



National Executive News

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UN Women: New structure for empowerment of women

Claire Matthewson, CIR, National Executive

July 2 2010 was an historic day. The United Nations General Assembly voted unanimously to create a new entity to accelerate progress in meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide.



The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – to be known as UN Women — merges and will build on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system which focus exclusively on gender equality and women’s empowerment:

- DAW – Division for the Advancement of Women, since 1946;
- INSTRAW – International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, since 1976;
- UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women, since 1976; and
- OSAGI – Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, since 1997.

Welcoming the historic news, our IFUW President Louise Croot noted: “this milestone was finally achieved with much energy and support from women internationally and many of their governments pressured by national action... it has been about six years of work... We will need to be vigilant that it now grows and flourishes and the work of the four separate entities continues and develops. Internationally we will continue to participate with CSW [Commission on the Status of Women] and other UN partnerships... Nationally new opportunities should develop so do be aware of what is happening and share with all of us.”

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon heralded UN Women as “a recognition of a simple truth: Equality for women and girls is not only a basic human right, it is a social and economic imperative. Where women are educated and empowered, economies are more productive and strong. Where women are fully represented, societies are more peaceful and stable... Our challenge now is to make UN Women fully operational. I will continue my outreach with Member States and civil society in seeking a dynamic Under-Secretary-General to lead UN Women. I commend the leadership and staff of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM for their commitment to the cause of gender equality.”

At least US\$500m – double the current combined budget of DAW, INSTRAW, UNIFEM and OSAGI – has been recognised by Member States as the minimum investment needed for UN Women.

Visit www.unwomen.org/faq/ for answers to these questions: What will UN Women do at the global, regional and country levels? What does the creation of UN Women mean for other offices and funds in the UN system working on gender and women’s empowerment? Who will head UN Women and where will it be based? Which countries will UN Women support? In which countries will UN Women have a presence? How will UN Women work with UN Member States? How will civil society be involved with UN Women? What will happen to the staff at DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI, and UNIFEM? UN Women will be operational by January 2011.

EDITORIAL

*Dot Page,
National
President*

**Advocacy,
Charity and the
National
Council of Women**

In a parliamentary speech during NCWNZ’s centenary year, 1996, the then Minister of



Women’s Affairs praised the Council’s role as ‘a strong advocate for promoting progress for all women.’ Effective, disinterested, non-partisan advocacy on behalf of New Zealand women, based on consultation with branches and nationally organised societies throughout the country, has always been the pride of NCW and its core activity. That the advocacy has been representational and not political has been acknowledged by its inclusion among the organisations registered with the Charities Commission. This has now changed and NCW is about to be deregistered as a charitable organisation. This affects us. NZFGW has been a member of NCWNZ from our inception. Through it we link with other women’s organisations and we help it support women throughout society. We must therefore share the deepest concern at this threat to NCW’s capacity to advocate effectively for New Zealand women.

The Charities Commission notified its intention to deregister NCWNZ on 18 April and events have moved quickly since. A written submission and a meeting of NCW Board members with representatives of the Commission’s Review and Investigation team in mid-May did not change the intention, which was confirmed in late June. On the 30th of that month President Elizabeth Bang sent a long letter to NCW members explaining the situation. She also met with the president of the Association of Non-Governmental Organisations of Aotearoa (ANGOA) to alert the voluntary sector as a whole to the situation, which had implications for other organisations. On 6 July the Charities Commission agreed to consider further information from NCW, if it was provided by 9 July, and the Council called on its Branches and Nationally Organised Societies to email evidence of the nature of its work, demonstrating that its advocacy was for the benefit of women and society, and not political. Florence Stone, our NCW representative, and I responded on behalf of NZFGW.

Why did the Charities Commission decide to deregister NCW? The letter from the Charity Commission’s Manager of Monitoring and Investigation explained that NCWNZ was not

'established and maintained exclusively for charitable purposes' as required by the Charities Act (2005). And what are charitable purposes? The definition used in the New Zealand legislation is traditional, dating back to the Statute of Elizabeth I in 1601, but used in 19th century British law as well. It includes four elements, the promotion of religion and education, providing for the poor and providing for 'the public benefit.' The Charity Commission believed it was difficult to ascertain how serving 'women, the family and the community' reflected the four heads of charity cited. If an organisation had a non-charitable purpose (such as advocacy) that was merely ancillary to the main purposes as laid down in the Act, this would not disqualify it from registration as a charity. But in the eyes of the Charities Commission, the advocacy practised by NCW was a principal rather than an ancillary activity, and was political.

