MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING
HILTON HOTEL, MALTA
THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Barbara Dixon, Federation Programme Director
Margaret Emsley, Federation President
Ann Hodgson, Federation President Elect
Nisha Ghosh, Federation Friendship Link Coordinator
Margaret Clark, Federation APD Advocacy
Rayner Rees, Federation APD Economic Empowerment
Laura Longman, Federation APD Environmental Sustainability
Rita Beaumont, Federation APD Food Security and Health
Barbara Dixon (pp Pam Allinson), Federation APD Learning Opportunities
Jan Hemlin, Federation APD Violence and Conflict Resolution
Najma Hasin, FPAC Bangladesh
Andrea Farmer, FPAC Barbados (Proxy)
Martha Pufong, FPAC Cameroon
Glenys Hunt, FPAC England
Ndella Faye Colley, FPAC Gambia
Jacqueline Pascal, FPAC Grenada
Anu Wakhu, FPAC India
Emma Maria de Lucca, FPAC Malta
Dora Ramsay, FPAC Mauritius
Annette Oke, FPAC Nigeria
Maureen Maguire, FPAC Northern Ireland (Proxy)
Mary Hession, FPAC Republic of Ireland
Margaret Mowat, FPAC Scotland
Doreen Deigh, FPAC Sierra Leone
Gail Charalambous, FPAC South Africa
Neelanthi Fernando, FPAC Sri Lanka
Ikarmola La Borde, FPAC St Vincent and the Grenadines
Bebe Adjodha, FPAC Trinidad and Tobago
Betty Dean, FPAC Turks and Caicos
Kay Richmond, FPAC UK and Wales

IN ATTENDANCE: Gina Coad, Federation Executive Officer

APOLOGIES: Kabita Thapaliya, FPAC Nepal
1. **WELCOME**
Barbara Dixon, Federation Programme Director, welcomed all attendees to the FPAC meeting. Ann Dawson, Conference Chairman, welcomed all to the 82nd Federation Conference at Malta and gave some important notices about various events over the next few days.

2. **ROLL CALL**
A Roll Call was taken of those present.

3. **MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION MEETING, 5 November 2015 (Circulated)**
There were no amendments to the 2015 FPAC Minutes and they were signed as a true record.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**
There were no matters arising.

5. **FEDERATION PRESIDENT MARGARET EMSLEY**
President Margaret said that she was thrilled to be at Conference in Malta, where she had many friends, and hoped that everyone present would experience a wonderful Conference.

She re-affirmed that Programme Action is the lifeblood of Soroptimist International and was responsible for both SI’s and SIGBI’s status at the United Nations, but that as an Organisation we did not exploit our fantastic work enough in order to attract new Members and raise our profile. The power of Soroptimist International is the snowball effect of so many Soroptimists around the world all working together to improve the lives of women and girls.

The Programme Database and websites should be used to greater effect, and she urged the Federation Programme Action Committee Chairmen present to let the world know what is being done. She also stated that we should be looking forward to future projects as well as looking back at completed ones so that the Organisation is always moving forwards.

6. **FEDERATION PRESIDENT ELECT, ANN HODGSON**
President Elect Ann Hodgson gave a short speech in which she confirmed that she would introduce a Day in which Clubs/Regions/National Associations/Networks/Countries would look forward to projects that could be done to improve the lives of women and girls. She emphasized that powerful projects would bring in new Members and get Soroptimist International noticed.

7. **SIGBI PROGRAMME DATABASE PRESENTATION AND Q&A SESSION – SALLY HIGGINS, SIGBI MEMBERSHIP AND WEBSITE OFFICER**
Sally demonstrated the ease of adding a report to the SIGBI Programme Database, including the new “Save to complete later” facility which had recently been added. The Members present were engaged and there were a number of questions from the floor and several valid suggestions on ways in which the database could be improved and refined. Sally asked that such suggestions be sent to her by email so that she could take them forward.

8. **ASSISTANT PROGRAMME DIRECTORS REVIEW OF REPORTS 2015-2016**
Margaret Clark, APD Advocacy
The Advocacy post was introduced in January 2016, as was the SIGBI Programme Database which allows reports concerning advocacy to be specified. Therefore reports input before that date which involved advocacy cannot be easily identified. There were 144 Programme Focus
Reports connected with Advocacy. Advocacy is an important part of what Soroptimst International does, as it provides a voice for those who haven’t one.

An excellent example of how Advocacy works is the electronic petition which obtained 43K signatures to reunite refugee children from Calais with their families in the UK. A letter was received from the MP and the MP raised this in the UK Parliament with Prime Minister Teresa May. Many have benefited from Soroptimists raising awareness of grass roots issues to seeing changes implemented across the Federation and the world. Work with governments, NGOs and civil society organisations throughout the Federation is undertaken to establish current positions and determine what has to be done to influence decisions before formal agreements are made.

