



ACWW EUROPEAN AREA CONFERENCE



«Working with women worldwide»

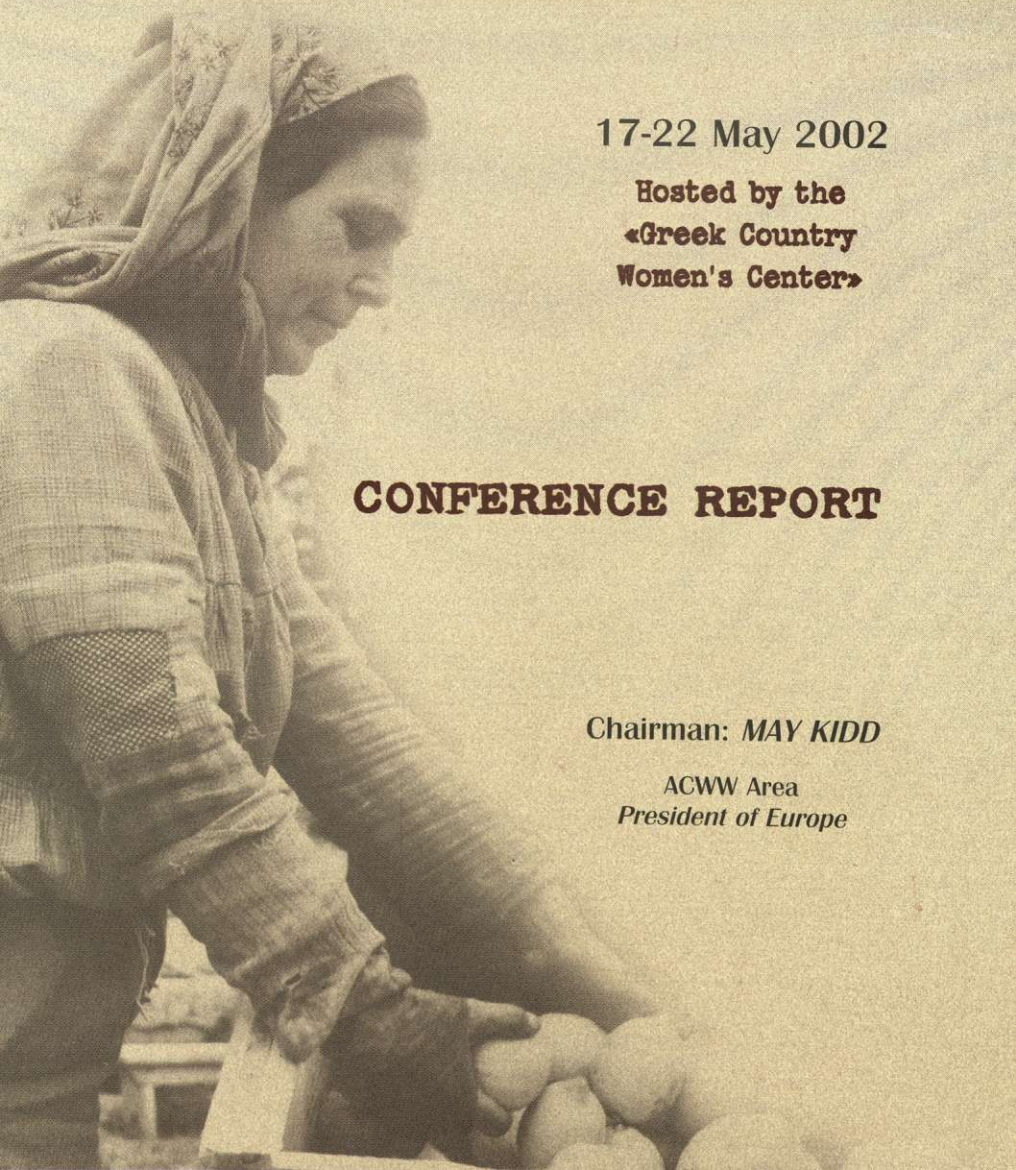
17-22 May 2002

Hosted by the
«Greek Country
Women's Center»

CONFERENCE REPORT

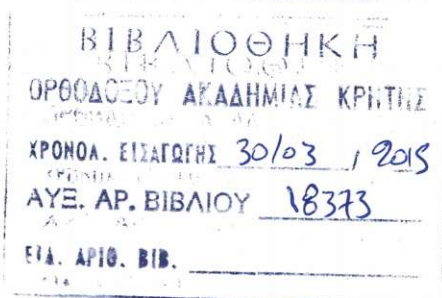
Chairman: *MAY KIDD*

ACWW Area
President of Europe



ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

"Working with Women Worldwide"



European Area Conference

17-22 May 2002

Hosted by the

«Greek Country Women's Center»

Orthodox Academy of Crete, Greece

Report of ACWW European Area Conference

17-22 May 2002

Orthodox Academy of Crete, Greece

Conference Chairman:

May Kidd

ACWW Area President Europe

Hosted by

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CONTENTS

1. Acknowledgements5
2. Conference Programme6
3. Opening Ceremony and Speeches9
4. ACWW Afternoon . . . . .	.15
5. Seminar . . . . .	.18
6. Discussion Group Reports . . . . .	.23
7. Members' Presentations . . . . .	.30
8. Follow-up of ACWW Resolutions & Recommendations . . . . .	.49
9. Conference Summation . . . . .	.50
10. Close of Conference . . . . .	.53
11. Social Events . . . . .	.53
12. Weekend Activities . . . . .	.54
13. ACWW European Area Business . . . . .	.59
14. List of Conference delegates . . . . .	.62
15. List of Conference Committee Members . . . . .	.64
16. Sponsors . . . . .	.64

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to present this report of "THE CRETE CONFERENCE" held in May 2002.

I acknowledge with grateful thanks: the welcome and hospitality of Archbishop Eirineaos; the constant support of Dr Alexander Papaderos and all the staff at OAC, especially Vagelis, Vickie and Takis; the generosity of the many sponsors; the excellence of the speakers, translators, reporters, discussion group chairmen and rapporteurs; the participation, support and friendship of delegates from all countries; the invaluable assistance of Alison Bayley in compiling this report.

My deep gratitude goes to the President, the Board and members of the Greek Country Women's Centre, the local members on Crete and those who came from Aegina, Thessalonika and the mainland. They helped in so many ways, often unseen. Their warm welcome, hard work, generosity and hospitality knew no bounds. They made us feel at home in their country.

Finally, there are no words to adequately express my thanks to the General Secretary, Menie Pavella. Her friendly manner, her cooperation, her translating skills, her enthusiasm and dedication ensured the success of The Crete Conference.

