



Zonta International Legislative Awareness and Advocacy Committee 2008 – 2010 Biennium

NEWSLETTER

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Contents

- 1. Introduction p.1**
- 2. Sources of LAA Information
pp 1-2**
- 3. CEDAW and Country Reports
p. 2**
- 4. Optional Protocol and NGO
(Shadow) Reports pp. 2-3**
- 5. Colorado Zontians Success
p. 3**
- 6. LAA Committee Members
p. 3**
- 7. Examples of Advocacy and
Service p. 4**
- 8. Other Information p. 4**

WELCOME to the Newsletter from the LAA Committee. This issue will highlight some LAA information on the ZI website, provide some examples of advocacy, and will suggest some things that all members can do to inform themselves about CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) and how to use the articles and country reports to think about advocacy issues.

You will also be introduced to the LAA team. We want to hear from you about what you would like to see on the LAA pages of the ZI website and in our Newsletters which we hope to produce 3 times per year.

Districts and clubs are welcome to reproduce information from this Newsletter in their respective newsletters, but please ensure that you copy all of the information rather than attempt a summary. Our protocol for spreading information **accurately** is to request that District websites 'link' to the LAA page on the ZI website, rather than copy and paste onto other websites. This ensures that members are accessing the latest information as presented by the LAA Team.

Importantly, you will need to register as a user on the ZI website and this is very easy to do. Check your last mailing of The Zontian magazine for the address label – it shows your district (2 digits), your area (2 digits), club number and then your individual number. If you cannot locate this, check with your club Treasurer or District OMC Chairman to get these details. This will mean that you will have access to all of the existing and important information on the members section of the ZI website.

Sources of LAA Information

Information relevant to this biennium is on the LAA pages of the ZI website – from the members' home page go to Member Resources, Committees, LAA. Information is given on

- linking Zonta's Objects (a) and (c) to CEDAW Articles,
- using a Scorecard to check that we are pursuing advocacy and service which focus on our primary objects,
- establish when it is appropriate to take action and at what level ; decide how advocacy should proceed.

Contacts:

www.zonta.org (Member Resources)

- Committees
- LAA

Denise Conroy: d.conroy@qut.edu.au

Connie Deckert: cedeckert@bellnet.ca

Kitty Hara: kikuhara@tky.3web.ne.jp

Tayo Morgan: victoriabolajoko@yahoo.co.uk

Bev Morrow: dougnbev@bresnan.net

This Biennium we are focussing on having members understand the major status of women Convention – CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA+ 10 version) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There is an application of all these instruments to our International Service Projects (applying Zonta's Scorecard to International Service and ZISVAW 2008-2010 Projects) on the website.

There are PowerPoint versions of some of these documents which can assist in educating members by using these at club meetings, Area Workshops or District Conferences.

Please let us know what other resources would be helpful.

CEDAW and Country Reports

On the website (LAA page) is a list of Zonta countries and the dates on which they signed/ratified CEDAW and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, and the latest country report submitted to CEDAW.

For those members/clubs/districts which may not have ventured into advocacy, a starting point can be your country's latest report to CEDAW and the Committee's feedback on its content. You can follow up with the next report to see what has been done in response or, if the last report was a few years ago and another one is not due for a while, you could follow up on the issues of concern with relevant government agencies to see what action they have taken.

From this list on the LAA web page, the following information is available to enable some action:

No reports submitted – Bahamas, Cote d' Ivoire Monaco; Countries reported to 42nd Session (20 Oct-7 Nov 2008) – Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Mongolia, Uruguay; Country reporting to 43rd Session (19 Jan – 6 Feb 2009) – Germany Countries reporting to 44th Session (20 July – 7 Aug 2009) – Argentina, Denmark, Japan, Spain, Switzerland. Countries reporting to the 45th session (January 2010) – Netherlands, Ukraine.

Zonta countries which are not signatories to CEDAW are Hong Kong (part of Republic of China), Puerto Ricco (in association with USA), and Taiwan (currently not a member of the UN).

The USA is a signatory only (no ratification) but some States in the US have passed resolutions to support the goals of CEDAW and/or endorse US ratification. (See Colorado Zontians Success p. 3).

