

"The future depends on what we do in the present"
(Mahatma Gandhi)

ACWW Triennial Conference

The Association of Country Women of the World (ACWW), with four hundred and sixty societies in more than seventy countries, has as its objective to raise the standard of living for rural women and children through education and self development.

As ACWW has consultative status with the UN, it can through its representatives based in New York, Geneva and Vienna lobby and negotiate on issues such as hunger, health, water for all and violence against women. Particular issues are put forward every three years to a world conference for adoption as a resolution. It must be remembered that a resolution if adopted must be acted on at all levels of the organisation including at UN level.

This year at the world conference in Chennai the following resolutions were adopted:

Women and children as 'victims of conflict' is a familiar news item for us all, even European women are affected by violence and conflict. As prevention of violence is a global responsibility, ACWW has adopted that its members will urge their governments to act on the UN Security Council's resolution to end violence against women and children. Men and boys must be encouraged to be leaders against discrimination against women, as they also benefit when women and girls are free.

Another resolution adopted was on Maternal Health. Pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading cause of death and disability in developing countries, with at least 358,000 women and girls dying each year. The resolution adopted seeks to support the Millennium Development Goals 4, i.e. to reduce child mortality and 5 to improve maternal health and contribute positively to goal 6 to combat AIDS and HIV.

The British Columbia Women's Institute proposed that Governments are urged to register all births within their jurisdictions and ensure that all children are recognised as children in their own right. This was adopted and will be acted upon by all members in all societies.

Female Genital Mutilation is still practiced in twenty eight countries in Africa, in Somalia over 97% and in others to a lesser degree. It is an issue that affects 3 million girls each year. Many die from blood loss, infections and trauma and others suffer disability for their life time. Western societies have immigrant communities who continue to practice Female Genital Mutilation. ACWW calls on all people worldwide to end this practice.

A resolution submitted by the Dublin Area Conference in 2011 to stop the use of Bisphenol A was also adopted. Bisphenol A is a chemical used in many household products such as food containers including babies plastic bottles. The chemical components are dissolved and leach into the contents of the container and thus poison and damage our health.

While there is no obvious quick solution to many of the issues raised in these resolutions, the voice of united women worldwide can be a force for change.

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