May Kidd
ACWW Area President Europe
& the Mediterranean

ACWW European Area Conference
17-22 May 2002
Orthodox Academy of Crete, Greece

Hosted by the Greek Country Women's Centre

Chairman: May Kidd

ACWW Area President Europe

Friday 17 May

Arrival & Registration

20.00 Welcome Reception by O.A.C.

Music Vassilis Carefillakis

Saturday 18 May

07.30 *Breakfast*

08.30 Field trips:

a. Olive co-operative at Kolympari b. Ceramic workshop at Nohia
c. Ecological farm

13.30 *Lunch at O.A.C.*

15.00 Introductory Session & Preliminary Area Business

16.30 Coffee Break

17.00 Field trips: Venizelos Tombs & Chania Harbour

21.30 *Dinner Let's get acquainted*

Greek Dances: **Women's Greek Lyceum**

Sunday 19 May

08.00 Departure to Metropolitan Church, Platanos

10.00 *Breakfast* at Phalassarna

11.30 Memorial Service at Fotini's graveyard Saint Kyr-Yiannis

12.30 Visit to hand-carved olive-wood workshop

14.00 *Lunch* in Kastelli given by **Archbishop Eirineas**

15.30 Free time

17.30 Women's Co-operative Fair in City Hall, Kastelli

19.00 Official Celebration of the Battle of Crete

19.15 Euro-Mediterranean Youth Centre - Presentation of the Battle of Crete

21.30 *Dinner* at OAC given by Prefectural and Municipal Authorities

Monday 20 May

07.30 *Breakfast*

Session I

09.00 Welcome to Conference

- May Kidd**, ACWW Area President Europe
- 09.10 Welcome to Greece
Heleni Chrysochoou, President of Greek Country Women's Centre
- 09.20 Greetings to Conference
- 09.35 Opening Ceremony
Archbishop Eirineaos
- 09.50 Address: "Working with Women Worldwide"
Hilda Stewart, ACWW World President
- 10.15 Keynote Speaker: **Alexander Papaderos**, Director of O.A.C.
 "If one part suffers all suffer together. If one flourishes all rejoice together."
- 10.45 *Coffee break*

Session 2

- 11.15 **Kyriakos Rodousakis**, Ambassador to Japan "Fotini Anoussaki"
- 11.30 **Nikos Psillakis**, former General Secretary Ministry of Agriculture
 "The Olive Tree, the Environment and Cretan Women"
- 11.55 **Dr Antonia Trihopoulou**, Professor of Nutrition, University of Athens
 "Traditional Foods in the Mediterranean Diet"
- 12.20 Panel of Speakers, Questions & Discussion
- 13.30 *Lunch*

Session 3

ACWW AFTERNOON

- 15.00 **May Kidd**, European Area President's Report
- 15.20 **Ursula Goh**, Deputy World President / Agriculture Committee
 Chairman
Sandra Broadrick-Allen, UN Committee Chairman. "ACWW & the UN"
Jean Blair, Promotions and Publications Committee Chairman
Angela Martin, Member of Projects Committee
- 16.20 Questions and Discussion
- 16.45 *Coffee break*

Session 4

- 17.15 European Area Business
- 19.00 Exhibitions / Displays by Member Societies
- 20.00 *Dinner*
- 21.00 **You Entertain Us**

Tuesday 21 May

- 07.30 *Breakfast*

SEMINAR

"Working with Women in their families, societies, communities, NGOs, countries."

Session 1

- 09.00 **Dr Clio Presvelou**, Dean University of the People, Athens
"Metamodernistic Trends and Rural Women's Activities"
09.25 **Harikleia Kalliteraki**, former Dean Home Economics College
"Co-operative Aspects in relation to family life and the community"
09.45 **Nelly Lagakou**, High School Counselor / Author
"Healthy and sound ways of love in the family"
10.05 Questions and Discussion
10.45 *Coffee break*

Session 2

- 11.45 Presentations by members and societies
13.30 *Lunch*

Session 3

- 15.00 **Eftihia Pefkianaki**, Deputy Principal Kasteli Lyceum
"The Women of the Countryside through time"

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Working with Women Worldwide

- 15.25 Topics
a. health & nutrition b. agriculture & environment c. technology &
communication d. education & lifelong learning
17.00 *Coffee break*

Session 4

- 17.30 Discussion Groups (continued)
20.00 *Gala Dinner* offered by the Municipal Authority of Kolympari

Wednesday 22 May

- 07.30 Breakfast

Session 1

- 09.00 Reports from Discussion Groups
10.00 ACWW Resolutions and Recommendations follow-up
"What has your society done since Hamilton"
10.45 *Coffee break*

Session 2

- 11.45 Unfinished Area Business and offers to host next Area
Conference
12.10 Conference Summation
12.30 Votes of Thanks and Farewells
13.00 *Lunch*

ACWW EUROPEAN AREA CONFERENCE

17 - 22 May 2002

"Working with Women Worldwide"

Chairman: May Kidd, Scotland, ACWW Area President Europe

165 delegates representing 25 countries were present. The ACWW Board members attending the Conference were Hilda Stewart, World President; Ursula Goh, Deputy World President; Sandra Broadrick-Allen, Chairman UN Committee; Jean Blair, Chairman P&P Committee.

Monday 20 May - Session I

Official Opening

The official opening of the Conference took place on Monday 20 May. Conference Chairman May Kidd extended a warm welcome to delegates from all parts of Europe, and gave a special welcome to the guests from all over Greece, especially the many gentlemen who had honoured this gathering of women with their presence and their support.

She introduced Heleni Chrysochoou, President of the Greek Country Women's Centre, who welcomed everyone to Greece. She also introduced Menie Pavella, General Secretary of the Greek Country Women's Centre, who had co-ordinated the local arrangements and who acted as translator when required throughout the Conference.

Greetings were received from the Greek Ministry of Finance; Minister of Agriculture; Press Ministry; former ACWW World President, Lyndsay Hackett Pain Mundy; Southern Africa Area President, Anna Boshoff; President of the Austrian Country Women, Lilly Ertl; "Estia Miteras", sister society in Greece; President of the International Federation for Home Economics, Gertraud Pichler; individual ACWW member Sheila Brooks.

Greetings were delivered personally by several of the guests, including Mr Bakopoulos, General Director of the Ministry of

Agriculture; Mr Meheloyiannis, former Congressman of Crete; Mr Dermitjakis, Mayor of Pelekanos; Mr Fountoulakis, Mayor of Voukolios.

Opening Ceremony Archbishop Eirineaos

Archbishop Eirineaos, Founder of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, has devoted his life to the people of Crete. He has supported the founding of 35 Women's Organisations.

In the humble principality of Crete people talk about the oldest olive tree. I must be the most ancient man in Greece! I am honoured by ACWW's visit to Crete, and I applaud the organisation which helps the women of the countryside to gain new skills. The conference has the atmosphere of the women of the Bible. An effort has to be made for the women of the countryside, the pace of life has become so fast. People are not staying in the villages; numbers in the school are dwindling. Resolutions from conference need to go to our governments. We cannot afford to lose the human element. They must take care of the women of the countryside, and to lose that is to start losing everything. I give a message to all mothers to support the countryside. We have local songs about brave men - man is the child of woman.

We have just celebrated the period of Easter; let's make the conference a Resurrection of the Countryside. I congratulate you on your effort and work to safeguard the countryside. Creative women can offer so much.

