous, thoughtful support. Our Committee Chairman in particular must receive thanks for the often arduous and unthankful tasks they have been presented with, and their unflinching enthusiasm and hard work has not gone unnoticed. The newly elected Board and Committees are already working to build upon these strong foundations.

ACWW is a unique body, with an international network of rural and non-rural women, willing to work together to improve the quality of life of others. We must work to ensure that we are all better informed, and use our increasingly strong organisation to secure our current achievements – and build on them. We have shown that ACWW can be an inspirational leader in Women’s issues; we must now use that position of leadership to make even more significant and positive impacts across the world.

Thank you for the honour and privilege of leading you, this amazing collection of weird, wacky and wonderful women. Being your World President has provided so many opportunities to explore and celebrate the unique, diverse and human work of ACWW members and I thank you all. Let us go forward making this Triennium our most productive and successful ever, under the banner of our new theme: **90 Years of Achievements, Building 90 years of Opportunities.**

I very much look forward to working with you over the next three years.

Ruth Shanks AM
ACWW World President



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