

**33rd International Council of Women General Assembly**  
**Seoul, South Korea**  
**17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

The Korean National Council of Women, under the leadership of President, Jung Sook Kim organised an inspiring and varied programme over a week in two major hotels in the centre of Seoul.

The 33rd International Council of Women General Assembly got underway at the Lotte Hotel with an opening ceremony on September 17 evening, called "Progress for Women, Progress for All."

About 1,000 guests who were mostly female leaders of member countries attended the opening ceremony. For the opening event, Cosima Schenk, the president of ICW and Jung-Sook Kim, the president of KNCW, welcomed the guests with the opening remark and welcome note. Michelle Bachelet, the head of UN Women, sent a video message auguring the participants stimulating meetings. The key note speakers present were Gertrude Mongella, a former president of Pan-African Parliament, Yoon-ok Kim, the first Lady of South Korea, Keun-hye Park, a former chairperson of the ruling New Frontier Party and Keum-lae Kim, the Minister of Gender Equality and the Family. They had one message to all those present to encourage women to participate in all spheres of public life in order to tackle global issues. They appreciated the efforts that women leaders have made by shedding light on contemporary issues which are plaguing women and finding solutions to various challenges as well as leaving a positive mark on society.

Afterwards Artists from the National Gugak centre took the stage to present Korean traditional art performances, sharing the Korean spirit.

During the day of 17<sup>th</sup> September the ICW Regional Councils held their General Assemblies. Doris Bingley, President ECICW organised the European Regional Centre Meeting. ECICW had a full day programme which included the approval of the minutes of the Spring GA in Athens and financial report presented by Martine Marandel, President of NCW France, while the Presidents or Representatives of the Councils presented their reports. President Doris Bingley launched the website and facebook which needed the approval of those present. The members had full praise for the work done by the young Maltese woman in designing the website and once all the material is in place the website will go public. Two presentations by President Doris Bingley on "Women Empowerment & Rio + 20" and "Investing in Women for a Democratic World" were greatly appreciated and there was particular interest in acquiring them to show to their members. Observers at ECICW meeting included Morocco and South Africa.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> International Council of Women General Assembly was a big event in the history of ICW with participants and observers from about 80 countries. Numerous partial participants and observers were representatives of NGOs who had been invited by NCW Korea and sponsored by governmental training programs, by Koica and various institutes. They took part in the opening ceremony and the seminar and besides these they participated in special training sessions during the week. The whole program in connection to the General Assembly was effectively organized, magnificent and a great success. Our warmest congratulations to the Korean National Council of Women!

The official business programmes of the 33rd ICW-CIF General Assembly started on September 18 at President Hotel, Seoul. During the morning session, members reviewed and approved the minutes of the 32nd ICW-CIF General Assembly held in Johannesburg, South Africa. In addition, elections for a new president who will lead the organization for the next three years and a treasurer were held. **Cosima Schenk from Switzerland was re-elected President while Angelika Hecht from Germany was elected Treasurer.** In the afternoon, representatives from member countries shared their practices for enhancing women's right and empowering women for the past three years. After the official programme, participants moved to the Institute of Traditional Korean Food to experience Korean cooking. Wearing Hanbok (Korean traditional clothes), they had a chance to view the food museum and cook and taste Korean food such as Bulgogi and Bibimbab. This was great fun and brought many smiles and laughter throughout the evening as various different nationalities tried to muster the Korean cooking techniques.

On Wednesday 19 September the International Women's Forum was held at the Crystal Ballroom of the Lotte Hotel. ICW members and Koreans NGOs participated for the International Forum. They exchanged a wide range of good practices, knowledge and experience with high-level and accomplished speakers. Dr. Kyung-wha Kang, Deputy High-Commissioner of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR) shed light on the framework of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in terms of the gender equality and women's rights. Lorena Aguilar Revelo, Global Senior Gender Adviser of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature asserted that actions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment are central to a country's effective response to climate change, in order for it to meet the challenges and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. A panel discussion with 5 different topics entitled 'Transformative Politics by Women', 'Gender and Technology', 'Sustainable Social Welfare for Women', 'Human Rights of Women', and 'Toward Effective Development Cooperation: the Role of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' were actively discussed with experts and professionals leading the way. Then the Chairperson of the Maekyung Media Group, Dr. Dae-whan Chang gave a speech on the Global Economics and Women. After the luncheon, there were workshops with the aforementioned topics. This was followed by a Friendship Night. During the Friendship Night, Mr. Won-soon Park, the Mayor of Seoul and Sang-hee Kim, Chairperson of the Gender Equality and Family Committee delivered encouraging speeches to the women leaders participating in the Seoul General Assembly. ICW delegates were touched by the splendid performances of the Men's Popera quartet INCIELO, Soprano Su-yeon Kim, Tenor Yoon-seok Han, and the Lee Young hoe Chorus. The music and singing were superb