Address Hilda Stewart, ACWW World President *"Working with Women Worldwide"*

In 1929 the Scotswoman Lady Aberdeen, the Swiss Elsie Zimmern and the Canadian Mrs Alfred Watt came together and were the driving force and founders of ACWW.

ACWW's consultative status at the United Nations is very important and is dependent on good, two-way communication between member societies and our hard-working, dedicated representatives, including the two present at this conference, Otilie Gambrell and Agnete Weigl, who attend the UN meetings in Vienna on behalf of ACWW.

ACWW is planning five workshops in this triennium: one in each of Zambia, Trinidad & Tobago, Africa, Costa Rica and Eastern Europe.

Half the people in the world have to survive on \$2 per day; one quarter of the world's population never get a glass of clean water. Somewhere in the world one woman dies every minute in childbirth. Globalisation is having a catastrophic effect on agriculture. Cheap food and supermarket powers affect all. Food security must be protected.

One of the biggest problems in the world is the HIV/AIDS epidemic; the innocent victims are the children, with an estimate of 13 million orphans and increasing child prostitution. ACWW, through its resolutions, is committed to these issues. There is a need for peace in the world - as women and mothers it has to be our greatest concern.

**Keynote speaker Dr Alexander Papaderos,
General Director of Orthodox Academy of Crete**

*"If one part suffers, all suffer together.
If one flourishes, all rejoice together."*

I wish to re-emphasise our grateful thanks for your visit, and for choosing Crete. During the pastoral term of Archbishop Eirineas over the last 40 years, the work of women in communities has been supported here in Kolympari.

This is a place of memories, look to the east and you will see where people came uninvited to invade Crete. There are in the area the graves of many young Cretan people. Services of reconciliation are shared on the anniversary of the Cretan Invasion of 21st May 1941.

ACWW's vision of globalisation helps in the understanding of other nations, and fosters tolerance.

I believe that everyone has more than one talent. Talented people are not gifted, but they become gifted when a talent benefits others. The new millennium has started with the suffering in Afghanistan, Israel and Palestine, and in the USA on September the 11th. Here in OAC we celebrate the Resurrection and Jesus's message of hope for women and for all people.

**The session concluded with the singing of ACWW's
Song of Peace, to the tune of Sibelius's Finlandia,
accompanied by Elsie Brown on piano.**

Monday 20 May - Session 2

Speaker Kyriakos Rodousakis, Ambassador to Japan
"Fotini Anoussaki"

Kyriakos Rodousakis had known Fotini Anoussaki for many years and felt honoured to speak about her. She came to live in Crete as a young child, grew up amongst the farming community and came to know of the problems and struggles of the women as she travelled to the villages, talking to them about these problems concerning health and the education of their children, giving assistance where she could.

It became her passionate desire to help to upgrade the work of women in the home and in local affairs. In this aim she had the support of His Eminence Archbishop Eirineas.

When her family moved to Athens, she widened her interests to improve life for women in the whole country, writing to the newspapers, seeking information from the Ministry of Agriculture and other research organisations. Her monthly letters to Crete developed into a newspaper 'The Chronicle of Kissamos and Selinos'. This became a valuable newspaper for the region. She was Chief Editor, writer and photographer - a person with great enthusiasm and stamina. She returned in the mid-60s to live in Kissamos. She worked to solve problems in the area, such as extending and improving the road system, advocating health centres and dealing with pollution.

Fotini was much to the fore in creating the Greek Country Women's Centre in 1978. She became its first General Secretary and, later, its President until her death. Her death prevented her from hosting the first ACWW Conference in Crete, for which she had longed. The continuation of 'The Chronicle' still gives strength to the people today, and her work is continued by her sister Maria.

Speaker Nikos Psillakis, Organic Grower
of Olive Trees, former General Director,
Ministry of Agriculture

"The olive tree, the environment and Cretan women"

The conservation of the environment is of great importance today. In the past 30 years the planet has lost 30% of its natural resources, averaging 1% per year. A need has arisen to protect the environment

and to serve the needs of the economy by developing suitable techniques of agriculture.

The Mediterranean region grows 95% of the world's olive trees, approximately 800 million trees. In Crete in 1960 there were 12 million olive trees; by 2000 this had increased to 40 million due to improved techniques in cultivation. The island of Crete today is a green forest of olive trees. The environmental improvement has come about because:

1. the area of olive tree cultivation has increased in place of cereals
2. the soil has been protected from erosion by controlling the streams and directing the water through concrete channels
3. the deep roots of olive trees hold the soil together, thus preventing soil erosion
4. the olive tree is evergreen and carries out photosynthesis all the year round, with the long period of sunny days in Crete
5. chemicals are not used to control pests or as fertilisers. Biological methods are now used, e.g. pheromones and insect traps stop spoilage of the fruits; the prunings from the trees after harvesting are given a water treatment and returned to the soil as fertiliser.

In the past women have carried out the harvesting of olives by hand, but now machinery is used. Today, women's role is in following the Cretan diet with its increased use of olive oil.

**Speaker Dr Antonia Trihopoulou,
Professor of Nutrition, University of Athens
*"Traditional foods in the Mediterranean diet"***

Mediterranean diet refers to dietary patterns found in olive-growing areas of the Mediterranean region in the '60s. There are several variants of the Mediterranean diet, but 8 common characteristics can be identified: high monounsaturated-to-saturated lipids ratio (mainly olive oil), high consumption of vegetables, fruits, legumes and unrefined cereals, moderate consumption of meat and meat products, sea food and ethanol consumption at moderate levels and mainly in the form of wine. Wine has been consumed in moderation and generally during meals in many Mediterranean Countries, in Moslem Mediterranean Countries, however, consumption of alcohol is prohibited on religious grounds.

There is growing evidence that Mediterranean diet is beneficial to health; the evidence is stronger for coronary heart disease, but it also applies to some forms of cancer. Results from recent investigations provide a strong biomedical foundation for the beneficial effects of the Mediterranean diet.

In Greece, the Ministry of Health has issued a poster depicting a Greek version of the Harvard developed Mediterranean diet pyramid, acknowledging the importance of this pattern for the health of the Greek population. Moreover, the Hellenic Supreme Scientific Health Council has recently called for the development of a document summarizing Food Based Nutrition Guideline for the Greek population, taking into account evidence from studies in this population¹.

The global acknowledgment of the Mediterranean diet as a model of healthy nutrition, in conjunction with the fact that traditional Mediterranean foods are particularly appealing from the aspect of organoleptic characteristics, creates promising prospects for the productive and export activities of the food and beverage industry. The achievement of this objective, however, prerequisites the standardization of food production, in order for the products to present a stable high quality and conform to contemporary perception on food safety, as well as the legal securing of traditional foods.

During the last years an attempt has been made in Greece to formulate a framework for the systematic investigation of the nutritional value of traditional foods and recipes. The more specific aims of this approach are: the accumulation of scientific knowledge with respect to the effects of traditional Greek diet on health, the formation of Mediterranean type-meals, and the investigation of the historical and cultural identity of the Greek simple and composite foods (recipes).

