

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN TRIENNIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A report by the National Council of Women of Canada delegate to the ICW-CIF GA in Seoul, Korea,
Rosemary Mallory. November 5, 2012.

ICW History

The **International Council of Women (ICW)** was the first women's organization to work across national boundaries for the common cause of advocating human rights for women. In March and April 1888, women leaders came together in Washington D.C. with 80 speakers and 49 delegates representing 53 women's organizations from 9 countries: Canada, the United States, Ireland, India, England, Finland, Denmark, France and Norway.

The ICW drafted a constitution and established national meetings every three years and international meetings every five years. In 1893, Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General, established the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) and proceeded to cross the country establishing Local Councils of Women in the major cities from Halifax to Victoria. Provincial Councils were organized later. (PCWBC was formed in 1926.) Our National organization (NCWC) meets annually; the International meets triennially. ICW has consultative status at the U.N.

ICW is a federation or an umbrella organization of National Councils. Only one national council is admitted per country. Recent ICW Triennial General Assemblies have taken place in Ottawa, Canada; Helsinki, Finland; Perth, Australia; Kiev, Ukraine; Johannesburg, South Africa; and Seoul, Korea.

ICW Governance

ICW is managed by 3 distinct bodies: the General Assembly, the Executive Committee and the Board. Election of officers takes place at General Assemblies. In Seoul, Cosima Schenk of Switzerland was elected for a second term as President. Five Vice Presidents were elected, as well as other Board members and conveners.



ICW has grown considerably since its formation. Of its seventy member countries more than fifty sent delegates to the General Assembly in Seoul which took place September 16 to 23rd, 2012. Member countries with delegates in attendance were: **Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Cameroon,**

Canada, Colombia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Korea, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lithuania, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Samoa, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, United Kingdom (U.K.), Uganda, Ukraine, USA, China, Japan, Singapore, Tanzania, and Costa Rica.

In addition

Observers, thanks to the Korean National Council of Women, were from: Brunei, China, East Timor, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Liberia, Mexico, Moldova, Mozambique, Myanmar, Palestine, Poland, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.



The 33rd ICW-CIF General Assembly
17-22 September 2012
Seoul, Korea

SEOUL DECLARATION

1. We, the women participating in the 33rd ICW-CIF General Assembly, gathered here in Seoul on 17-22 September 2012 on the occasion of ICW-CIF 124th anniversary, with the theme of "Progress for Women is Progress for All," concerned about the outcomes of upcoming +20 conferences, urge the Member States of the United Nations to make an evaluation of the implementation of the commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action(BPfA).

2. What has been achieved? What are the challenges they still have to realize by 2015? Included in the evaluation and monitoring should be their commitments to the ICPD Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals, Human Rights Agenda, CEDAW, Security Council Resolution 1325.

3. We urge Women's Organizations (International), NGOs, to make the commitment to monitor the above issues by making shadow reports.

4. In particular, we urge the monitoring of commitments regarding:

- BPfA: the IO "Critical areas of concern" of the BPfA: leadership of women, participation and decision making
- MDGs: especially No. 3, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women as the Cross-cutting goal
- ICPD: Sexual Reproductive Rights, harmful practices/FGM
- Human Rights: "Women's Rights are Human Rights"
- CEDAW including the Optional Protocols and other Conventions
- SCR 1325: involvement of women in peace prevention, peace negotiations and post-conflict situations and in National Action Plans.

5. We note the following emerging issues to respond from a gender perspective:

- Climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Food Security
- Water Sanitation
- Economic and Financial Crisis Effects

We are determined to;

6. Make concerted efforts to increase women's representation in decision making so that no more than 60% of both genders are represented at all levels of society, including the National and Local Assemblies, Government Cabinets, as well as private corporations.

7. Ensure that sexual crimes such as rape, sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking are considered as violation of women's human rights to dignity that should be subject to heavy penalty, and urge governments to make it compulsory for Internet Service Providers to block pornography at source.

8. Pay special attention to rural, migrant, and elderly women, and urge governments and international organizations to take positive measures to protect the rights of refugee women so that they won't be forcefully returned to the country they escaped from.

9. Denounce sexual slavery and rape of women and children during and after wars and armed conflicts has to be condemned as a crime.