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CIRs and Secretaries
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Letter from the IFUW President, Griselda Kenyon

It is a long time since I wrote to you all, but a lot of things have happened and I have been on my travels, visiting some of you.

In March there was the annual **UN Commission on the Status of Women** meeting in New York. There was a good group of us there, about 30, including several who were representing other organisations as well as those accredited by IFUW, some for the first time. Catherine Moore did a lot of work for us and several of us were able to meet one of the vice presidents of the Bureau, the organising committee for the meeting, a diplomat from Nigeria, a Mrs Adekunbe Abibat Sonaïke. She was helpful about explaining the procedures. Later in the week we had a meeting with a lady from UNIFEM, who told us about UNIFEM's work on women in Peace and Security, getting women to the peace table and women in peace negotiations and peace building. The main meeting was busy with discussions on women and development and women in decision making. There were also meetings about slimming the future programme of the Commission, because all discussions have to have an agreed document at the end and diplomats sit in small meetings haggling over wording of these documents, which is wearing, time consuming and not very helpful. We are allowed into some of these meetings, which are very interesting in that they demonstrate the actual positions of countries and which things they will not have at any price, but they go on late and concentrating is tiring. The main subject for next year will be "The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child" along with a review of progress on the decisions taken on the Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality. Anyone with any information, studies or anything else on these subjects is invited to send it to IFUW office.

Project Five-O

During the time in New York, Phyllis Scott and I attended the annual Board meeting of Project Five-O. The organisation has spent nearly \$3000 on administration and given away \$23,900 to projects. Projects in Phuket and Georgia have been funded and follow-up grants are being considered for Latvia, Uganda and Georgia. Monitoring projects is always a problem. More fundraising, promotional material, and Project Five-O's role in advocacy at international organisations was discussed.

Board Meeting

The Board meeting took place in the second half of March. We were in the new IFUW office which is very nice, open plan with big windows and enough space to spread the tables when there were a lot of us, such as when the Manchester organising committee members were with us. Ruth Sweetser telephoned us with the proposal about paying dues, which we sent to you. It was not a nice conversation and the results were what you wrote to us. We also spent some time discussing the arrangements for the Manchester Conference. It is interesting how there are always different problems come up with every conference, different place, trying to fit new things into the timetable and new problems and ideas. We hope we shall have an event which everyone will enjoy.

Observers came to sit in on part of the Board meeting, which they found useful and we had good informal meetings on the UN and on the running of IFUW. Observers contributions can be very useful, a different slant on things.

Visits

In April, more travels. With my husband, I went to the Australian Conference in Canberra. It was lovely to meet Australian members, some of whom, of course, I knew already, The New Zealand President, Rae Duff, was there with her husband as well. The meeting was very interesting with two days of public sessions on the Role of Australian Women in Peacekeeping with speakers from the army, talking about women in the Australian armed forces; a research worker and someone from the police, on women peacekeepers; and a lady who spoke on emergency management of disasters. There were resolutions on peacekeeping, education for sustainable development and violence against women, We enjoyed some lovely social events, reception at Government house, a reception at Parliament, a conference dinner in the War Memorial and a splendid home hospitality evening at a member's home. She nobly provided for more than forty of us, good food, drink and relaxation.

We then went on to New Delhi where we stayed with Sushil Bhardwaj (Convener of the IFUW Resolutions Committee) and I spoke at a seminar they were holding on Women in the Media. It was a very good day, lively and interesting, with speakers from the media, from education and lots of lively discussion. Sushil hosted several gatherings at her house and it was lovely to relax and talk to members, Chitra Ghosh (IFUW Past President) came over from Calcutta and it was good to see her again.

After official visits, we thought it would be nice to relax on the friendship trip to Turkey. There were about 36 of us, from Singapore, India, Argentina, north America and lots from Europe. There was some relaxation, but it was a very packed programme, great fun. Sightseeing, receptions, formal dinners, laying a wreath at the tomb of Attaturk and writing in the memorial book; speeches at a seminar in parliament (I think I have seen more of other people's parliaments than I have of my own) and to women entrepreneurs, we did enjoy it. There was a lot of belly dancing after dinner as well! Almost all of us were doing it by the end of the trip! I thought of heading this letter "join IFUW and come belly dancing" but maybe not! The Turkish association were very enthusiastic and welcoming in all the places we stopped and other members came from places we were not visiting to meet us and encourage us to come back and visit them. They were wonderful and did an enormous amount of work. Highly recommended, friendship visits, if you have never tried one!

AAUW

I am afraid that the situation with AAUW remains much the same. I have made one or two advances in private letters to the president but I always get the same reply; AAUW cannot and will not pay. It would appear that many members of AAUW do not know what is happening, from conversations I have had on my travels so if you wish to write to your friends, feel free. I have had discussions with several AAUW members who are internationally minded and possible strategies are being considered but nothing conclusive. If any of you have suggestions that you think would help, let me know. We are willing to go on talking, but it must be with figures in mind.

Manchester

As a follow-on from the previous paragraph can I assure all AAUW members that they are welcome to come to the Conference in Manchester next year. They may not vote but can participate in everything except business sessions, where they may observe, and there are workshops, seminars, social sessions and the dinner in Manchester United Football ground which are for everybody. The preparations are getting more intense and I am consulting the Foreign Office about visas and accreditation letters. We are looking forward to welcoming you all and hope you will have a good time. (The dancing, of all kinds, is up to you, though!)

With all good wishes

Griselda Kenyon
IFUW President