The above approach accommodates health promotion, at a national and international level, whereas at the same time benefits national economy and contributes to the preservation of cultural inheritance.

References

- ¹ Ministry of Health and Welfare, Supreme Scientific Health Council Dietary Guidelines for adults in Greece Archives of Hellenic Medicine 1999, 16(5) 516-524.

Monday 20 May - Session 3

ACWW Afternoon

May Kidd opened the session by remembering Past Area Presidents Mrs Yrsa Berner, Norway, and Mrs Margaret Erraught, Ireland, who had died recently. A minute's silence was observed.

Report May Kidd, ACWW Area President Europe

ACWW has just under 400 member societies around the world. They are split into nine Areas of which Europe is one. All Areas are different, with different strengths and different problems. Some are huge geographically. Some are scattered over many islands. Some are richer and some are poorer. Some Areas cover many diverse cultures.

What about our Area - Europe?

There are currently almost 200 member societies in the European Area. So half the member societies of the world are in Europe, which highlights the sheer scale of the Area in terms of membership.

The societies are spread around 25 countries with as many different languages. As well as the member societies, there are 436 individual members in Europe.

Each ACWW Area is looked after by an Area President. She has several responsibilities:

1. It is the Area President's job to maintain contact with her member societies, to keep them informed and to help them when appropriate and possible. I do this by regular Area Newsletters, of which there have been 4 to date. These go to all member societies and also to about 20 other groups who have at some point been interested or involved in ACWW. So there is a mail-out of about 220 for each newsletter.

Thank you to all who write back to me, whether by email, fax or post. I appreciate your messages, especially the information about your society's activities. This can then be passed on to others through the newsletter. Please keep on keeping me informed.

2. It is the Area President's job to represent her Area on the Board of ACWW and to take joint responsibility for the wider work of ACWW. The Board met briefly in Hamilton at the close of the World Conference. Then there was a 3-day meeting in London in October 2001. I found it particularly helpful to meet and chat with the other

Area Presidents, to hear about their Areas, to share our ideas and hopes for the future.

3. It is the Area President's job to communicate regularly with Central Office and to keep them informed. She does not have secretarial help within Central Office. She is responsible for that herself, and she probably works from home, as I do.

4. It is the Area President's job to visit her societies, insofar as restrictions of time and finance allow. Last October I visited Greece to meet with the Greek Country Women. In December I attended Advent in Vienna, the international meeting of the Austrian Countrywomen. Otherwise my travels have been within the United Kingdom, in England and Scotland. Last month I met with two groups of Countrywomen from Germany, who were touring Scotland by coach and visited a farm near my home. I met them over coffee at the farm. We ended up singing Auld Lang Syne together in the cattle shed.

I now need to make a future travel plan to cover the rest of 2002 and all of 2003. If you would like me to visit your society, please talk to me about it here, or contact me at home after conference.

5. It is the Area President's job, with the help of the hostess society, to organise an Area Conference. And, thanks to the Greek Country Women's Centre, here we are!

These then are the duties and responsibilities of the Area President. What a challenge!

There is something very special and significant about holding the first European Area Conference of the new millennium on the island of Crete, the cradle of European civilisation. Let this sense of history be our inspiration in our discussions and deliberations. We are seeking better ways, a fairer society for all, peace without violence, a safe future for our children and our children's children. In other words, we are seeking a new world.

I end with the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

"I believe that, to meet the challenge of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for his or her own self, family or nation, but for the benefit of all mankind. Universal responsibility is the real key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace, the equitable use of natural resources and, through concern for future generations, the proper care of the environment."

**Speaker Ursula Goh, Malaysia, Deputy World
President, Chairman Agriculture Committee**

It is good that earlier speakers have emphasised the importance of agriculture. The Agriculture Committee has now replaced the former Ad Hoc Committee. This young committee knows that needs vary from country to country. It can only carry out what it can afford to do. Three of the committee's five members are present, one from Netherlands, one from Norway and one from England.

Mrs Goh spoke on her work as Deputy President. As well as being The World President's deputy, she had also been made responsible for East, West and Central Africa. She follows up the progress of various projects. She has travelled around with the World President, which has given her a good knowledge of the workings of ACWW.

**Speaker Sandra Broadrick-Allen, USA,
Chairman United Nations Committee.**

Peace is not just absence of hostilities, it is also a quality of life. ACWW was one of the founding organisations of the United Nations. ACWW has consultative status at the UN. It has eleven UN representatives who can attend UN meetings and workshops around the world.

The ACWW UN committee works on resolutions passed at ACWW world conferences. It deals with health, the status of the girl child, education, and the topic of ageing.

- Half the world cannot practise their religion without fear of harassment, torture and death.
- If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of the people in the world.
- If you have money in your purse, even a small amount, you are in the top 8% of the world's wealthy.
- If you can read you are more blessed than two billion people who cannot read or write - one third of the world's population.

The speaker urged us to tap into the various UN websites and keep up-to-date with what is happening.

**Speaker Jean Blair, Northern Ireland, Chairman
Promotions and Publications Committee.**

The committee is responsible for The Countrywoman, all ACWW's promotional leaflets, the Annual Report, and now the website;

www.acww.org.uk. The committee secretary is Angela Stephen, Editor of The Countrywoman.

The speaker emphasised the benefits of having Individual Membership of ACWW, which keeps you much more in contact with the workings of ACWW. For £15 per year (25 euros), you are helping your organisation provide the foundation for all activities. As an individual member you have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping women worldwide to improve their status and education, health and nutrition, environment and sustainable development, labour and income generation - all things that many of us take for granted.

**Speaker Angela Martin, Northern Ireland, member
of the Projects Committee.**

This committee receives a huge number of applications each year and after they have been sifted many times, the final selection is made. Projects which are given 80% of the funding requested include small income-generating projects, leadership training, health and nutrition, education and literacy programmes. All the applications must be women-driven. All projects are carefully monitored during their duration.

Tuesday 21 May

SEMINAR:

**Working with Women in their families,
societies, communities, NGOs, countries**

Note: During Tuesday the Conference delegates were pleased to welcome a party of students with their teacher, from a College on mainland Greece.

**Speaker Dr Clio Presvelou, Dean of the University
of the People, Athens**

"Metamodernistic Trends and Rural Women's Activities"

Many of the features of post-modern society - world markets for goods and services, competitive behaviour among companies,

flexibility in the job market - are very new to European societies. As a result, social, family and individual patterns of behaviour are being continuously modified. Every day brings new inventions and technological achievements in the area of information and communications technology. These in turn impact on social behaviour and result in new demands in terms of education and re-training for a whole array of new professions. At the same time traditional professions and qualifications vanish whereas the numbers of unemployed increase.

Contemporary men and women, especially the young, tend to become unsure of themselves because they cannot manage alone all the changes that take place in their lives. They feel constantly under stress. They feel that long-term planning is not possible, relationships are fragile just as jobs are fragile. This can lead to an identity crisis "Who am I?" "How can I succeed in life?" "Is this a good choice?" Intimate and family relationships suffer.