On Thursday 20, September, Christine Knock of New Zealand organised an Interfaith Service with Christians, Anglicans, Orthodox, Islam, Hindu, Buddhist, Bahai and other faiths praying together. Sheila Petersen of Great Britain spoke on the International Day of Peace and later at the business meeting a Declaration on the sufferings of women and children in wars, calling to renew efforts to achieve peace, was sent to Michelle Bachelet Head of UN Women. At the morning meeting at the Hotel President elections for Vice Presidents, Board Members, and Recording Secretary of International Council of Women were held. After the business session, women representatives from each countries toured Seoul taking the group photo at the front of the Sejong Center, then visiting Changdeokgung, Gwanghwamun Square, and Bukak Skyway, and enjoying Seoul attractions with colleagues and friends.

The Business Meeting of the 33rd General Assembly of the International Council of Women continued at the Schubert Hall of the Hotel President on Friday, 21 September, 2012. The results of the elections for the Board Members as well as Recording Secretary were announced. **The five Vice-Presidents elected were: 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Jung Sook Kim (Korea); 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Christine Knock (NEW Zealand); 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President Elisabeth Newman (Australia); 4<sup>th</sup> Vice-President Grace Wedekind (Great Britain); 5<sup>th</sup> Vice-President Hean Bee Wee (Australia)**  
**Board Members: Doris Bingley (Malta); Linda L C Liu (Taiwan); Carmen Gloria Arriagada (USA); Recording Secretary Doreen Micallef (Malta).**

Afterwards participants evaluated the triennial theme 2009-2012 and actively discussed the new triennial theme for 2012-2015. Elisabeth Newman then announced the voting for the Coordinators of Standing Committees and Advisors for Standing took place on Friday afternoon. Committees

That evening the Gala Dinner took place, the international contingent networked and built up a number of contacts. They enjoyed every moment of that evening especially the beautiful music and singing by Tenor Shin-joo Kang, Soprano Soo-kyung Ahn, and the string quartet.

The Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September meeting was held at the Schubert Hall of the Hotel President. In the morning session, new life members, individual members, and new members of the committee of honour were introduced amid the applause of the delegates. The results of the Standing Committees Co-ordinators were announced.

**Status of Women Monica Tolman (Great Britain); General Well Being Nadyanne Mangion (Malta); Communications (Geraldine Campell (Australia); Social Issues Isarangkool Na Aytthaya (Thailand); Experts: International Relations and Peace Sheila Petersen (Great Britain); Legislation (Christiane Tricot (France); Consumer Affairs Hadriani Uli Tiuida Silalahi (Indonesia); Economics Bridget Faye (Australia); Women & Employment Colette Cousinine (France); Nutrition Margaret Jip Kuo (Taiwan); Education (Theresa Der-Lan Yeh (Thailand); Mass Media Claude Bougon-Guibert (France); Migration Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis (Australia)**

Furthermore, ICW-CIF Standing Committees Plans of Action and Objectives for the next three years were adopted and presented at the meeting.

Lastly, with all the outcomes discussed from the various forums, workshops and conference, the next three year plan of actions and resolution were gathered and presented as a 'Seoul Declaration for the advancement of women'. The Seoul Declaration will be used and promoted by not only women leaders but also many organizations for the Gender Equality and empowerment of women around the world.

At the Closing Ceremony, delegates and attendees expressed sincere appreciations towards the Korean National Council of Women for the efficient preparations and organizing of all the events and programmes of the General Assembly in Seoul, Korea.

After the Closing Ceremony, ICW international delegates visited the global IT company, Samsung Electronics Corporation with the vision of 'Inspire the World, Create the Future'.

After the end of the 33rd General Assembly of the International Council of Women, on Sunday 23 September, 2012, the Korean National Council of Women organised a special Demilitarized Zone Tour. ICW delegates and other women representatives arrived at the Demilitarized Zone passing by the Unification Bridge which is known as the Gateway to the

Unification, constructed by the founder of Hyundai Corporation to enter North Korea as a payback in 1998, and used by the former presidents to cross the border for North-South summit talks.

Delegates visited DMZ Museum and watched the video well depicted post war Korea and viewed the exhibition of the ecological environment of Demilitarized Zone which has been preserved for about 60 years. Besides, there was time to listen to the history of the DMZ and the truce line between North and South Korea as well as the unresolved issues of the separated families. All the participants understood the importance of the unification.

ICW members also visited the 3rd Infiltration Tunnel which was discovered on October 17, 1978 and the Dora Observatory where visitors can view a part of North Korean life through a telescope together with the Imjingak Pyeonghwa Nuri Park. I found going down into the deep tunnel and looking at the other side which is relatively very near, was a touching and moving experience

On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September the new ICW Board met to discuss the next three years programme and Plan of Action which will have the theme “Caring for Women is Caring for the World”

Doris Bingley  
Hon General Secretary  
ECICW President