The work undertaken by members enabled SIGBI to be recognised by the UN Economic and Social Council and Special Consultative Status was awarded in August 2013. This status is to be reviewed in 2017 and it is why particular focus is on member’s contributions.

The Beijing +20 review took place September 2015 along with the introduction of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. SIGBI were part of the SI delegation at the Global Summit where all representatives of the political leadership attended. Linked with this is the **2030 Agenda** which is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity recognising that eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the greatest global challenge. All countries and stakeholders acting in collaborative partnership will implement this plan and we recognise our Soroptimist Goals are an integral part of them. Many Soroptimists may be achieving the SDGs without be aware of it.

Working with Parliaments have provided an essential way forward to having our voice heard. The UK Parliament Outreach has given members in the UK access to ongoing information Sessions on various advocacy related topics. A three hour session on, “Get Heard at Parliament”, was piloted and exceeded members’ expectations.

Following this a specially designed programme for Soroptimists to, ‘Train Trainers’ on “Women and Parliament,” was piloted at Westminster and is anticipated reaching out to over 5K people. This programme is now available throughout the UK. Programmes for the devolved nations, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, have been reviewed and a Scottish event is scheduled for November, possibly in the Edinburgh Parliament.

Action has been instigated to progress similar schemes in the other countries in our Federation with positive developments, India most recently having achieved success linking their Parliament with Soroptimists and other countries evidencing their successes with their projects.

The Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) 60 was held in March 2016 in New York with the **Priority theme: Women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development** and the **Review theme: The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (agreed conclusions from the fifty-seventh session)**. SIGBI was represented by 20 delegates including members from Africa, India, Ireland and UK. Advocacy work enabled input for learning, networking, sharing, discussion and finding common ground to enforce change and work towards achieving our Soroptimist Mission and Goals along with the 2030 Agenda.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon finished his 10 year term of office in November and has been replaced with Antonio Guterres, a former Portugese Prime Minister 1995-2002. As High
Commissioner for refugees 2005-2008, he provided assistance to over 60 million refugees worldwide. It may have been disappointing a woman was not elected to replace Ban Ki-Moon but it is felt we have a very competent new UN Secretary General to take us forward and support gender equality.

Rayner Rees, APD Economic Empowerment
Over the past 12 months over 300 reports have been entered on the database under this Programme Objective, £150,645 has been raised and 4,102 women and girls have directly benefitted.

Over 40% of the projects were at a local level and included supporting schools, victims of trafficking, women’s aid, carers and providing support for women offenders both in and out of prison. Over 20% involved providing a wide variety of goods for projects from recycled bras to craft items, which have enabled women and girls to set up small cottage industries. 14% have provided small loans through projects such as Kiva and supported Fair Trade through fund raising and raising awareness. 12% have funded and supported training events, 10% involved direct lobbying at both local and international level on women’s pension rights, gender equality, climate change and stop the traffic.

Soroptimists have shown that they are not afraid to deal with difficult issues, such as gender equality, child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Clubs and Regions/National Associations/Networks are actively engaged in supporting trafficked victims and are working hard to ensure that all women and girls are given the opportunity to be economically empowered. Projects relate to and are beginning to meet the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Many Clubs support Fair Trade, which has been shown to increase standards of living and reduce risk and vulnerability for farmers and workers. The Fair Trade Minimum Price provides a safety net for farmers, which can mean they are less vulnerable to price volatility, leading to a better cash flow and the ability to invest in generating other food sources such as growing new crops (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6).

We need to ensure that workers’ basic rights are protected including a safe working environment, the right to join a trade union and negotiate with their employer on wages and conditions, prohibiting discrimination and forced or illegal child labour. (SDGs 8, 9,10,11,15 and 16.)

Many of our clubs fund and support promote training including advice on switching to environmentally friendly practices. This leads to good agricultural practices, which have encouraged environmentally sustainable production. The Standards also guide producers in adapting to climate change and mitigate their impact. (SDGs 4, 6, 7, 11, 14 and 15.)

Barbara Dixon, Proxy APD Education
In the past year there have been 525 programme reports completed under education with over 9,300 beneficiaries and over £300,000 raised.