A rural environment is on the whole less stressful and provides more opportunities for stable relationships. Marriage and family relationships remain more stable in villages than in urban areas. On the other hand, marriage for rural males becomes more difficult because young girls prefer to settle in urban areas.

Work opportunities for rural women and girls are in the process of being changed. The first requirement is to be trained in information and communications technology. Acquiring a computer and other communications material as well as taking a subscription to the Internet and other services may mean an important financial investment which all households cannot afford. Perhaps communities could organise courses for the women who cannot afford to pay the training fees.

Women's involvement in rural activities is expected to become more varied in future. Their involvement with family, farm and community matters will be a mixture in terms of time allocated to each of these dimensions.

The traditional know-how in terms of food production and food preparation, in terms of keeping alive the whole regional culture, is vanishing. There is a great need to react to the rapid disappearance of our common inheritance.

**Speaker Harikleia Kalliteraki, former Dean Home
Economics College**

***"Cooperative aspects in relation to family life
and the community."***

One word is repeatedly spoken - "development". economic development, development of tourism, development of agriculture etc. Nothing has been spoken, though, about family development. In order to achieve successful social development, it is necessary to achieve better home management in family living. The family is an important factor in the management and welfare of the larger society. In general the culture and the economic standards of each family reflect the culture and the economic level of the society, and in each family, the parents set the economic and cultural standards.

The resources available to a family are firstly the family members, with all the intellectual and practical skills they own and may cultivate and develop. Every person is a source of power or emotions, a source of knowledge and energy, a source of skills, a resource to others by communication or cooperation.. Everyone should develop abilities, skills and techniques, to reveal their talents and to understand the importance of cooperation with others.

Within the family, roles are created for each member. The main role is given to the woman, as mother of the family, since she is the first person everyone comes into contact with at birth and even before birth. The woman is the coordinator, to allocate and use the family resources, and also she should have the initiative to maintain good cooperation first with her husband and later on with her children. Love and positive behaviour of parents are the basic factors for successful communication within the family environment.

**Speaker Nelly Lagakou,
High School Counselor and Author**

"Healthy and sound ways of love in the family"

Love is the backbone of life, an active force, a power that does away with walls between people. Love helps people to be themselves; it has integrity. Love in the family leads to material action of higher purpose. It links members so that they are strong and perform

effectively and feel free. They have their own profile and characteristics. Love in the family creates security, strength, protection. Everyone should be able to feel this protection. Optimism is a result of love.

Love can be demanding and lead to misery. Love can become a prison. This can happen between a man and wife, between parents and children, where children are not able to take their own path in life, to have their own vision or take opportunities. As a result, they may become revolutionaries.

A morbid, over-protective love that does not allow people to stand on their own, has a bad influence on the recipient, causing loss of self-esteem and lack of interest in life. Parents must accept children with positive or negative characteristics. Strength of love creates people with personality and self-esteem.

If love is absent because of rejection, children will feel undesirable, insecure, behave badly and be aggressive. If love is given in an authoritarian way, children feel subjugated and worthless. This is passed on when they grow up, in a similar pattern.

When parents love each other and respect personality and freedom, these qualities are expressed in the child. The child has feelings of security and sufficiency. The result is a balanced child, normal and self-adjusted. One of the rules of healthy love is dialogue - talk and listen - with everything shared and divided into responsibilities and respect.

Woman, mother, grandmother, sister - the role of the father is important but woman has the divine gift to offer love. She is able to offer love without limitation, always ready to strengthen and protect, to care. Love works with sincerity to create a family that is calm and its members respectful of each other.

Speaker Eftihia Pefkianaki,

Deputy Principal Kasteli Lyceum

"The women of the countryside through time"

Since the beginning of time, man has derived his power from the earth. First he was a nomad and food-collector, then he acquired permanent settlement and his own land. His involvement in land cultivation was what we call the agricultural revolution. In this

struggle it was the male who had the leading role and not the female. The woman participated as far as her household chores and raising of children permitted.

For the first half of the 20th century in Greece, the farm woman lived in the village and had her own farm land as an endowment or inheritance from her parents. Her education rarely exceeded elementary level. Her family was usually big, with a lot of children, and sometimes included her aged parents. She worked on the farm next to the man and at the same time had her household and children to care for. She acted as doctor, nurse and midwife, all based on her life experience and calm temperament. In her spare time she knitted and weaved using traditional methods and materials, thus becoming a genuine creator of folk art. The villages had a council, a police station, a teacher and a priest. There was no electricity. Only the village council or the police station had a telephone. The roads were inadequate and public transport was unreliable.

More recently, women's clubs were set up in the villages, by which women managed to express themselves through elected representatives. They cooperated in issues of cultural and social interest. This was a big step for women with basic education, who nonetheless succeeded in instilling virtues and values into their children, thus preserving our country's social framework. Their dream was that their children would be educated, so that they would be freed from the hardships and insecure conditions of farm life. From the 1960s people started moving from villages to urban or semi-urban centres in search of a better life. Their big dream was a house in the city and a job that would ensure a pension on retirement.

Nowadays there is an improvement in the social and economic conditions and machines help farmers increase and improve their production. The European Community finances agricultural programmes. Today's farmwoman has little in common with one of the past. Yet fewer young people are willing to become involved in farming. Now you find the younger farmwomen only in big villages, and not in small ones, where you would see only old people. In these big villages the woman's social and economic status has greatly improved. She now has a leading role in farming, since the man may

have another job as well. The state has recognised the woman's right to social security and a pension. It is not unusual to see women driving farm vehicles, operating farm machinery and taking care of greenhouses.

A considerable number of farmwomen have set up farming partnerships. With the help of the Ministry of Agriculture and the European Union, they are now able to promote their products through exhibitions held throughout the country. A particular occupation of women in suburban areas and villages is "agro farm-tourism". Women are the owners of many restaurants, taverns and guest-houses, which operate during the tourist high season.

In spite of the crisis in moral values, the woman of the countryside is still the bearer of traditional values, either as a mother or as a grandmother. She takes part in local women's clubs and has a close relationship with the church. A lot of countrywomen are artists, painters, iconographers and poets. In recent years countrywomen have become involved in politics and are candidates in elections, both locally and nationally. They have no need to be jealous of urban women, since all modern developments have come to the most remote home.

DISCUSSION GROUP REPORTS

DISCUSSION GROUP I -

Health and Nutrition

Chairmen: Ilse Andrä (Germany)
and Everdine Sanders-Vonk (Netherlands)

Rapporteurs: Brenda Drake, (England)

1 and Margaret McKay, (Scotland).

The definition of Health was given as the state of wellbeing in body and mind with freedom from illness. Nutrition was defined as nourishment to feed plants, animals and humans. Delegates were asked to consider the link between Health and Nutrition, and the effects of Nutrition upon Health. It was felt that Health and Nutrition lies in women's hands, since women are mainly responsible for

preparing and cooking food for the family. Women should be aware of the nutritional content of food.

