

# SIGBI Programme Director's Blog March 2017

March is always a busy month in the Soroptimist Calendar with Fairtrade fortnight, International Women's day , Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and the Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Soroptimists around the world will be raising awareness of issues, advocating for change and taking action to improve the lives of women and girls through projects which will educate, empower or enable women and girls to reach their full potential

## Fairtrade Fortnight – Monday 27 February – Sunday 12 March



Fairtrade Fortnight is a time when many Soroptimists show their support for the farmers and workers who grow our food in developing countries. We need to amplify the voices of marginalised producers as much as ever in 2017.

When we come together we can change the way people think about trade and the products on our shelves. Your actions help shoppers to make choices that change the lives of farmers and workers.

Join thousands of others across the UK this Fairtrade Fortnight to take exploitation out.

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## Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month



March is Ovarian Cancer awareness Month and once again many clubs will be supporting the campaign to raise awareness of this disease as only 3% of women are confident of spotting the symptoms of Ovarian Cancer.

Women need to know what to look for so that they can get help at an early stage, giving a better chance of successful treatment.

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## International Women's Day – 8 March 2017



International women's day will be celebrated by all in many different ways. Marches, lectures, social gatherings raising awareness of women's issues in many different ways.

For International Women's Day 2017, we're asking you to **#BeBoldForChange**  
Call on the masses or call on yourself to help forge a better working world and a more inclusive, gender-equal world

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## Commission on the Status of Women 61 – 13-24 March 2017



Shortly after that date over 80 Soroptimist from all over the world will join with thousands of other like minded, women and some men at the United Nations in New York to discuss common interests at the Commission on the Status of Women

2016 marked the first year of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all countries around the world, envisioning a “world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed”.

As countries start implementing the Sustainable Development Goals towards achieving a sustainable and gender equal future by 2030, discriminatory laws continue to hold women and girls back. Begoña Lasagabaster, UN Women Chief of Leadership and Governance Section, talks about a new UN Women initiative, Roadmap for Substantive Equality:2030, launched on 14 February at the UN Headquarters, which coordinates efforts to repeal and amend all laws that discriminate against women and girls.

The SDGs place gender equality at the heart of sustainable development. But how can there be equality between all genders when laws discriminate against women and girls?

Laws play out in our daily lives in very tangible ways.

Take the issue of child marriage, for example. Over 700 million women alive today were married as children. Child marriage interrupts girls' education, limits their livelihood options and forces them to take on the roles of wives and mothers before they are ready.

It's a vicious cycle of inequality—girls married early are condemned to a life of dependency and poverty, and rendered more vulnerable to violence. They bear children before their bodies are fully matured, jeopardizing their own health and that of their children.

Soroptimist will be active at CSW Advocating for the changes we want to see, a better world for women and girls. Please follow our blogs on the website.

Yours in friendship

Barbara Dixon  
Programme Director