

SCWO 23rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
21st JUNE 2003

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I First year of term of office of the 12th Executive Board

The 12th Executive Board focused on the following areas in the period of its first year in office from July 2002 to June 2003:

1. Strengthening & professionalising the management and administration of the SCWO Office and Centre

1.1 Staffing

- Quality of staffing was strengthened by the appointment of a Manager Ms Selina Gan with improved supervision and performance of two support staff.
- HR Policies & Procedures were drawn up and the Employment Terms for staff were updated with the assistance of two Board members Mrs Ling-Saw Wei Ying and Ms Woo Choon Mei, who are HR professionals, and approved by the Board on 9 October 02. The HR P&Ps and Employment Terms are attached for information at Annexes 1 & 2.
- Group insurance was negotiated and taken for medical cover for staff. Members were offered the opportunity to join in the scheme for their own staff.

1.2 SCWO Centre

- Much needed repairs were undertaken to rectify the problems that had been noted in the year preceding, including getting the electricals reviewed and upgraded, and touch-ups to the physical structure of the Centre.
- Room rates were reviewed and raised moderately, and better support for room users organised. Utilisation has been maintained despite the rate increases up till the onset of SARS in Singapore when training and meeting activities nation-wide took a significant dip.
- Discussions that had been on-going for some time with IRAS and MCDS on the issue of property tax were concluded. It was accepted that SCWO will have to pay property tax on SCWO Centre but rates have been set at non-commercial levels, and the issue of development charge for the canteen (for the period of operations of the Kiwi Kai café) was resolved.

1.3 Membership Administration

- Membership data was updated and has since been kept current.
- Communications are now routed to Members on a timely basis, including notices from Members which they request to be circulated for the information of others.

1.4 Website

- The SCWO Website was given a major revamp to give it a more attractive and lively look as well as make it much more interactive and user friendly. It was decided to use the Website, which has a calendar, and on which reports of events and activities are posted, to replace the One Voice newsletter.
- The IT Hub Subcommittee has undertaken to assist with the updating the Website

1.5 Accounts & Budget

- The Hon Treasurer with the assistance of Ms Chan Jer Luang and Ms Cheong Swee Ying undertook a review of the accounts and worked with the auditors to tidy up the figures, with the audited accounts ready to be sent Members with the notice of AGM.
- With the assistance of Ms Chan Jer Luang, a detailed set of Financial Policies & Procedures was drawn up and submitted to the Board, and approved on 9 April 03. The Financial P&Ps are

attached for information at Annex 3.

- The Board is pleased to present the Budget for FY03, attached at Annex 4. Discussion on the Budget can be taken at the AGM together with the Hon Treasurer's report and audited accounts.

2. On-going Programmes & Services

2.1 IT Hub

- The IT Hub continues to provide useful and instructive programmes in basic IT literacy. The new Subcommittee appointed in November 2002 is led by Chairperson Mrs Premala Gopalakrishnakone and Assistant Chair Mrs Esther Pung.
- A full report of the Subcommittee's work has been separately submitted by Chairperson Mrs Premala Gopalakrishnakone.

2.2 Star Shelter

- A new Star Shelter Management Committee chaired by 2nd VP Mrs Wee Wan Joo is taking office from 1 June 2003 and will include representatives from our Member Organisations who have a special interest and expertise in the area of family violence, the SAFV and the SASW. This is in line with our efforts to have more opportunities for participation and engagement of Members in the activities and programmes of SCWO.
- A report of the Star Shelter's activities for the preceding year has been separately submitted by out-going Chair of the Management Committee Dr Anamah Tan.

3. Major Projects

3.1 Constitution Review

- A major review was undertaken of the Constitution by President and Hon General Secretary with a view to both simplify the language and remove ambiguities in wording, as well as introduce substantive changes to the provisions.
- In the process, consultation taken with the Past Presidents of SCWO, and feedback was obtained from the past Chairperson of the Nominations Committee Mrs Tina Hung, and from MCDS, of their observations in working with SCWO over the years. Mrs Arfat Selvam, who is currently President of the Law Society, as well as a member of Quota Club, also assisted in the review with much appreciated comments and suggestions.
- We were happy to be able to complete the work after several rounds of consultation with the various groups, and further discussion at the Board, to be able to send the proposed amendments to the Membership two weeks earlier than the requisite three weeks official notice, to enable Members to table their own proposed amendments to be incorporated as well.
- The proposed amendments have been tabled for discussion at the AGM on 21 June 03.