Governments give conflicting information which changes as ongoing research causes alterations in ideas. Consumers worry about pollution, contamination of food with pesticides, chemicals and gene modification.

The lack of home economics and cookery teaching in schools has led to two generations of women who no longer want, or know how, to cook and children who prefer to grab a ready-made meal, rather than sit down as a family. The lack of cookery teaching is a particular concern in the UK, but in Finland, cooking has become more popular because of TV programmes, and children are showing an interest. In the Netherlands, secondary school children are taught Home Economics, Health, Nutrition, and advice regarding abuse of alcohol and drugs, for 3 hours a week for 2 years. It is important to cook and for children to learn the skill so that they do not always rely on convenience food. In Latvia, Nutrition is taught in country schools through the provision of school lunches, using local farmers' produce. Food is one of our greatest delights and pleasures, but we should eat to live, not live to eat.

Governments have an obsession with obesity, as do young women who want to be slim. Concerns were voiced regarding obesity in young children, and the fact that many are left to forage for themselves. In these cases it is very easy for them to turn to convenience foods at home or outside catering establishments e.g. MacDonalds. Big businesses advertise and lobby, which can restrict choice and persuade children to prefer junk food. Opinion on this suggested that in our changing society, families eat out more and children follow this habit; what they learn by example in childhood they take into adult life.

There was discussion on the properties and use of olive oil and of the Mediterranean diet. The comparative nutritional value of fresh and frozen food was discussed. Supermarkets have convenience foods, which cater for all needs from breakfast to dinner, but the additives in these foods can be detrimental to health.

Finally concerns were expressed over the apparent increase in cancer, but it was pointed out that in the past more people died of diseases which are now controllable. Nowadays, cancer is often recognised earlier and if so can be successfully treated.

The main conclusions were that:

Moderation and variety of diet and exercise supported by education and knowledge is the best way to provide for our families. The concerns of Health and Nutrition are worldwide problems that require to be addressed. It was suggested that this could be implemented through action by ACWW.

DISCUSSION GROUP 2 - Agriculture and Environment.

Chairmen: Margaret Cadzow (England) and Fiona Ross(England)

Rapporteurs: Elsie Brown, (Scotland)

and Gunhild Haugum, (Norway).

Among the main points discussed were pollution, education for farmers, organic farming and global warming.

I. POLLUTION

There was a discussion on the situation in the hometown of one of the Romanian participants, which is the most polluted city in the world, because there is a factory with production based on lead. While steps are being taken to reduce pollution in the big cities of Romania, her hometown is quite small, only 10,000 inhabitants, and the authorities do not have the same concerns. The pollution affects poor children in particular, who cannot buy the healthiest foods.

In Greece, agricultural production is changing with the use of pesticides and other chemicals, which are not good for the environment. Greece is also a country of islands, and pollution from sea traffic is a great problem. Many big ships travel the Mediterranean Sea towards the Black Sea, but the EU is now preparing a new law that will regulate this pollution. Plastic also causes pollution since it is non bio-degradable, but Ireland now has a new law forbidding shops to use plastic bags. Russia has airborne pollution from the West, which affects the whole country, and also receives nuclear waste for storage. The Russian delegate said it would be hard to solve the environmental problems unless governments co-operate.

2. EDUCATION for FARMERS

Romanian farms have big difficulties. There is a conflict between the "mountain-farmer" and the farmer in central areas. The farmer in the mountain areas has little opportunity for additional income. The farmers have now got back ownership of their land, but they don't have enough technical equipment. They need exchange of knowledge, and also financial help, to re-establish their agricultural production. In other European countries there are educational systems that contribute to this demand for knowledge, but in Romania the economy does not permit this.

The average farm is a small family farm. Nowadays, however people are buying up small farms and creating bigger units.

In Finland the environmental problems due to agricultural production are small. The government has carried through a programme where all farmers must take courses in environmental issues in order to receive economic support. 80,000 farmers will be taking this course. There is also an increased focus on landscape. By maintaining the rural landscape, the farmer can communicate to the consumer.

3. ORGANIC FARMING

This was widely discussed in all the groups. Organic production will mean that agricultural production in Greece will return to traditional farming methods. The representative from Lithuania suggested that organic production should increase since locally produced foods are often more interesting for the consumer.

In Estonia, there is a programme promoting Estonian food. The Estonians prefer their own country's food, because it is mostly organic.

4. GLOBAL WARMING

One of the participants from Greece said that they now have two seasons - not four like before. Also in other countries changes in climate are being experienced, and making difficulties for farmers. Among other points made was that our demands today are greater. We want a larger variety of products all year round, which increases pressure on the environment. We need to share experiences and learn about the problems of other countries in order to help each other.

Finally, the Russian representative encouraged us to appeal to our governments to ratify and follow up the Rio Convention and other environmental conferences.

DISCUSSION GROUP 3 - Technology and Communication

Chairmen: Janice Langley (England) and Bethan Williams (Wales)
Rapporteurs: Betty Houghton (England) and Marian Verstappen
(Netherlands)

One chairman opened the discussion by asking everyone to greet her neighbour, and ended by asking them all to look at each other, smile and say "Good-bye". Communication is social, as Latvia said.

We all have a need to talk and listen.

Technology

Everywhere in modern life you see technology: e.g. cows with a "passport", hospital patients with a barcode, mobile telephones and headphones for interpreters. It was recognised that technology was here to stay. Most of the delegates present use email. It's quicker, cheaper and can receive an immediate answer.

However, some points were made against IT (Information Technology). With email you can contact almost everybody everywhere, but you can lose personal contact with your family and neighbours. It is an easy way to go shopping, and make reservations, but you don't get physical exercise. It is an easy way to handle administration, but you are dependent on a machine.

Greece felt that it can bring unemployment, and the UK thought there would be no archive to keep for the future. There was concern that data might be lost in a power failure. There was also concern that children will not be encouraged to read, although there was evidence that reading is still popular.

Mobile telephones can be used to send short messages and receive traffic information, but they can be intensely irritating. More consideration for others should be shown in their use.

Computers

What can you do with computers? They give you information and access to knowledge through the Internet.

Some people didn't have a computer, couldn't afford one, didn't want one or felt too old to learn. The latter point was disputed, as several senior members have taken training courses and enjoy it.

Lithuania thought that it was important for women to train in their use in order to get better jobs.

It was generally felt that there are many courses in computer use for people of any age and, in most schools, children are taught from an early age.

There were differences between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. In Western Europe there are many ways to get a computer - for example sometimes the government provides them or people just buy them. Sometimes buses with laptops come to villages and training is given in libraries and schools in the towns. In Eastern Europe, communication and technology is expensive, and not open to everybody. The language - English - is often difficult. Sometimes there is an inconvenient distance between computer and user.

It was concluded that if people don't know about computers, they don't like them and don't want to use them. But to be up-to-date, one has to come to terms with them.

TV, Radio and Press

The use of TV, radio and the press for advertising the work of NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) was discussed. This is expensive in most countries, although in Scotland they found that news of special projects would be accepted by local TV, the press and on Internet. The UK and Ireland train their members to report well, but Russia wanted professional journalists trained to deal with NGOs. Croatia said that we must also learn to listen to each other and, in some cases, change our attitude to using the media.

