

Chairman's Report UKPAC March 2021

Since my last report in November, we have organised the **UKPAC Study Day**, on Saturday April 17th. This day will be interactive and I hope that everyone who is involved will leave with new knowledge and skill to help with their programme action work. We are using a zoom platform, so hopefully this will be familiar to participants

The morning theme is modern day slavery and the speaker will be Dame Sara Thornton, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and she will be followed by a workshop run by the Rights Lab of Nottingham University. The afternoon theme is Domestic Violence and the speaker is Nicole Jacobs, Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner. This will be followed by the parliamentary outreach team led by Rachael Dodgson and Baroness Lorely Burt of Solihull, to help us with our lobbying work. The study day is free to attend, but everyone must register to be sent the link, and we will be having a bit of a practice using some of the features during the meeting.

I congratulate everyone on the marvellous work that has been carried out, lobbying both MPs and those in the House of Lords, about the amendments to the **Domestic Abuse Bill**, which is still going through parliament. This work has been led by Vice-Chair Lindsay and is already showing signs of being effective and making a change to help the women and girls for whom work.

It was my turn to chair the meeting of the **6'O' group** in February and am pleased to report that a move to greater meaningful collaboration was agreed. We recently collaborated with the WI on their march for Violence against women in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard and I have invited members of 6'O' to attend our study day. The Townswomen's Guild were remembering strong women, both historical and contemporary as a virtual project for International Women's Day, and I am pleased to report that UKPAC contributed to that event and linked it to SIGBI's 100 Women project. We are stronger together and working with other women's organisations is tangible way of achieving more.

The **Civil Society Women's Alliance** (CSWA) UK is working hard to bring pressure to bear on the UK government about many issues. We are a member of this group and I sit on the core group. This group meets with the Gender Equality Office regularly and manages to have a meaningful dialogue. The work is aimed at influencing policy at home, but also abroad and works to make representation at the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) of the UN. There is a move to more right wing, nationalistic government worldwide and so it requires constant pressure to maintain the rights of women already gained and still push for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and moves to equality for women everywhere. Only last week Turkey annulled their Istanbul Convention laws which they had already agreed and ratified, so there is much for us to do.

C-19 has certainly highlighted the inequalities and vulnerabilities of huge sectors of the population, but our database shows that we are all still working to make a difference to the lives of women and girls. Since my last report in November 759 **PFRFs** have been entered on the database, covering all aspects of our work - signing petitions against modern day slavery, violence against women and sexual harassment, supporting women in refuges and those less fortunate with Christmas gifts and food parcels, campaigning for improvement in housing, the banning of single use plastic, tree planting and many innovative fundraising projects for beneficiaries at home and the rest of our Federation to name a few

Liz Dominey