3.2 International Women's Day 2003 Celebrations

- The celebration of IWD03 was an opportunity to highlight the contributions of women to Singapore as well as working with and engaging Members and facilitating their networking through three events,
 - i. a commemoration of the women and children of Changi prison in WWII on 1 March at the Changi Chapel & Museum,
 - ii. an exhibition titled "HerStory of Singapore" on 8 March at Suntec City, and
 - iii. a Forum on "Empowering Women for Life" also on 8 March at Suntec City.
- A more detailed account of the events are captured as part of the Programmes Committee Report and in our SCWO Website.
- We also took the occasion to gather all Presidents of Member Organisations to celebrate IWD03 at the dinner on 7 March 03 which marked the launch of the PA WIN Council.

4. External & Community Relations

4.1 MCDS

- We have instituted regular meetings with the MCDS Women's Desk (WD) on a quarterly basis, meeting twice since the beginning of 2003. The meetings are a useful occasion to discuss issues of importance to both parties and opportunities to work jointly to advance our common cause to promote women's progress and participation at a national level.
- Following upon the MCDS discussions we have also instituted a half yearly "Women's Network" meeting which bring together MCDS WD, SCWO and two of its largest Members, the NTUC Women's Programme Committee and the PA WECs, to discuss topics of common interest.
- The main joint activity co-organised with MCDS in the period under review was the Closed Door Session on CEDAW which was held on 24 May 03. We had a an attendance of over 90 participants and good discussions on the various reservations Singapore has registered in signing the Convention. A report of the Session will be posted on our Website.
- Up-coming projects include an Asean ICT Workshop proposed at the ACW meeting in October 02 (pending response from the other Asean members), and the Women's Register, currently being deliberated by an SCWO workgroup.

4.2 Other organisations

We have established communications with the following organisations with whom we plan to co-organise events or explore the possibility of joint projects in the coming year:

- TWC2 - Forum on Foreign Domestic Workers in July
- Tsao Foundation - Forum on Ageing in August
- SingHealth / KK Women's & Children's Hospital - seminar series on women's health topics tentatively scheduled for August, October & November
- National Volunteer Council - Women's Register project
- Employer Alliance on Work & the Family – Work-Life Balance seminars in partnership with MCDS Work-Life Unit

4.3 Invitations to Participate in Feedback / Dialogue sessions

- We continued to be invited to participate in feedback and dialogue sessions through the year as listed at Annex 5.
- The Feedback Unit has noted that women are under-represented in both the Feedback Groups as well as the People's Forum, and has asked SCWO to help promote participation of interested Members in these groups. We will be sending out a circular to Members with background information on both the eight Feedback Groups and the People's Forum shortly in follow-up of this request.

4.4 Visitors

We received the following visitors in the course of the past year:

- 6 November 02 - Minister MCDS Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister of State MCDS Mr Chen Soo Sen, and a party of senior MCDS officers
- 20 March 03 - The Women's Committee of Senior Servants of the Administration Department of the Shen Zhen Municipal Government of China

5. International Affiliations

5.1 ACWO & ACW

The ACWO Conference held in Singapore in July 2002 and the ACW meeting held in Laos in October 2002 have already been reported upon at the 22nd General Meeting on 17 December 02.

5.2 PPSEAWA

The PPSEAWA Conference originally scheduled for August of 2003 has been re-scheduled to 11-19 May 04.

5.3 ICW

The ICW Triennium will be held in Perth from 30 August to 6 September 03. Information on the meeting has been circulated to Members. Our candidate Dr Anamah Tan is President Elect and will be installed during the meeting. Our congratulations to Anamah.

II Going Forward - plans for second year of term of office of the 12th Executive Board

The main activities and programmes envisaged for the coming year, in line with SCWO's aims to better position the organisation to undertake advocacy and education on women's issues in general, and creating a level playing field for women at work in particular, and in addition to those events mentioned in section I. 4.2 above, are to initiate:

1. Briefings for Members of Parliament on issues that impact women

We propose to conduct regular briefings for specific groups of MPs, namely NMPs, the women MPs, the Group Parliamentary Committee for MCDS, and other selected MPs who have shown interest in bringing up women's issues, to present to them our perspectives and information on subjects of importance to women in Singapore, to win their support in furthering our position in these areas. We intend to start with a session in Q3 of 2003 and will be inviting interested Members to participate in submitting issues they wish to highlight.