On the subject of children watching TV it was thought that this could lead to eye-strain, and to violent behaviour, but Estonia thought that it was up to parents to control their children's choice of programme.

European Area Website

All the groups were asked if we needed a European Area website. Most answered "Yes", though some wondered what should be put on it. It was agreed that technology could never replace conferences. Newsletters are still needed, and, above all there must be the chance to talk face to face and to write letters for the sake of the future, as emails can be instantly lost.

DISCUSSION GROUP 4 - Education and Lifelong Learning.

Chairmen: Drifa Hjartardottir (Iceland) and Joan Shanks (N.Ireland)
Rapporteurs Angela Martin: (N.Ireland) and Cristina Mates (Romania)

Education is the key to life and keeps the brain active; lifelong learning encourages intelligence and curiosity. Learning begins at home with parental influence on our thinking and habit forming. We learn something new every day of our lives and are never too old to learn. Through lifelong learning, people are more active; they can invest in themselves. Young women today have far more opportunities to learn than their mothers did.

One problem is that young people are leaving the countryside and the rural population is ageing. There are too many unemployed graduates and not enough tradesmen and skilled workers. Today there are few lifelong jobs, so people have to train and re-train all their lives. In Poland, for example, although 10% of the population have university degrees, in the countryside it is only 3%, because of the lack of money to pay for university education .

There was much discussion about tertiary level education. The third age of learning is when people retire, which gives them a chance to learn new skills and hobbies. One delegate said that after retiring she had time to do charity work. In the Netherlands, because of falling farm incomes, many farmers are becoming part-time and are taking short retraining courses.

In the rural areas of Finland there is retraining for professional women to get back to work after having families. In the Czech Republic, women take four years off after childbirth and in order to re-enter employment they must take a short retraining course. Also in the Czech Republic, there are special Government programmes for elderly people. The point was made that training courses should be organised according to age. Mixing ages in the same group is not a good idea because of the different speeds of working. The NFWI (England) and ICA (Ireland) told of their societies' adult education colleges where vocational courses in many subjects are offered, mainly weeklong residential courses. In Scotland some councils provide free courses for everyone over fifty. In Estonia third level and adult education is offered only in cities. The Norwegian Women and

Family Association urges their Ministry for Education to support lifelong learning and runs courses for women, especially language courses. They also support education in other parts of the country.

There were many comments from the Greek delegates, mainly regarding access to learning and retraining for rural women, and the ways this could be introduced to their many islands. Some ideas suggested were mobile units, short courses with back-up through telecommunications, courses linking people up with others, thus bringing jobs to rural areas. One of the speakers said that re-training is especially important for unemployed people.

Some felt that third level education should not be totally free. Some students take more than one course as they do not want the responsibility of employment. It is more difficult to study the arts. An Austrian point of view was that, when university was free, many students studied for 8-10 years. This meant that universities were overcrowded. Now the situation has improved since students must now pay. In Greece, university education is free of charge, but only a few finish it and then they may not find a job.

Other comments made were that the Greek Government urges families to have more children because the birth rate is decreasing. This is done by subsidising children, especially the first child. Romania would like teenage education on sex and HIV/AIDs. They have too many unwanted babies, some of whom are abandoned. Lithuania would like courses to train trainers in health education for women to promote breast feeding and cancer awareness.

Finally, it was noted that the 21st Century is to be considered as the Century of Knowledge and the Century of the Status of Women.

MEMBERS' PRESENTATIONS

Betty Lyttle, Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland

The FWINI is proud to be one of the most generous and consistent donors per person to ACWW funds. This has been possible through the ongoing work of our International Committee in promoting the work of ACWW. Our members like to identify with a specific project and we try to devise unique ways to supplement our direct giving e.g. we sell fireside quiz sheets and word-search puzzles.

The International Committee organises an annual International Day each March when the keynote speakers come from European countries, and on one occasion a panel from ACWW Board. Members organise a meeting to celebrate World Rural Women's Day each October. This year the FWINI is celebrating the formation of the first Women's Institute in Northern Ireland in 1932 - seventy years ago - and we are proud that throughout these seventy years we have been consistent givers of people and funding to ACWW.

Gunhild Haugum, Norwegian Society of Rural Women

I am a farmer and I also work part-time as head of the agricultural section in our administrative county.

The Norwegian Society of Rural Women has a total of 17,300 members countrywide. Our members live in rural areas and have close connections with farming. They have a strong social commitment, and they work with issues that are important for the rural population in our country, and in other countries. Our main focus areas are:

Culture:

We register and promote Norwegian traditional clothing, crafts, music etc.

We promote traditional and new ways of communication and storytelling.

Food:

We promote sustainable food production. We spread information on pure safe food, genetically manipulated food, enhanced food and food labelling.

We work together with non-governmental organisations, and focus on nutrition, health and the importance of the meal as a social arena.

We promote small-scale farming in Norway and in other countries.

We work for the recruitment of more women farmers.

Environmental Issues:

We are engaged in projects following up Agenda 21 locally.

We have undertaken an initiative for a development project in Senegal, West Africa, which focuses on establishing village-cooperatives.

We have an exchange programme with women's organisations in the Baltic countries.

We arrange safety courses, focusing on accidents on farms.

We support the Max Havelaar foundation, which works for fair trade with developing countries.

Current issues:

My organisation would like to focus on the consequences that we see today in the development of the farming and food industry. The role of farming and the food industry has grown: providing safe, quality food, supporting the local economy and managing the rural landscape. At the same time there has been a decrease in the farm economy and increased focus on production volume. This has led to an emphasis on quantity rather than quality.

Consumers are increasingly concerned about the quality of much of the food production and the environmental cost of intensive farming. The current situation benefits none: farmers, consumers or the environment. This has consequences that are in contrast with international agendas concerning sustainable development. It has negative consequences for our environment and for the farmer-consumer relationship. We realize that these are complex issues, influenced by international agreements on trade and by the agricultural policy of each country.

The Norwegian Society of Rural Women encourages all member societies of ACWW to focus on these issues in their local communities. We hope ACWW will focus on these challenges and aim to work towards a future of sustainable food and farming industries.

**Helga Gudmundsdottir,
Federation of Icelandic Women**

May I share with you some thoughts that were brought forward at a recent conference in Iceland. The theme was: "Is the family the cornerstone of society or is it an outcast?" Our main purpose was to emphasise family values, strengthen the ties between employers and employees and how to find ways for both parents to share equally the responsibility of bringing up a family in today's society.

Well-known speakers were invited - our Minister of Social Affairs, a university professor on family matters, a well-known Icelandic priest who advises people seeking family consultation, and two young adults who shared with us their views on how to be a teenager. We touched on how family nutrition is changing and family financial affairs, and

a well-known television news presenter, who is the mother of a young child and a career woman, described her views on raising today's family.