Projects on Education have ranged from individual sponsorship of girls to provision of schools in the community. They have covered Health, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Agriculture and the Environment, Modern Day slavery awareness, schools in a box, wood carving lessons to knitting with the brownies, advocacy for girls’ education, small business training and interview techniques as well as literacy classes. Clubs have worked with special needs groups, have supported refuge education and given women a chance to train as teachers. Partnership is becoming more popular and many clubs are
working with friendship links to deliver projects. Barbara outlined the work being done on just three of the many education projects:

Many Clubs donated to Nepal immediately after the earthquake, but support for the **International Presidents’ appeal**, also known as the December 10th appeal, records over £5,000 being raised. Once again funds were raised by many functions, cream teas, auctions, donations in lieu of Christmas cards, sales of brooches and raffles.

The new Federation Project, **Meru Women’s Garden Project**, was launched on International Women’s Day 2016 and will run for 3 years. This project aims to provide a range of education from Agriculture to FGM. A successful day of action has seen our monetary target reach £30,000. The amount will not be updated until after Conference, but as this marks only 8 months of work it is a fantastic amount.

Many Clubs support **Mary’s Meals**, either with back packs or fundraising. £14,500 was raised through many events to support the work of Mary’s Meals which sources local materials and food to support children at school. It is important that when supporting a project we ensure that our work does not undermine local economies.

**Laura Longman, APD Environmental Sustainability**

Over the past year 58 projects have been reported on the database as undertaken by Clubs across the Federation with the aim of helping to make our environment sustainable or responding to the effects of natural disasters. Sadly the impact of environmental changes are becoming more significant and natural disasters are becoming a more frequent occurrence but I am delighted that Clubs are responding to the challenge and have provided clothes, blankets, raised money, rebuilt schools and much more.

This year saw the last of the funds being raised for See Solar Cook Solar by 11 clubs. This money will be used to provide sustainable cooking and lighting solutions in developing countries, enabling women and girls to educate and feed themselves using environmentally sustainable energy.

Clubs continue to educate school children on the importance of the honey bee and the impact it has ensuring a sustainable future for all. It is great to see projects being developed with long term progress in mind.

12 club reports and probably many other unreported clubs have raised funds to help support work being done to improve the lives of women and girls after the Nepal earthquake. With the International President’s Appeal “Educate to Lead Nepal” embracing numerous projects in this badly affected country the magnificent work will continue. I believe we will be getting a more detailed update on the work being done in Nepal at the conference, from the reports I can see that our club in Nepal has been busy providing supplies to the vulnerable, building temporary shelters, providing educational supplies and rebuilding schools.

3 clubs also provided aid in the aftermath of the Cumbrian floods in the UK, this came in the form of financial aid and practical help such as cleaning out flooded homes, wrapping Christmas presents and providing cleaning supplies.

Clubs also continue to support other disaster relief charities such as Shelterbox, Samara’s Aid and School in a Box, and are helping schools and families in areas affected by drought, which is sadly becoming more common as a result of the extreme weather we are starting to experience. SI Cape of Good Hope
has provided much needed bottles of drinking water to families, SI Colombo have provided a preschool with piped water and toilets and clubs in India and Pakistan have provided clean water to schools and villages.

Toilet Twinning has become popular in the UK with a number of clubs taking part. Chester became the first city to be granted the status of the UK’s First Toilet twinned City, in which SI Chester played a significant role by working to persuade firms to adopt a twinned toilet and to raise public awareness of the charity through fun events with toilets. This is in addition to the strong support that clubs still provide to WaterAid, particularly in the UK, through fundraising and awareness raising events.

Many clubs undertook events or projects to mark World Environment Day and World Water Day, which involved raising awareness of environmental issues, clearing rubbish, recycling items, planting trees, educating school children and raising money for local charities.

Every project that protects our environment or encourages the development of sustainable ways of interacting with wildlife and habitats is making a huge change for future generations of women and girls. Without a sustainable environment, women and girls will not be able to achieve their full potential.

**Rita Beaumont, APD Food Security and Healthcare**

Across the two focus areas 411 reports have been received with a total of £211,801.47 being raised, benefiting 7,347 women & girls.

Sustainable Development Goal 2 identifies the aim to End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, with Goal 3 seeking to Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all ages. In March this year the General Assembly of the United Nations recommended 2016-2025 be designated the [Decade for Action on Nutrition](#), led by the UN Food & Agricultural Organisation & World Health Organisation.

We face many challenges. We have seen the devastating outcomes of the Ebola virus in Sierra Leone and the effect of the Zika virus continues to unfold. Advances in science and technology has revolutionised the diagnosis of many diseases; the treatment options available and the success of outcomes is greatly enhanced. One thing that does not change is that women remain the prime carers and projects being undertaken by Clubs demonstrate support to groups of all ages both in Food Security & Healthcare

Across the UK there has been a steady growth in the number local Foodbanks providing emergency provision. The Trussell Trust reported a 2% increase in the emergency three day food parcels given out in the past year, reaching a staggering 1,109,309 parcels. The main reasons given for needing the help is benefit delays and changes, low income and debt. Clubs have raised in excess of £17,000 in cash and food donation equivalents to support local initiatives. Several clubs continue to support Mary’s Meals.