2. Work-Life Balance workshops

We have recruited a volunteer Ms Chee Thong Gan, previously Head of the Work-Life Unit of KK Hospital, who has a wealth of experience in the subject of work-life effectiveness to work on developing a series of workshops targeted at helping individuals achieve work-life balance, to be presented by SCWO to both Members and the public as an on-going part of our efforts to improve the environment in this area for women in Singapore. We hope to launch the first workshop in November 03. Once the workshops have been developed we would like to recruit presenters from our Mandarin speaking Members to do the series in Mandarin.

3. Fund Raising

We will need to raise funds from various sources to the amount of about \$100,000 annually. We are exploring the possibility of a major fund raising event around IWD 04, for example in the form of a Fete at the Istana grounds or a dinner in conjunction with the Woman of the Year award ceremony. We will keep Members informed of developments and ask for volunteers to participate in organising the events.

4. Profile and Branding

To more effectively serve as the umbrella organisation for women's groups and to push the women's agenda forward we envisage we will need to build a higher profile for SCWO. We will explore how we might go about building appropriate "branding" for SCWO in the coming year.

5. Calendar

The calendar of activities and events planned and anticipated for the coming year is at Annex 6.

III Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to the following:

- All my Board members for their participation and contribution, both in general Board matters as well as in chairing as serving on other committees and subcommittees.

Specifically thanks to:

- Ms Sue Wong, Mrs Wee Wan Joo, Mrs Tisa Ng, Ms Susie Kong and Mrs Rosy Nakhoda, and all the members of their respective organising committees for the IWD 03 celebrations,
- Mrs Ling Saw Wei Ying and Ms Woo Choon Mei for their work on the HR P&Ps and Employment Terms,
- Mrs Ivy Singh-Lim, Ms Chan Jer Luang and Ms Cheong Swee Ying for their work on the accounts and Financial P&Ps,
- Mrs Premala Gopalakrishnakone and Mrs Esther Pung, and the members of the IT Hub Subcommittee, the volunteer instructors and assistant instructors of the IT Hub, and Mr Lee Heng Guan who provided the cabling that enable our wireless Internet access,
- Ms Margaret Thomas for her help with revamping the Website,
- Ms Leong Chooi Peng, Mrs Arfat Selvam, Past Presidents Dr Chua Lee Eng, Ms Caroline Lam, Ms Quek Bee See, Ms Constance Singham and Mrs Janet Yee for their work and inputs on the amendments to the Constitution,
- Dr Anamah Tan and the members of the out-going Star Shelter Management Committee and Ad-hoc Review Committee for their work with the Shelter,
- Ms Irene Dobrzanski and the volunteers who so consistently and efficiently run our New2U shop,
- All other Members, volunteers and well wishers who have supported our programmes and activities through the year, and
- Our Manager Ms Selina Gan and our staff for all their behind-the-scenes work to support our activities.

INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN FEEDBACK / DIALOGUE SESSIONS

29 August 02

Dialogue session with professionals on the Prime Minister's National Day Rally speech

14 October 02

Dialogue with the Prime Minister to share and discuss recent developments

9 December 02

Dialogue session on the "Revamp of the Medishield Scheme"

7 January 03

Dialogue session with professionals on "Building Common Space among Singaporeans"

22 January 03

Discussion on "Code on Religious Harmony"

10-14 April 03

Focus Group discussion on Marriage & Procreation

*** Coming up: 28 June 03**

Dialogue session with professional on "Concerns Confronting various Communities & Professions"

SCWO CALENDAR 2003/04

JUL	05 3/10/17/24	SCWO / TWC2 Forum on Foreign Domestic Workers Bowling Clinics
AUG	16 or 23 24 25 31-6/9	Women's Health Seminar in conjunction with SingHealth (rescheduled from April) Bowling Competition Forum on Ageing in conjunction with Tsao Foundation ICW in Perth
SEP	01-06 tbc	ICW in Perth Briefing for MPs
OCT	7-9 or 14-16 18 & 19	ACW IT Workshop (pending confirmation by MCDS) Menopause Public Forum in conjunction with KK Hospital
NOV	tbc 15	Workshops on Work-life Balance Urogynae Public Forum in conjunction with KK Hospital
DEC	tbc	Year-end party
JAN		
FEB		
MAR	tbc	IWD 04 Fund Raiser event
APR		
MAY	11-19	PPSEAWA Conference
JUN	tbc	AGM