

Anglican women meet to work towards empowerment, equality

Women of the Anglican Communion will come together in New York this month to focus on the welfare of their sisters throughout the world at the first formal meeting of the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN).

Building on the strong presence of the IAWN during the 2008 Lambeth Conference, women representing 26 of the 38 Anglican provinces are expected to attend the meeting February 22 – 27 at the Tutu Center for Peace at the General Theological Seminary.

“We will focus on progress or lack thereof toward equality and empowerment for women in our regions,” said Priscilla Julie of the Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean, who chairs the IAWN steering group.

“How does our situation measure up against the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goal #3: to promote gender equality and empower women?” she said. “Even more important, what progress has been made on resolution 13–31 of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in 2005, which acknowledged the importance of this MDG goal and requested “all member



Priscilla Julie

churches to work toward the realization of this goal in their structures of governance, and in other bodies to which they nominate or appoint.”

The IAWN will

report to the Anglican Consultative Council in May when it convenes in Kingston, Jamaica. The report will include activities of the IAWN in the four years since ACC-13 met in Nottingham, plans for the future, and recommendations for ACC action.

During their week together in New York, IAWN representatives will share their struggles and successes, build on common goals that have been made, and plan for the future. They will worship, make reports, vote on new members to the Steering Group and create recommendations for further action.



IAWN will meet at the Desmond Tutu Center at General Theological Seminary in New York City.

Some will stay on in New York to attend the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) as part of the Anglican delegation organized by the Anglican Observer's Office. That meeting runs from March 2–13, with the theme "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS."

IAWN was formed in November 1996 following a consultation convened by the ACC and funded by the Mothers' Union, headquartered in London, and the United Thank Offering of The Episcopal Church. Women from 14 of the (then) 32 provinces of the Anglican Communion met in London and agreed that IAWN, an official network of the Communion, be formed to report the work of women and the challenges that they face to the ACC.

In March 2006, IAWN was re-invigorated at a meeting of Anglican delegates to the 50th UNCSW, led by Archdeacon Taimalelagi Fagamalama Tuatagaloa-Matalavea, former

Anglican Observer, and Dr. Jenny Plane Te Paa of New Zealand, with support from Anglican Women's Empowerment (AWE).

Kim Robey, program officer for Women's Ministries and IAWN secretary, is coordinating the meeting, hosted by The Episcopal Church. "I'm so pleased with the eager response we have had to the invitations for this meeting," she said. "It's a tribute to the Anglican Communion's growing commitment to women that representatives are coming from so many provinces."

Provinces represented at the meeting are: Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia, Australia, Burundi, Canada, Central Africa, England, the U.S.-based Episcopal Church, Hong Kong, Indian Ocean, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Melanesia, Mexico, North India, Pakistan, Philippines, Scotland, South Africa, Southern Cone, Sudan, Uganda, Wales, West Africa, and West Indies.

—*Anglican Communion News Service*

For more information:

Anglican Consultative Council resolutions:

www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc13/resolutions.

The Beijing Platform:

www.episcopalchurch.org/women.htm (click on "Beijing Circles")

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm

The Anglican Observer's Office at the United Nations

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/un/>

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