Clubs in India are involved in the national “Fistful of Grain” project aimed at providing food for underprivileged children, needy girls and the destitute elderly living in homes. Examples of work being undertaken have been reported by SI Pune Metro East, SI Bangalore and SI Whitefield.

We live in an ageing society and supporting both individuals facing the challenges of living with dementia and their carers has been reported by an increased number of Clubs across the Federation.
Provision of Feminine Hygiene Protection items to enable girls to attend school and women work whilst menstruating with accompanying health education initiatives has been on the agenda for many Clubs across the Federation.

Many clubs in the UK support overseas projects; evidence of the benefits of collaborative working in partnership with other clubs and agencies is demonstrated. One example is the number of clubs providing items and support for the SI Thames Valley Kori Project, enabling the multifaceted initiative to eliminate FGM across the Kori Region of Sierra Leone to increase both operational capacity and impact on the lives of the women and girls.

Campaigning and fund raising to support various cancer related charities and local schemes is being undertaken by many Clubs across the Federation. In particular Clubs raised awareness and funds during Ovarian Cancer Month and work to support Breast Cancer initiatives.

Preparatory work has commenced ready for an application to be made for the Federation to gain recognition of its work by the World Health Organisation. Statistical evidence supported by detailed multiple examples of projects being undertaken to support the application is being collated.

Jan Hemlin, APD Violence and Conflict Resolution

At the Istanbul Convention in July 2015 the Board agreed 8 new objectives within Goal 2: Elimination of Violence and Conflict Resolution/Peace Promotion now appear as different objectives on the Database.

There were 331 Reports raised over the past year under these objectives. £146,307 was raised and 53,027 people directly benefitted.

The 2016 UN International Day of Peace theme was ‘The Sustainable Development Goals, Building Blocks for Peace”. The SDG’s are integral to achieving peace in our time, as development and peace are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Every single one of the 17 SDGs is a building block in the global architecture of peace. President Margaret’s theme ‘Engineering the Future’ is so relevant for Soroptimists across the Federation contributing through their project work.

Conflict Resolution and Peace Promotion

25 reports were submitted under this objective. A total of £9052 was raised and 350 women and girls benefitted from these projects.

A variety of projects included the well-established Handicap International - Forgotten 10 Challenge held every year around Human Rights Day 10th December. Funds raised last year went towards providing artificial limbs and physiotherapy for children injured in war torn Syria.

A number of clubs knitted and crocheted poppies to fundraise for the British Legion Poppy Appeal.

The UN International Day of Peace, was celebrated by many clubs across the Federation. SI Middlesbrough held a Women for Peace in a World of War conference and SI Londonderry facilitated an event with local organisations to enable peaceful interaction in Londonderry.
Elimination of Violence
306 forms were submitted under this objective with greatest increase in the number of Human Trafficking and Anti-Slavery reports. The funds raised were £137,255 and beneficiaries were 52,677.

An amazing £82,531 was raised by clubs to help victims of trafficking.

23 clubs supported the Purple Teardrop campaign, raising awareness of the plight of women and girls drawn into modern day slavery and human trafficking and forced into prostitution. SI Kenilworth assisted by SI Coventry and SI Leamington & Warwick educated visitors at the Leamington Peace Festival about these issues, and were very successful in collecting over 1000 signatures for the Ban “sex for sale” petition. This could be a record for one event. Their purple stand attracted a steady stream of visitors and possibly two new members.

Please extend my thanks to all your clubs for their programme work in this area. This is my last report for Violence & Conflict Resolution before handing on to Nisha Gosh. I am “changing hats” looking after Education for 2016/17 due to Pam Allinsons’ continued ill health. My background is in Education as a secondary school teacher for over 30 years. I feel I am well equipped for this role. I look forward to supporting you this year.

9.
FRIENDSHIP LINK COORDINATOR, NISHA GHOSH
Over the past four years, Nisha has urged Clubs to make the most of their Friendship Links and work on projects across regions and countries in order to achieve the SDGs.