The Optional Protocol (OP) provides an opportunity for NGOs (non governmental organisations) – like Zonta International – to evaluate their government's efforts to meet the obligations of the CEDAW Convention and to lodge a complaint. This can occur whether or not your country is a signatory to the O.P.

Reading a country report can inform us as to what our government is doing to improve the status of women.

Reading the CEDAW Committee's comments on each report is also instructive as any need for improvement is identified.

For those countries which have not submitted reports, can we find out why?

The last column of the list of Zonta countries (and reports) on our website is where we need you to let us know of any shadow/alternative reports for your country so that we can add these to our list.

Please email the URL (www. etc) for any reports to the LAA Committee.

Optional Protocol and NGO (Shadow) Reports

The difference between a shadow report and an alternative report is whether or not the NGO has had access to the government report submitted to the CEDAW Committee. If it has had access, the NGO report is called a shadow report as it is able to comment on the official report; if no access to the official report, or the government has not written one, then NGO reports are called alternative reports. The purpose of NGO shadow or alternative reports is to provide the CEDAW Committee with independent feedback on a country's progress on each of the Articles in the Convention.

The International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia-Pacific has published some useful guidelines for writing a shadow/alternative report and has also published some of these reports.

Refer to LAA Resources (on the LAA Web page) for details on CEDAW, the Optional Protocol and shadow/alternative reports.

PLEASE NOTE that if Zonta Districts wish to become involved in producing shadow/alternative reports, you need to be very sure that:

- The report is about the Country in question (not any one district or area unless it comprises a country – see next page for list).

- You can only submit one country report, so if there are a number of Districts for your country this exercise will need to be co-ordinated; (imagine the embarrassment if there are 3 Zonta Districts and each submits a report containing conflicting information/reviews);
- You have experts compile any report – use those who have access to valid and reliable data needed to counter any claims made in an official country report.

Zonta's district divisional structure does not really lend itself to this exercise unless District Governors/District LAA Chairman ensure that efforts are co-ordinated.

Countries which are 'single' districts/regions are:

- District 16 - New Zealand
- District 26 - Japan
- District 31 - Taiwan
- District 32 - South Korea
- Region - Mongolia

Districts where Areas are countries:

- District 13 - Area 1 – Denmark
- Area 2 – Lithuania
- Area 3 – Iceland
- Area 4 – Norway

Districts where countries can be identified by areas:

- District 17 - Areas 1, 3 to 5 - Phillipines
- Area 6 - Thailand
- District 18 - Area 4 - South Africa
- District 20 - Areas 1 to 5 - Finland
- Area 6 - Estonia
- District 21 - Areas 1 to 5 - Sweden
- Area 6 - Latvia
- District 25 - Area 2 - Bangladesh

Indeed, LAA activities at a national (country) level are made difficult by our District divisional structure. The LAA Committee would urge caution where countries are split over a number of districts and does not recommend independent action by one District to represent a view by Zonta International unless all districts covering that country have explicitly agreed to the report and co-signed same.

Colorado Zontians Success

Bev Morrow, a member of the LAA Committee, has prepared a summary of how Colorado (USA) Zontians successfully promoted CEDAW by getting their Legislature to pass a House Joint Resolution concerning support for CEDAW, and urged the US Senate to ratify same. During Bev's terms as Lt. Governor and Governor she focused on advocacy in District 12 and Kay Meyer, Area 3 Director during that time, led the Colorado effort by Zontians from a number of different clubs.

Bev's report and materials developed by Kay and her team are on the LAA section of the ZI website under Examples of Advocacy. This information may be helpful for other Districts in the US who wish to promote ratification of CEDAW by the US Senate and is timely given the imminent change in Presidency.

If your District has examples which would be helpful for others, please send in the details so that we can add them to the website. Contacts are on page 1 of this newsletter.

Bev Morrow is happy to answer any enquiries about their actions to achieve the passage of this Resolution (see her email address p.1).

