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Tricia Coll  
BECKWITH HOUSE  
1 WELLINGTON ROAD NORTH  
STOCKPORT  
SK4 1AF

[hq@sigbi.org](mailto:hq@sigbi.org)

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Dear Tricia

I am writing in response to your letter of 8 May inviting me to send greetings to the 84<sup>th</sup> Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland's 84<sup>th</sup> Conference.

I would be delighted to provide the attached message to be relayed to delegates and send my very best wishes for a successful conference.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

**CARWYN JONES**

I am delighted to send my greetings and best wishes to the Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland's 84<sup>th</sup> conference.

2018 marks the centenary of partial women's suffrage in the UK. I know that many of you will have been celebrating this important step forward in the journey towards equality. The theme of this year's conference, *Empower Today – Enable Tomorrow*, is very apt when considering the actions and achievements of the suffragettes and suffragists. These women pushed the boundaries forward for the women of their time. They took risks. They weren't frightened to challenge the status quo. They wanted equality. They weren't deterred by setbacks or people who didn't believe in them. They became role models to others, showing what could be achieved and inspiring others to take action, to believe in themselves and to follow their dreams. Where they led, others have followed.

The theme is equally applicable to those who continue to break down barriers today. And Soroptimists can rightly be proud of the part you play both here in the UK and internationally, changing lives for the better. By affording women and girls opportunities to be empowered and educated, you are enabling them to make a difference to their own lives, as well as the lives of their friends, families and communities.

This year's theme also chimes well with the Welsh Government's aims and commitments. From tackling poverty, delivering a more diverse pool of decision-makers in public life, cutting the pay gap and tackling violence and abuse, our actions focus on the areas which disproportionately affect women and other protected groups.

On International Women's Day this year, I announced that the Welsh Government would undertake a Rapid Review of its gender and equality policies. We have been listening to stakeholders across Wales to find out what they consider to be priorities for the future. Our approach includes working across different equality strands, including race, disability and age, aiming to ensure that no one is left behind. We recognise that women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are often excluded from progress.

This review – and the action which will swiftly follow - will ensure that we, as a government, ensure gender equality remains a priority across all our policies and programmes. I want Wales to set a powerful example to the rest of the UK and beyond – we have said that we want Wales to be the safest place to be a woman in the whole of Europe. But, more than that, I want our Government to follow in the footsteps of Sweden and become a truly Feminist Government. Like you, we want to make a positive difference to people's lives – to empower and enable them to fulfil their potential.

I wish you every success with the important work you continue to do and send my very best wishes for a worthwhile and enjoyable conference.