

Modern Day Slavery (MDS) affects every country in our Federation and beyond and, as supporters of Women's rights, Soroptimists have been keen to support this area of work.

The Trafficking Awareness project started in SI Lurgan, was then taken up by Northern Ireland, followed by the Republic of Ireland and, in October 2017, to members of the public in the UK; the Caribbean also engaged in the project.

Many organisations exist that work to either support victims or educate vulnerable people about the risks of MDS, advocating to prevent this scourge: [Stop the Traffik](#), [Hope for Justice](#) and [Shiva Foundation](#) amongst others.

I urge you to look on the web and see if there is an organisation near you that would benefit from your support. Use your Friendship Links to work together on this and let us see if we can make a real difference.



From 25<sup>th</sup> November - [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), to 10<sup>th</sup> December - [Human Rights Day](#), the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#) Campaign is a time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

What will you be doing to mark this? Modern Day Slavery is one of the worst forms of violence against women, preying on the vulnerable, poor, displaced or socially excluded women and children.

Can you use part of the 16 Days of Activism to work on MDS?

**Barbara Dixon**  
Programme Director

### Human Rights Day - 10<sup>th</sup> December

World [Human Rights Day](#) is observed on 10<sup>th</sup> December every year. It commemorates the day on which, in 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). This year's Human Rights Day is devoted to the launch of a year-long campaign for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the two International Covenants on Human Rights: the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and the [Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), which were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1966.

The two Covenants, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, set out the civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights that are the birthright of all human beings. "Our Rights, Our Freedoms, Always" aims to promote and raise awareness of the two covenants on their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The year-long campaign revolves around the theme of rights and freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom from want and freedom from fear - which underpins the International Bill of Human Rights - are as relevant today as they were when the Covenants were adopted 50 years ago.

As Soroptimists we mark the 10<sup>th</sup> December with the launch of the [International President's Appeal](#). SI President, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, was inaugurated at the Soroptimist meeting in Rotterdam on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2017. Mariet is the first Dutch President in the organisation's 100 years existence. The focus of Soroptimist International continues to be "Educate to Lead".



Recognised as an expert on the topic of water and how it impacts the lives of women and girls globally, Mariet is delighted to announce that her President's Appeal for the 2017 – 2019 biennium will focus on [Women, Water and Leadership](#). At least five projects will be supported in five continents with a view to enabling women to become active leaders in water management. More specifically, these projects will connect to [SDG 4](#) - Quality Education, [SDG 5](#) – Gender Equality and [SDG 6](#) – Clean Water and Sanitation for all purposes.

International President Mariet presented at World Water Week in Stockholm at the end of August, when she connected SDG 5 and SDG 6.3 during the seminar 'Understanding the Gender Dimension of Water and Waste'. In her presentation, she provided solutions to ensure women's expertise and skills in water in general, and waste water specifically, are taken seriously to improve our water and waste management systems. As we are aware in many countries women are responsible for fetching drinking water for the family, getting water to grow vegetables, caring for family members who are ill because they have to drink dirty water, taking care of waste or waste water. A worthy project, which will make a difference, not only to women but to their families and their communities.

**Jan Hemlin - Acting APD Education**

## Abolition of Slavery

This year seems to have gone very quickly but here I am again, writing about the Abolition of Slavery. How far have we come in that year and what has happened over that time? On the action side, UKPAC has conducted a survey on perceptions of human trafficking and modern day slavery and as APD with the Caribbean cluster as part of my brief, I have adapted the survey to suit this region of our Federation. We will know the results of the online survey at conference in Cardiff and the result, which will include the paper submissions, will be sent to us when it has been analysed. I have been taken aback by some comments of friends (not Soroptimists) who do not accept that trafficking and slavery still exists: 'not here, maybe in London or big cities'. As soroptimists, we know that it continues to be a major tragedy for the most vulnerable in our world. In an email that I received today from Freedom United ([www.freedomunited.org](http://www.freedomunited.org)) they outline an extensive range of recent examples that include....

**Abuse on Cotton Fields Persists Despite Change in Uzbek Policy** The Cotton Campaign announced that Uzbekistan has finally excused students and some health and education workers from the cotton fields, all of them forced labourers who had been picking cotton since the season began.

**World Cup 2022: Qatar's Workers Treated Like Slaves** Imagine that you are living in rural Bangladesh when an acquaintance in your town approaches you with a job offer to work abroad in a clerical job. He says everything will be covered and that you will be paid more money than you have ever seen in your life.

**Myanmar Workers Fight Defamation Charges in Thailand** A group of migrant workers from Myanmar pleaded not guilty to charges of defamation this week by their former employer, Thammakaset poultry farm in central Thailand. The workers say they were forced to work overtime, unlawful deductions were made from their salaries, and that their passports were confiscated.

**Companies Failing to Disclose Slavery Risks** Major brands are failing to disclose the risks of human trafficking and forced labour in their supply chains according to Thomson Reuters Foundation. Under Britain's 2015 Modern Slavery Act, companies with an annual revenue of over £36 million are required to issue statements on how they are addressing slavery in their supply chains.

**Indian Girl Jumps from 11th Floor to Escape Slavery** A 13-year-old girl who had been held captive in domestic servitude by a 23-year-old woman in India jumped from the 11th floor of the apartment building in Faridabad. The child was caught in a bird net on the 10th floor and was rescued by residents.

**Fleeing Rohingya at Risk of Human Trafficking** According to Channel News Asia, it is estimated that there are 480,000 Rohingya (Burma) who have fled deadly violence in Rakhine state, crossing the border into neighbouring Bangladesh.



Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh

I do not pretend to understand the reasons for what is happening in Myanmar (Burma) but [Sir Bob Geldof](#) (love him or hate him) called Aung San Suu Kyi, 'one of the great ethnic cleansers of our planet' at the opening ceremony of the [One Young World](#) summit in Bogota recently.

Half a million people are seeking refuge in Bangladesh and are in great danger of being trafficked, of being used and abused and, according the BBC, this is not being talked about in Myanmar.

All we can do is support disaster funds and charities that will help to relieve the suffering of these people and hope the UK is right in giving Aung San Suu Kyi the benefit of the doubt.

**Rayner Rees - APD Economic Empowerment**

## Federation Programme Team



**Barbara Dixon**  
Programme Director



**Rita Beaumont**  
Food Security & Healthcare



**Margaret Clark**  
Advocacy



**Nisha Ghosh**  
Violence & Conflict Resolution



**Jan Hemlin**  
Education



**Rayner Rees**  
Economic Empowerment



**Naina Shah**  
Environmental Sustainability

**KEEP IN TOUCH:** **Barbara:** [barbara.dixon5@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.dixon5@btinternet.com) **Rita:** [r.beaumont3@ntlworld.com](mailto:r.beaumont3@ntlworld.com) **Margaret:** [margaretclark123@gmail.com](mailto:margaretclark123@gmail.com)  
**Nisha:** [apdnishavision2021@hotmail.com](mailto:apdnishavision2021@hotmail.com) **Jan:** [janhemlin@btinternet.com](mailto:janhemlin@btinternet.com) **Rayner:** [raynerjrees@gmail.com](mailto:raynerjrees@gmail.com) **Naina:** [nainashah@gmail.com](mailto:nainashah@gmail.com)