Does deregistration matter? It has serious financial implications. Many of the country's most significant funding bodies such as the Lion Foundation, Pub Charities, the New Zealand Community Trust and the Lottery Minister's Discretionary Fund (for amounts over \$10,000) require applicants to have charitable status. Sponsors also strongly prefer it and a body that loses the status may also lose the ability to offer individuals a tax rebate on donations. In this connection it should be noted that the Commission has deregistered or is in process of deregistering a list of organisations, from Greenpeace to the Sensible Sentencing Trust. Most non-governmental organisations are heavily dependent for their resources on their charitable status.

The problem seems to be a legislative definition of charity that is no longer relevant, and the obvious solution would be to change it. Both Britain and Canada have been discussing this. In its Charities Act (2006) Britain defined charitable purposes as 'the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution and reconciliation or the promotion of religious and racial harmony or equality

and diversity', which is about as inclusive as you could get.

There are some ironies in the position of NCW. While the national body faces deregistration, the branches are not threatened – local activity does not seem to be regarded as political. And then there is the fact that NCW is actually partially funded under a government contract to provide advocacy. As Elizabeth Bang put it 'One side of government contracts us to advocate and the other side seeks to punish us for this.'

This is an unfinished story and no conclusions can be drawn, but it is an important one. There is a great deal of interesting material on the NCWNZ website under the heading 'NCW and the Charities Commission' which I commend to you.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Official response to letter re membership inequality on UN Climate Change Financing Group

From the Hon Tim Groser, Minister for International Climate Change Negotiations:

"Thank you for your letter of 28 April concerning membership of the United Nations Climate Change Financing Group. As this is an issue that falls under my portfolio, I am responding on behalf of my colleagues the Hon Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon Nick Smith, Minister for the Environment, and Hon Pansy Wong, Minister of Women's Affairs.

You will be interested to know that Christine Lagarde, Minister of the Economy, Industry and Employment, France, has replaced Jean-Pierre Landau, Second Deputy Governor, Bank of France, who was originally announced as a member of the group.

The New Zealand Government recognises that women will be disproportionately affected by climate change and need to play a significant role in addressing its impact. New Zealand continues to advocate for gender equality to be taken into account for all appointments made within the United Nations. Clearly that has not been the case for the Climate Change Financing Group, which we acknowledge is partly due to a lack of high profile women candidates in this particular area. Nevertheless we continue to press the United Nations to ensure that its appointments represent a gender balance and for this Group to consider the disproportionate impact of climate change on women around the world. Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.”

[Footnote: None of the five Opposition spokespeople also written to acknowledged receipt of the NZFGW letter.]

NZFGW Triennial Report 2007–2010

A collaborative effort by the previous and current National Executives, our national report for this concluding triennium is now available at:

www.ifuw.org/ifuw2010/documents.shtml

How can we build a sustainable IFUW

At the IFUW Conference, there will be a plenary session entitled *Building a Sustainable IFUW: Meeting Members' Needs and Expectation*. Especially to enable members who will not be at the Conference to give their input, an online discussion on the topic is running until Friday 23 July. The set of discussion questions is available online at:

www.ifuw.org/docs/temp/2010-finmem-disc.pdf. This is proving to be a highly engaging international discussion.

If you would like to participate, please email replies to discussions@ifuw.org. If you would like to join even just to audit the exchange, email discussions-subs@ifuw.org. (Anamarie Vere, IFUW)

More on the Pacific Fund to end violence against women

The Australian Government's additional \$300,000 to UNIFEM's Pacific Fund to End Violence against Women brings its total funding to the UNIFEM Pacific Fund to \$1.1m since it was established in 2009. The Pacific Fund supports community organisations working with women who have experienced violence to provide counselling, legal support and safe refuges and provides small grants to organisations to help raise awareness of violence against women and to implement a range of programs to end violence against women.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Child Abuse in New Zealand

Maori Television marked the Maori New Year, Matariki, with a two-night landmark broadcast to show how all New Zealanders can help to halt child abuse, and to tell the inspiring stories of how families have emerged from the darkness of family violence. The programme “Tamariki Ora: a New Beginning” was presented in mini-documentary style and was very compelling viewing. It was screened on Maori Television on 27 and 28 June.

The ‘Tamariki Ora’ programme demonstrated that Māori are determined to acknowledge the issues of family violence and abuse. It showed Māori men acknowledging that the abuse they received as children, turned them into abusers of their own children. It also showed the extent to which whānāu are acknowledging the issues, forging their own solutions, and actively working within their whānāu and the community to encourage positive, loving relationships.

In part 1 Carol Hirshfeld introduced the stories of men and women who had the courage to confront violence in their communities. Also included was an insider's view of Starship's child crisis team in action.

