**The text of Federation President Pat Black’s presentation to the FPAC 31 October 2013.**

I have this year been delighted to visit with many of you and share the work you are doing. It has been an informative and educational year for me as I have travelled around the Federation.

I have been able to visit and hear about many of your projects and the service which you are providing for your local communities.

You will remember that this time last year I offered two challenges. The first was to educate yourselves in some way that would make a difference in your own lives.

Many members have taken this challenge up with enthusiasm and found a huge variety of ways of gaining new skills and knowledge. They have conquered computers and added to their social media skills, learnt how to Skype and generally become computer literate. Members have taken on new personal skills from golf through running to painting and music, writing novels and poetry. And throughout they have had a lot of fun and found new friends.

The second challenge was that for every member of SIGBI we would offer, to 100 women and girls, an educational opportunity, whatever form it takes. This would mean that by this Conference in NewcastleGateshead Soroptimists from this Federation would have improved the lives of one million women and girls around the world through education in some form.

Many clubs and members were involved in developing educational opportunities already and have sustained and continued those. Many have developed new Friendship Links to help and support other clubs with their projects. But I don’t think from the Programme Focus Report Forms submitted this year that we have achieved my target of one million. However, I know we are well on our way to reaching that target and that we will get there. I just need the Programme Focus Report Forms to be completed so we can prove it!

I have seen primary schools and secondary schools supported and sustained on a long term basis by Soroptimists. Members have raised awareness and educated communities on a huge range of health issues including FGM, Ovarian and Breast Cancer and Endometriosis.

Clubs have worked with women to enable them to gain vocational skills so that they become economically empowered. Encouragement has been given to many girls to consider making a career in one of the fields of science. And members have worked extremely hard to develop the role of relationship education following our Resolution at Conference. Ensuring that communities are aware of human trafficking and modern day slavery has been high on the list for many clubs and members this year.

But for many this year, Standing with Malala Yousfazia has been inspiring. This time last year we had learnt about the shooting of Malala and her friends and resolved at Conference that we would protest and lobby to ensure girls have access to free and safe education wherever they live.

You have done this as we have watched Malala become an icon of bravery and justice for young women everywhere, at the centre of a global campaign focussing on education for all girls.

I hope that some of you were able to watch this young woman speaking at the United Nations or have seen her accepting some of the many awards she has received this year. She continues to be an inspiration for all young girls and women, and in spite of danger to herself is determined to ensure that education for girls is high on the global agenda.

However you have tackled it you have turned our Soroptimist Vision into Action and this has meant you are turning their dreams, their future into our Vision of a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

Congratulations and thank you. I know you will continue to succeed as Soroptimists educating to lead.