

International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN): Report to the Standing Committee, May 2014

Submitted by Ann Skamp, Convener, and Elaine Cameron, Acting Convener July 2013 to March 2014

Members of both the outgoing and the new IAWN Steering Group met before ACC-15 to decide priorities and a plan of action for the next triennium. This included each Steering Group member's commitment to:

- be in regular contact with the Provincial Links in her geographical area
- bi-monthly Steering Group skype meetings
- a quarterly Newsletter
- a face-to-face Steering Group meeting in London, November 2014, and the hope of a global meeting of Provincial Links in 2014.

The plan of action as outlined has been largely followed. The IAWN Steering Group meeting in London (7 to 13 November 2013) noted that "many of the challenges faced by women are held in common, whether in the developed or developing world". In all churches, however, more needs to be done to ensure women's work and voices are acknowledged and appreciated. (The report of the meeting may be found at:

http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/docs/IAWN_steering_group_meeting_report_Nov_2013.pdf)

Concerned that there should be collaboration, not duplication, with other Networks, we designated Steering Group members to be contact people with the Environmental, Refugee & Migrant, and Family Networks.

Responding to Provincial Links' feedback, the Steering Group revisited the proposal of a global meeting in order to deepen conversation and resolve common challenges. It was decided instead to explore the possibilities of three regional gatherings. The first is now planned for the UK, Europe and Middle East region in September 2014. This hopefully will be followed by regional meetings in South Asia in 2015, and in Africa in 2016, all with a focus on women's economic empowerment and related issues.

The Steering Group celebrates, and is greatly encouraged by, the progress that has been made in many parts of the Communion on issues affecting women, while acknowledging the challenge to continue addressing these issues. Communication with Provincial Links has helped identify ongoing key issues:

- A. Gendered violence:
 - a. The continuing silence in many of our churches about men's violence against women and children and the need to articulate how the Gospel informs the issue of right relationship.
 - b. The need to work with men and boys on these issues.
 - c. The need for theological training of clergy and other ministers to include awareness of gendered violence and the scriptural basis for eliminating such violence.

- d. The need for more education and action to fight global trafficking of women and girls.
- B. The lack of women's economic empowerment; poverty too often has a woman's face, seen in:
 - a. lack of access to education, training and financial resources
 - b. the need for the implementation of gender budgeting
 - c. the effects of corruption
 - d. unpaid care giving.
- C. The lack of equal participation of women in decision making bodies, and the need for gender audits of our Provincial decision-making bodies.
- D. The plight of female refugees and children, particularly in the Middle East, is a growing concern to many women in the Network.

The Network welcomes, and is encouraged by, the full support of the Standing Committee in relation to ACC resolutions 13.31; 14.33; 15.07, and 15.10, but notes with sadness that these resolutions are yet to be fully enacted throughout the Communion. Like other faith communities, the Anglican Communion is hopefully recognising how it is part of the solution to the problem of gender based violence. Faith leaders are present at many of life's key events – such as baptism, marriage and death, and at times of suffering. Such moments offer vital opportunities to influence communities that violence against women is unacceptable.

The Network will now seek ways of reporting to ACC-16 on the extent to which the ACC resolutions are being implemented and how the whole Communion might take these resolutions seriously and fully embrace them.

A fundraising strategy for the Network will include an approach to Provinces to include a contribution to IAWN in their annual budgets.

In many parts of the Communion full value is yet to be given to Anglican women's organisations that contribute faithfully to God's mission among marginalised women and girls in their communities. Despite their work, Anglican women often receive little recognition and few resources from the churches but know that women's economic empowerment and gender equality are foundational to God's transformative mission in this world.

This report is written as Anglican women with a range of extraordinary ministries back home ranging from theologians to leadership of grass roots ministries, are attending this year's session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW 58) where the priority theme is the *Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals* and the post-2015 development agenda.

The Anglican delegation is delighted to share with IAWN, and report to the Standing Committee, that CSW58 is recommending a stand-alone goal on gender equality within the post 2015 development framework. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the executive director of UN Women, said this represented "a milestone toward a transformative global development agenda that puts the empowerment of women and girls at its centre".