

## PROGRAMME NEWS

*No. 3, January 2010*

### Dear Soroptimists, Happy New Year 2010!

Wishing you all a year filled with happiness, passion, adventure, joy and good health! The Federation Programme Team looks forward to an efficient cooperation with you. With your support the Federation will realise great projects and continue to make a difference in the lives of women and girls.

### Long Term Project

Soroptimist International's Quadrennial Project (Project SIerra) from 2007-2011 is coming to an end next year. Thus the International Programme Team is working on the proposal of topics for a Long Term Project (LTP) which will be replacing the Quadrennial Project. The LTP will be launched at the SI Convention in Montreal, Canada in 2011. The main goal is to mobilise all Soroptimist clubs across the globe towards one topic. In the coming months, a number of topics will be presented to SI clubs. It is then up to the clubs to choose the topics from the proposed list. More communication and detailed information on the LTP will follow.



The United Nations declared 2010 as the international year of biodiversity. It is to celebrate the diversity of life on earth. The Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as “the variability among living organisms from all sources [...] this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems” (Article 2, CBD). There cannot be any life on earth without biodiversity hence the protection of biodiversity is in our self-interest. Biodiversity represents nature's support with the world's essential ecological functions. Therefore, the loss of biodiversity threatens our personal health, food supplies, opportunities for recreation, sources of wood, medicine and energy.

### What you can do to safe biodiversity?

<http://www.countdown2010.net/biodiversity>

<http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/>

1. Take public transportation, bike, walk, or carpool to work at least one day a week. Avoid air travel where possible.
2. Buy food, preferably organic food—vegetables, fruits, dairy, eggs, and meat—from a farmer's market at least one day a week.
3. Eat sustainably harvested seafood and farmed fish that is herbivorous, like catfish, tilapia, and shellfish. Avoid farmed carnivorous fish like salmon and shrimp.
4. Install at least one compact fluorescent light bulb in your home—it will save roughly 30 EUR in electricity and replacement bulb costs each year, and reduce carbon emissions by a ton every three years.
5. Turn off lights in empty rooms.
6. Lower the thermostat by at least 1 degree ° C in winter.
7. Stop using herbicides and pesticides on your lawn.
8. Only drink wines with natural cork stoppers.
9. Tell everyone what you are doing to conserve biodiversity and ask them to join you. Support representatives who act for biodiversity.
10. Above all, do not waste—reduce your consumption, buy only what you really need, and re-use and re-cycle whatever and whenever you can.

**Biodiversity is life  
Biodiversity is our life**

### COP 15 – Copenhagen

In the presence of numerous international heads of state, UN representatives, experts, activists, journalists and various organisations, Soroptimist International was the voice of women at the United Nations Climate Change Conference from 7 – 18 December 2009 in Copenhagen. Although the outcome of the conference was rather disappointing, Soroptimists were very visible in their work at the Conference. The Copenhagen Accord, a new

framework for addressing global warming, was adopted at the Conference. In the so-called "alternative" Forum of NGOs, Soroptimists' stands were very well visited and numerous national as well as international TV channels featured Soroptimists' interviews, e.g. the Belgian channel Deredactie.be.

### **The European Women's Lobby 50/50 Campaign for Democracy**

The European Women's Lobby's (EWL) '50/50 Campaign for Democracy' was launched in September 2008. The 50/50 Campaign aims to put gender equality at the core of the European political agenda and to promote the equal representation of women and men in decision-making in all the European institutions, in particular in the European Parliament.

Numerous people across Europe signed the 'EWL petition' to improve European democracy and the representation of women in European decision-making bodies. 'Model lobbying letters' were provided to convince national political parties to put more women on their election lists, or to be sent to heads of governments to make gender equality a priority for the composition of the next Commission.

The number of female Members of the European Parliament (MEP) has risen from 30 to 35 % and the number of women Chairs and Vice-Chairs of parliamentary Committees has increased from 25 to 38 %, giving them important visibility. Following intensive lobbying by the EWL for at least one of the four 'EU Top Jobs' to go to a female candidate, the nomination of Catherine Ashton to the post of EU foreign policy chief was highly welcomed.

<http://www.genderbalancedcommission.eu/female-commissioners/>



### **SI/E Best Practice Awards**

This year the **Best Practice Awards** will be presented during the Governors' meeting in Ghent, Belgium. As announced in December, we are in the process of revising the criteria and we will send it to all Unions and Single Clubs in February. This will give you ample time to do the pre-selection.

### **Beijing +15 / CSW**

**NGO Global Forum for Women: Beijing+15 (27 & 28 February 2010)** and the fifty-fourth session of the **Commission on the Status of Women (1-12 March 2010)** will take place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Next year's CSW will review what has happened since Beijing 1995, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

All members are welcome to attend this exciting meeting which addresses many aspects regarding the status of women. All arrangements for travel, visa and accommodation, and other expenses, are the responsibility of the participants themselves. For preregistration, please contact

[suba@soroptimisteurope.org](mailto:suba@soroptimisteurope.org)

Please check the following website for regular updates:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/>

### **Important dates 2010**

1-12 March	Commission on the Status of Women New York, USA
8 March	International Women's Day
22 March	World Water Day
23 May	6 <sup>th</sup> International Peace Marathon, Kigali, Rwanda
3-4 July	Governors' Meeting, Ghent, Belgium
21 September	International Day of Peace
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
10 December	Human Rights Day Soroptimist Day

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We look forward to your comments and suggestions about the Programme News.

Please send your comments directly to Suba Parthiban at [suba@soroptimisteurope.org](mailto:suba@soroptimisteurope.org)

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