In part 2 families shared their extraordinary stories of how they turned away from violence. There were graphic tales of lives being transformed and individuals becoming better parents and responsible community members. Carol Hirschfeld conducted panels looking at the issues from the point of view of those involved in assisting families and providing services and support. Central themes were the need to provide *ongoing* solutions and *long-term* support to ensure that communities were able to move away from dependency on formal agencies. Another issue raised was the need to have access to sustainable funding as a great deal of energy was taken up with constantly applying for funds. One vision was to change the pathway for mother and child so that they in turn will change the pathway for their children.

In marked contrast to these stories of positive changes elaborated on in the programme, the NZ Herald reported that the impact of family violence is compounded by police who do not favour this type of work. Jared Savage reported that a national inquiry into an "unacceptable" backlog of child-abuse cases has uncovered evidence that some police do not believe investigating such crimes is "real policing" and described child-abuse investigators as "poor cousins". Assisting dysfunctional families involves multiple agencies and a coordinated effort by people who believe in the worth of this challenging work.

www.nzherald.co.nz/child-abuse/news/article.cfm?c_id=146&objectid=10645938

NZFGW has recently sent a letter to the Minister for Social Development (and other ministers) outlining their views on the need to support early intervention to assist dysfunctional families. See the NZFGW website for a copy of this letter. We thank the

Hutt Valley Branch for their hard work in producing the draft letter in response to a remit passed at the 2009 conference.

What is a charitable organisation?

National Council of Women (NCW) is having to confront this question because they risk losing their charitable status. As reported in a recent posting on its website: "The Charities Commission NZ is seeking to deregister this body at the national level, as being a charitable society. The reason given for this action is that the Commission is of the view that NCWNZ Incorporated no longer qualifies for registration as a charitable entity on the grounds that it is not established and maintained exclusively for charitable purpose as required by section 13(1)(b) of the Act." They are arguing that there is a need "to review of the Charities Commission and the Charities Act to better reflect today's needs and public expectations.

www.ncwnz.org.nz/ncwnz-and-the-charities-commission

Progress on the ACE project

So far about 15 cases related to the loss of funding on the ACE programme have been received. These represent a range of people who have had involvement in the night classes. I.e. tutors, administrators, class members and community workers. My thanks to all those who have assisted in this project. The report will be compiled soon and posted on the NZFGW website.

Minister of Health Tony Ryall responds

Below is a summary of Tony Ryall's response to the NZFGW letter re HIV/AIDS, sent following a conference remit:

The Minister thanked us for our letter and said that he was replying for Tariana Turia also.

He said a review is underway of the services currently provided for HIV positive people in order to identify any gaps and make suggestions for the future. They have

consulted widely and the review will be released when completed.

The review has focused on those populations most at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. These are homosexual men, refugees and migrants from certain countries, injecting drug users, and sex workers.

He went on to say that females who have had heterosexual relations make up only 13% of those diagnosed with HIV and that HIV among Maori remains low. He did note that vigilance was still required because Maori do have a high rate of STDs. The minister referred us to the latest issue of AIDS NZ.

He mentioned that several groups supply services to HIV positive people, naming in particular, *Positive Women*. He went on to point out that teachers and schools are responsible for conducting sexuality education in schools and that it is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Health (although it does support initiatives).

In his last paragraph he addressed the issue in Hamilton, saying that the decision to close the NZAF centre was taken because more efficient ways of providing the same service could be put in place. It was considered more efficient to train locally based counsellors who would be available in Hamilton, Palmerston Nth, Whanganui, Rotorua, and Tauranga.

He did not indicate that any further action would be taken in Hamilton.

“GOWNING” IN JAPAN

This item was sent by an NZFGW member, whose client lectures in Japan. The client kindly sent her this short interest piece.

"Here most students hire or buy fancy formal kimono for their graduation, so everyone pretty much looks after themselves – or rather pays someone to do it.

"In the medical school, where I teach, they wear formal kimono for the daytime

graduation ceremony and then European style dresses and suits for the evening party. Look at the link below to see the variety of styles at just one rental shop.

<http://item.rakuten.co.jp/gofuku/c/0000000111/?p=6&type=all>

"The prices below each outfit written in yen, eg - 25,000 - range from about NX\$400-600 just for the kimono rental! They have to pay someone to help them put it on as well, and then there's the makeup and hairdo, so it a very costly business – something like a wedding ceremony in NZ."

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEB

Recent updates on the NZFGW website – www.nzfgw.org.nz – include:

- Under Wellington Branch news, an update on: Education Equity: Is the System serving boys and girls equally?"
- A copy of the NZFGW 7/7/10 Letter re Dysfunctional Families, on PAC page.
- A pdf version of this newsletter, plus recent back copies,