Some examples of joint projects are:

1. The Kori Development Project - helping a whole community in Sierra Leone.
2. SI St Austell and their project of stitching cushions for heart patients – a project of SI Canterbury in New Zealand.
3. Skirting Science – SI Weston super Mare and SI Thames Valley
4. SI Bilston sending funds to buy water tanks for their Friendship Link SI Northern Jamaica.
5. Knickers for Knowledge- SI Barnstaple for SI Bulawayo
6. SI South England linked with the South Africa. They visited the SOS village in Mamelodi - a great learning process
7. Snap project – of SI Chennai Downtown - SI Runcorn, Frodsham and District annual donation.
8. One member of SI Dundee goes out every November to spend a month with her Friendship Link SI South Kolkata - and work hands-on for their project of educating young girls.
9. 12 clubs from 3 federations come together to raise funds for an orphanage in Petersburg in Russia – what do they do? Showcase Bread from their countries through a calender to raise funds.
10. Of course we all come together for a larger impact through projects - as Project Sierra, The Birthing in Gambia and now the Meru women Garden Project so inspiring for the world to see.
11. SI Malta and SI Enna – gave a life time experience to differently able person by flying them to Italy where their link Club SI ENNA hosted them
So, Hurray for friendship links and the great work done.

10. GROUP DISCUSSION ON POSSIBLE FPAC FORUM 2017 AND FEEDBACK
Barbara Dixon stated that there had been 161 replies from the paper that was sent out about possible changes to the way that FPAC work together and meet. The FPAC meeting is now only half a day and costs approximately £6,000 per hour.

Requests received via the responses were that there should be a Programme Forum Day which is forward-looking instead of retrospective.

FPAC Chairs were given half an hour to write down their thoughts on the proposed format for the FPAC meeting.

A new proforma for the Annual Report will be circulated and feedback collated.

11. LAUREL BECKER PRESIDENT SI SOUTH AFRICA
Laurel was making this presentation on behalf of Lisette Genseberger, President Elect of SI Southern Africa Network, who was unable to attend Conference. She stated that there were 20 Clubs and 330 Members in 7 countries within the Southern Africa Network (SISAN). The distances between countries is great, so SISAN conduct their meetings using Skype.

The Network theme for the current year is “Keeping the girl child in School”, and Laurel spent some time detailing the various projects that Clubs in each of the 7 SISAN Countries that support this theme. SI Blantyre provide a local school with uniforms every year supported by SI Kenilworth. SI Ipsae run an afterschool Club to improve numeracy, literacy and IT skills. SI Cape of Good Hope and SI Durban both built libraries in local schools. SI Masaka continue their long-standing sanitary wear project to enable girls to attend school. SI Bulawayo continue their “Knickers for Knowledge” project in partnership with SI Barnstaple. These are just a few of the projects mentioned.

In March 2016, the SI Future Africa Conference took place in Madagascar and SISAN held a meeting during that Conference. Unfortunately, Malawi and Uganda were unable to attend, but there were representatives from all the other countries.

Friendship Links are valued resources, and Laurel talked through various friendship link projects between SISAN Clubs and other Clubs. There are lots of such projects being undertaken in each country of SISAN, and some wonderful work is being done.

12. THE FUTURE OF PROGRAMME – SUMMARY OF RESULTS FROM DISCUSSION DOCUMENT
Barbara Dixon explained that the discussion about the future of Programme started 12 months ago, and a provisional timetable was developed. A discussion paper was circulated to Clubs and there was a lot of response. In many areas the proposed changes were not received well. Everyone present was urged to encourage new Members to join and Programme Action is the best way of doing this as it is our Unique Selling Point (USP).

Most Members in the UK work towards Projects that UKPAC are doing. There needs to be better communication between UKPAC and FPAC in order to achieve some parallel working between the two and narrow the gap between them.
The issues are:
- Holding Face to Face meetings vs using technology
- Having Cluster Groups rather than one big meeting
- Improved communications
- Introduction of a Programme Forum Day
- Streamlining the FPAC meeting to have greater impact

It is vital to get UKPAC and FPAC working together, and friendship links are very important in achieving this. Barbara made the following points:

1. UKPAC should continue and should be supported by FPAC
2. UKPAC should be encouraged to be as economical as possible but there should be no reduction in Face to Face meetings
3. Need to get the two committees working together
4. Clusters are a good idea with a named APD in charge of each one, for those Clubs outside the UK only, and this will be implemented in 2017 (Barbara asked for a show of hands from those FPAC Chairmen who wanted Clusters)
5. FPAC Meeting needs to be more value for money. Therefore it should be extended to a full day and include more networking and more sharing of projects etc
6. There will be a Task and Finish Group to look at areas of concern, eg contact via the Membership Directory on the Website
7. The contacting of APDs will be made easier
8. Production of “Recipe books” for successful Projects

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
There was no other business.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26 October 2017 at St David’s Hotel, Cardiff Bay, UK.