LAA Committee Members

Connie Deckert is from Canada (District 4, Area 1). Connie was Owner/Manager of a small muffler company – employed there for 35 years which she recently sold to pursue her true love which is teaching golf. Connie has been a member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Zonta Club for over 17 years, was involved in LAA there as well as being the District 4 LAA Chair for Canada for the last 3 Biennia and still holds this position.

Kikuko (Kitty) Hara is a member of the Yokohama Club in Japan (District 26, Area 1) and was on the International Nominating Committee for the 2006-2008 Biennium. Kitty is the owner of a company which handles shipping, cargo (imports and exports).

A. O. Omotayo (Tayo) Morgan is a member of the Ibadan Club (District 18, Area 3) in Nigeria and was on the Zonta International Board for the 2005-2007 period. She is a former grammar school teacher, now entrepreneur, running her own business in the provision of reference/library materials for all levels of education. She has been a Zonta member for 38 years.

Beverley Morrow is a member of the Cheyenne Club (District 12, Area 2) and is the immediate Past District Governor of District 12. She has been the Administrator of the Ageing Division of the Wyoming Department of Health for a number of years and, prior to that, was Director of the Wyoming Commission for National and Community Service. These roles, and her previous work in the Health Department in the 1980s and 1990s involved a lot of advocacy on behalf of clients as well as dealing with legislative requirements.

Denise Conroy's details are in the July 2008 issue of the Zontian magazine (on the ZI website).

Examples of Advocacy and Service

- Zonta clubs in Ghana have a joint anaemia and nutrition project advocating the need to improve the health status of women and children, and is achieved through a variety of means – provision of medicines, training of District Teams about nutrition including mothers and bakers (fortification via bread), and ongoing education with mothers / caregivers and school children re eating the right foods, use of mosquito nets / insecticides, importance of visiting clinics.
- Zonta Club of Lagos 1 provides lectures on ‘roll back malaria’ advocating for the eradication of mosquitoes and a cleaner environment. The club donates bed sheets and treated mosquito nets to a pre-natal ward of a local hospital. The club also provides blood pressure tests to market women who may not have the time or money to go to a clinic for a check-up; some children brought to markets are of school age so the club employs a teacher to teach them to read and write; the club also set up a crèche at the markets to help women who bring young children with them by easing their stress of childcare whilst conducting their business. These activities improve the health and economic status of women.
- Tayo Morgan’s club is advocating for the provision of bathrooms in schools as many girls are forced to stay at home for those days of the month they need to attend to personal hygiene. The cumulative effect of these absences is that the girls fall behind and drop out when they are unable to keep up with their peers.
- Connie Deckert’s club joined with other agencies to run ‘campaign schools’ for women interested in running for office in local government, advocating for more women in political office. The Canadian Federation of Municipalities has set up a template to get more women elected to office. Contact Connie for more information (Email address p. 1)

PLEASE send us your examples for the next newsletter or which we might put onto the ZI website. Send to Denise (d.conroy@qut.edu.au). Any photos (JPEG) or copies of brochures in electronic form are welcomed.

Other Information

From time to time we can come across information that gives us hope that some governments are taking action to prevent discrimination or abuse of human rights.

One example is where the USA federal government requires all contractors and grantees that receive

federal funding to sign a set of assurances that they will follow all laws and requirements.

A new ‘assurance’ was added to the US Contract Manual for State Agencies in September 2008 regarding human trafficking. It reads:

“Human Trafficking

As required by 22 U.S.C. 7104(g) and 2 C.F.R. Part 175, this agreement may be terminated without penalty if a private entity that receives funds under this agreement:

- (a) Engages in severe forms of trafficking in persons during the period of time that the award is in effect;
- (b) Procures a commercial sex act during the period of time that the award is in effect; or
- (c) Uses forced labour in the performance of the award or sub-awards under the award.”

It would seem that other governments could take similar action, so here is a potential advocacy issue for Districts to pursue with their national, state and local governments which engage in issuing contracts or grants.



Left to Right: Bev Morrow, Kitty Hara



Left to Right: Connie Deckert, Tayo Morgan

As we say “Down Under” – Hoo Roo until the next Newsletter.