

## **BRIEFING NOTE – DECEMBER 2011**

As we move forward on developing UN Women in the UK I wanted to keep you informed of recent developments and to give you advanced notice of our plans for 2012. It has been a busy year since the launch of UN Women marked in the UK by the visit of the Executive Director Michelle Bachelet in May. The National Committee were pleased to host three events for Ms Bachelet who had the opportunity to meet a large number of supporters from across civil society as well as to have vital meetings with our politicians. We were very pleased that the UK Government subsequently announced a £10million funding for UN Women for the next two years. The warmth and support for her and UN Women was tangible at the time and continues to fire the ambitions of many organisations and people.

## **YOU HAVE CHANGED THE LIVES OF OVER 1500 WOMEN – THANK YOU!**

Through fundraising and donations you have been supporting projects in Kenya, Liberia and Peru which have enabled over 1500 marginalised women to become businesswomen. This is a crucial step out of poverty and gives them the opportunity to improve their lives and the lives of their families. Once we have approved the on-going programme for these projects we anticipate that we will continue to support them in 2012.

## **UN WOMEN UK CORPORATE NETWORK**

One of our objectives has been to develop our links with the corporate sector and I am very pleased to tell you that in November a group of senior women from 9 major international/global companies met and agreed to establish a corporate network in support of UN Women UK, its aims and objectives. An agenda of priorities for the following year was agreed and will be taken forward once formal agreement has been reached with each company. If you have personal contacts with any company with international/global interests who may be interested in joining the network please contact: francesca.harris@unwomenuk.org

## **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES**

Among the many issues which are of interest to UN Women UK is the inequality facing women in business such as unequal pay; unequal representation in management and at board level; lack of flexible working etc. Through the UN Global Compact companies have been signing up to commit to an agreed ethical way of operating. One of the most relevant areas for us are the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) which set out 7 steps companies can take to ensure equality and empowerment for women. We intend to launch these Principles to a corporate audience in the Spring and this is seen as one of the priority areas by the Corporate Network. If you feel you would like to give your skills or assistance in helping in any way please do contact me.

More information will follow.

## **WEP KNOWLEDGE HUB**

One of the important areas highlighted by our corporate colleagues was the monitoring and reporting of best practice by corporates in meeting the 7 principles of the Women's Empowerment Principles. Discussions are taking place to develop a pilot project in the UK in conjunction with UN Women HQ which could be extended internationally.

## **UN WOMEN UK EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

Creating awareness of issues affecting women and girls is one of our key roles and we are planning to extend our successful pilot education programme to schools, universities, and the workplace through a structured and financed plan. If we are to change attitudes towards women and girls, education at school is vital. A business case is being prepared to share with interested parties.

## GLOBAL SUMMIT OF UN WOMEN NATIONAL COMMITTEES

The 18 National Committees of UN Women representing countries around the world meet annually with UN Women staff to discuss progress and new ideas, and plan future strategies to ensure the development of this unique partnership.

In 2012 from 11 – 14th September the meeting will be held in London and will include business meetings, political meetings and social events. We will keep you informed of this programme as it unfolds. If you would like to help in developing this programme of activity please contact [jangrasty@unwomenuk.org](mailto:jangrasty@unwomenuk.org).

## COLLABORATING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

As a board we are keen to continue developing our links with other like-minded organisations to further the cause of women's equality and to increase our knowledge of the international development sector. Where appropriate we are happy to work together to tackle the issues affecting women and girls. Please contact Francesca or myself if you would like to talk.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

This year one of the campaigns we hope you will support is the *Join me on the Bridge* campaign. This is a global campaign which encourages women to come together on a bridge in a show of support for women and girls in Afghanistan; described as one of the 'worst countries in the world to be a woman'. More information will be circulated in January but please start thinking about this opportunity.

## HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Finally on your behalf I would like to thank all our volunteers who have been so dedicated this year. I hope you all have a very happy and peaceful Christmas and I look forward to working with you in 2012.

Thank you for your valuable support.

**Jan Grasty**

**President**