

## CONNECTING FOR SUCCESS

IWD 2012 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2012 WINDSOR BALLROOM, GOODWOOD PARK HOTEL

Our Guest of Honour, and Patron of SCWO, Mrs Mary Tan, Special Guest, Minister of State Halimah Yacob, Senior Minister of State, Grace Fu, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Members of Parliament, Presidents and members of the SCWO federation, and all our distinguished guests and supporters.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome you here tonight. SCWO is honoured by your presence, and your support.

Our theme for IWD 2012, is **Connecting for Success**, which is the mission of our Women's Register initiative, which has developed an on-line group mentorship program to connect women at different stages of their careers.

It also reflects the connections and relationships we have developed with our 52 member organisations, many of whom are present this evening. And very importantly, the connection to, and with, each and everyone here tonight, with you, the representatives of government, the public and private sectors, industry, foundations, professions, services and other NGOs, will be how we can continue to successfully deal with the challenges of the future.

Bill Gates coined the term "**Generation I**" for the current cohort of teenagers - with the "I" standing, of course, for the Internet. Since then it has also come to include Instant Messaging, iPod, iPhone, iPad and the idea of Individualism.

Gates observed that this would be a generation which would be mystified by record albums, because to them, music would simply be something downloaded from the web onto their computers. I have heard of babies touching TV screens to enlarge pictures or flip pages, because they are so familiar by the time they can toddle, with other touch-screen devices that their Mums and Dads are connected to constantly. And just 2 days ago, I heard that the great educational tool of my schooldays, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, was going to stop publishing its print version and be an on-line resource only. New means and modes of connecting are appearing all the time, and presenting new paths of connection and erasing old roads.

Our IWD celebrations this year connected with more than 600 enthusiastic girls through the **National Young Leaders Symposium** organised together with Halogen. They were able to hear for themselves, how the speakers had each achieved their goals through dedication, energy and building on their own strengths.

We need to share what our women can achieve, to assure, guide and inspire our girls to set their own goals, and work to achieve them.

Through the **SCWO-NUS Debating Tournament**, for Secondary and Junior College students, we heard the voices of future leaders passionately debate on issues which have an impact on women. These topics ranged from Women in the Military, to Women and the Media. They were most impressive, in their substantive arguments, and their ability to think and express their views. Later this evening, we will give the podium to the **Best Speaker** of this series for a short address, which should be interesting and refreshing!

It is important to successfully connect to this connected generation, which is connected continually, virtually, with each other. They **are** the mothers and fathers of the future, merely 10 years down the road!

Our **other initiatives** keep us connected to a wide range of sectors – with Senior Citizens through our **IT Hub**, which is run by senior volunteers to encourage life-long learning skills, **The Star Shelter** which accommodates and assists in re-building the lives of abused and homeless women and their families, **Maintenance Support Central**, the first dedicated facility for assisting claimants receive the life-line of maintenance funds after a family is split. As part of **Women's Register**, the **BoardAgender** initiative champions diversity in Government, Public and corporate Boards and senior management.

On the **international landscape**, SCWO is connected into **ASEAN** through our directorship on the **ASEAN Council of Women's Organisations** and **APEC** through the **APEC Women Leaders Network**, as well as participating and speaking at forums, conferences and symposiums in many other locations.

To function successfully through all these platforms requires the talent, and industry of a strong team. My gratitude must go to the SCWO Board and the dedicated staff of the SCWO, for all their hard work for all the IWD events, and throughout the rest of the year. They are truly the champions of multi-tasking. To our volunteers and members of Committees, thank you, and please stay connected to us!

Finally, our warmest regards and thanks to our **new Patron, Mrs Mary Tan**, for her gracious presence this evening, which, we trust, will mark the start of a rich and fruitful engagement in the coming years. We are so delighted, and proud, to be “connected” to you.

**LAURA HWANG**

**PRESIDENT, SCWO**