

# 2017

A Very Happy New Year to everyone; I hope that 2017 brings you all health, happiness and success, particularly in Programme Action!

Reflecting on past work and sharing best practice is so important. When we select the best practice awards for Conference we hope that members will look at them, not just at what was presented on stage, but also on the database.



These projects have been well researched, have S.M.A.R.T. objectives and deliver what is wanted, where and when it is needed.

Please look at the projects and maybe use them to plan your own work, modified for your own needs as necessary.

At this time of year about 80 members of SI are preparing for the trip to the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) in New York next March. This is a time when we can network with others fighting for the same things.

Last year one such contact led to fantastic work between the [White Ribbon Campaign](#) and Soroptimists in Pakistan - let us hope that the contacts made this coming year will have similar successful outcomes.

Chance meetings can have spectacular outcomes - so spread the word wherever you go.

Best wishes for 2017

**Barbara Dixon**  
Programme Director

## World Cancer Day - 4<sup>th</sup> February



World Cancer Day is celebrated each year on 4<sup>th</sup> February. It is organised by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and provides an opportunity for the international community to join together to end the injustice of preventable suffering from cancer.

A few facts from the [WHO](#) (World Health Organisation)

- 8.2 million people die each year from cancer; an estimated 13% of all deaths worldwide
- More than 30% of cases could be prevented
- One fifth of all cancers worldwide are linked to chronic infections; for example the human papillomavirus causes cervical cancer
- The increase in new cases over the next two decades is projected to be 70%
- Up to 100 different cancer types exist, each requiring unique diagnosis and treatment
- Worldwide the five most common types of cancer that frequently kill women (in order of frequency) are breast, lung, stomach, colorectal and cervical but in many developing countries cervical cancer is the most frequent killer



[The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provide a target for promoting healthy living and well-being for everyone. To reach the SDG target of reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases including cancer by one-third by 2030,

governments, NGOs, and all cancer advocates need to take collective action now. Improving access to lifesaving cancer treatment and palliative care is fundamental to achieve the SDGs. Early detection, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatment, including pain relief and palliative care, help increase cancer survival rates and reduce suffering. Treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, tailored to tumour stage, type and available resources. Comprehensive cancer control plans are needed to improve cancer prevention and care, especially in low-income and middle-income countries.

The theme for World Cancer Days between 2016 and 2018 is "We can, I can" and looks at how everyone, as a collective or as individuals, can do their part to reduce the global burden of cancer. Just as cancer affects everyone in different ways, all people have the power to take various actions to reduce the impact that cancer has on individuals, families and communities. Whatever you choose to do 'We can. I can.' make a difference to the fight against cancer.

To find out full details visit [www.worldcancerday.org](http://www.worldcancerday.org)

As a starter here are some of the key messages::

- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- Prevent cancer
- Understand that early detection saves lives
- Create healthy workplaces
- Create healthy cities
- Create healthy schools
- Improve access for cancer care
- Take control of my cancer journey

World Cancer Day is a chance to reflect on what you can do, make a pledge and take action. Ladies let us act to make a difference - "We can, I can"



**Rita Beaumont - APD Food Security/Healthcare**

## For South Asian policy-makers, climate migrants are still invisible



Tasura Begum straightens up from picking a bushel of green chillies and looks at the mighty Padma River flowing by, wondering whose life it ruined today. She remembers how she and her husband watched the Padma River engulf their home and farm – and all their hopes and dreams. Her husband had been forced to take a job as an unskilled construction worker in Saudi Arabia to repay the loan they had taken to buy food and rebuild another hut further back from the river.

Crop failure, rising sea levels and flooding, all caused by climate change, are pushing migration like never before in South Asia, says a joint study released on 8<sup>th</sup> December *'Climate Change Knows No Borders'* published by [ActionAid](#), [Climate Action Network-South Asia](#) and [Bread for the World](#). These organisations warn of the devastating and escalating strain climate change places on migration and call for governments to recognise and fill the policy gap before it blows up into mass migration, unrest and large-scale conflict over resources.

The impact of drought, cyclones, flooding and crop failure this year was spread across India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, affecting hundreds of millions of people and with an estimated reconstruction cost of 1.7 billion dollars.

Despite the clear writing on the wall, the magnitude of climate change remains largely invisible in the migration discourse. Populations forced to migrate, driven by desperation and lack of options, are least secure when they leave home for unknown lands, forced to take lower jobs and often exploited.

Trafficked and exploited women face the brunt of climate migration as they lack a social safety net. There is also the growing and alarming trend of women and girls trafficked into sexual exploitation as a result of migration, and women migrating alone, across borders, are most vulnerable.

But it is more common for men to migrate, leaving millions of female-headed households across the region. This creates enormous pressures on women who, in addition to their traditional roles of child-care etc, must try to assume their absent husbands' agricultural work. Women are often exhausted and, in many cases, fields are left uncultivated as women struggle to cope alone.

A [UN Women study](#) in 2015 found that farm or other work-related stress, increased childcare and household burdens, high occurrence of poor health and threat of physical and sexual violence are faced by women left behind. They also found that, in most cases, men were unable or unwilling to send money back to their households – and a growing trend is for men migrating to cities to never return.

When disasters occur, high levels of male migration mean that fewer men are available for the recovery and rescue process. The impact of this was visible during the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, when some communities had to rely on women, children and the elderly to try to dig survivors free and get food to stranded villages; the wonderful work of Soroptimist clubs in the affected areas has been impressive.

There is a lack of data mapping the role of climate change in overall migration trends in South Asia, and its contribution is not yet clearly understood by policy makers. Even though climate change is clearly leading to ever-greater migration in the region, the lack of clear data and policy analysis means that the issue is still largely invisible in migration discourse and response.

Soroptimists can play an important role in creating a sense of solidarity across South Asia towards those impacted by climate change. By identifying stories that help people to better understand the role of climate change in forcing migration, we can reach out to the public, for example through using social media.



*A week after losing their home to flood waters, this homeless family in Odisha still lives on an asphalt road]*

**Barbara Dixon**

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