Many questions were raised and some were answered. However, we still ask ourselves, where should we draw the line between the constant outside pressure to be perfect, educate ourselves, be mothers, good wives, going after better-paid jobs equal to men and preferably to be better than the rest.

In Iceland we have come a long way in equal pay and jobs. Parents will soon be allowed nine months maternity leave, shared by both parents. We still have to work on getting longer leave for parents with children with long-term sickness.

The family unit is getting smaller and family power hardly exists. 86% of all women in Iceland are part of a full-time labour force. In earlier days the family was an affectionate cornerstone, with two or three generations living in the same household. Now there is a lack of sharing, caring and devotion, which has led to broken homes and other problems.

Everything has changed so much in the family pattern during the last two decades, that the idea of establishing a Family School may become a reality one day. Why not? We all have to learn in school and practise how to drive a car at an early age. Likewise, no one should be allowed to establish a family without having a licence from the Family School. Our car needs regular upkeep and care and so does our family. The future of our children and their families will be best valued if we join forces to protect our precious family cornerstone.

Bjarnhild Hodneland, The Norwegian Women and Family Association

NWF, formerly the Norwegian Housewives Association, is one of the largest women's organisations in Norway, founded in 1915. We conduct various projects in developing countries, as well as holding a course for women in Eastern Europe, entitled Building and Running an Organisation.

We have been appointed delegates in Norwegian official delegations to the UN General Assembly and conferences. We have been active in workshops in NGO forums on population, environment,

energy, value of unpaid work, elderly people, the girl child, health, Aids/HIV and consumer issues.

Our vision is acceptance of women's right to choose at different phases in their lives.

Our purpose is to strengthen the position of the family through measures which allow us the time and opportunity to care for one another.

Our aim is national and international lobbying on women's and family-related issues.

Our international work is two-fold and consists of political lobbying and aid work. We carry out both types of activity on the basis of worldwide solidarity between women.

Rut Jorgensen, Denmark

There are three ACWW member organisations in Denmark, which together have 41,000 members. Two of the organisations are attending this conference.

At present we are working on family matters, especially health and nutrition for children and young people. Many have said that the world is changing - that has happened in Denmark too. There are many young people who don't want, or don't have the time to do unpaid work in an organisation. We attempt to attract them to join us. Perhaps some of you have a recipe to help us catch young people and encourage them to become members! Finally, from the Danish women and our husbands and all our members at home in Denmark, we wish all of you and your families good health and a happy future.

Antonia Mihelaki, President of Kolympari Women's Society, Crete, Greece

We propose and ask for a social worker to visit and work with the remote and neglected villages to give advice. There is a wish and a need to preserve the local colour and to motivate the young people to stay in their villages. We have to keep our living traditions which go from great grandmothers to their children and so on. If you can help to find ways of staying in our villages and making the best of what our land can give us, and can work our farmland with joy and satisfaction, we can live a pleasant life with mother earth.

**Ilze Karsa, Vice-Chairman Valmiera District
Women's Society, Latvia**

There are 57,000 inhabitants in Valmiera district. Half of them are country people. 16 rural women's organisations are working in our district. They are all different but have common problems and interests.

Last year our society celebrated World Rural Women's Day with a conference on Adult Education. 400 women participated. Speakers came from Latvian national and local government. The main object was to consider how to organise information to spread throughout the countryside, with the need for libraries and also to become information centres.

We have organised courses on how to start a business, micro-credit for women, psychology, countryside tourism, growing and using herbs, computer knowledge, project writing, how to be happy in the family, leadership programmes.

We want to know what will be in the countryside in the years ahead, especially if we join the European Union. We are planning to develop a countryside information network, working together with local municipalities for the introduction of e-mail and use of the internet. We are also planning to develop international contacts. We have a problem communicating in English - we are studying but find it difficult. We have common activities with the Swedish-Finnish Women's Marta Centre in Riga.

Mira Miskulin, Croatia

At our previous meeting I reported our efforts to help refugee and displaced women in our country to survive the difficulties of war. I am going to tell you the end of this story and it is not a happy ending. No war can have a happy ending at all.

After the UN forces had gone from the occupied area, refugee and displaced people gradually returned, although the process was very slow. Only one third of refugee and displaced people, (mostly old people from the countryside) are able to find the courage and energy to face the reality of returning to their original area. Burdened with unsolved traumas, pain, distrust and tension, they have to face destroyed homes, villages, towns, working places, churches, schools, hospitals, fields and gardens full of mines.

Many families are incomplete - missing members killed, emigrated, died, or whose destiny is still unknown. When the family is finally complete after a long time of separation, family members often do not recognise each other, are strangers, distant, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders, alcoholism and drugs. Older people, mostly women, are alone, ill and not cared for. Social networks are often destroyed too, and relatives and neighbours are not there any more.

The Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights, an NGO in Osijek (a town in Eastern Slavonia, Croatia), makes constant and long-lasting efforts to improve living conditions. They have been running programmes in education for peace building, for culture of non-violence, cooperation and creative conflict resolution, to transform the negative energy of anger, hate and destruction into positive engagement. Some lessons learned in this tragic experience must be shared. Different forms of violence and destruction are taking place in the world more and more these days. We must raise our voices against these catastrophic incidents caused by man's hand or brain. War causes massive pain, loss and frustration. But damage can be more successfully coped with and decreased by organised and skilled people (local, national and international voluntary sources) who are educated in how to deal with people's trauma. Women especially, because of their nature, are called to be nurses, to heal, to save. They have empathy, warm-hearted understanding and creative willingness to help anyone on earth. The help needed is most precious and often the only possible medicine against these evils. So in spite of everything and everyone, do not give up! We in Croatia have experienced this blessing of woman's soul. We remember it and are grateful.

**Maria Ciocirca, National Association
of University Women, Romania**

This Association existed between 1925 and 1946 but was destroyed by communism. It was reformed in 1990 and in 1996 we became members of ACWW. We have 14 national branches in Romania - 12 in the towns and 2 in the villages of Dragoslarsk and Rucar.

We work with women and children in the villages. We run conferences and courses for women, and summer school for

children to learn the English language, healthcare, friendship, painting etc.

Pirkko Ruuskanen-Parrukosh, Marttaliitto, Finland

I would like to tell you a little bit of our development co-operation with African women. Marttaliitto has been involved in development cooperation since the 1980s and now we are working in Burkina Faso, a beautiful country between the Sahara Desert and the Ivory Coast, but the third poorest country in the world.

We work with the local women's NGO Paq La Tiri. (The name means "Woman is the supporting pillar of the family") Its aim is to improve women's living conditions in the rural areas, to improve their economic situation and to help women to take part in decision-making in the societies. Paq La Tiri has chosen 14 local advisors to do Home Economics Extension work, people who are known and appreciated by the villagers and who are aware of the living conditions.

Each advisor works in 7 villages. They are provided with a few things in order to do their work - e.g. books, pots and pans. There are courses in nutrition, hygiene, taking care of the environment and economical housekeeping, food preserving using sun driers. The advisors have the support of the Women's Association. They are not alone - there will always be somebody to help in different ways.

When the Marttaliitto was founded, its founder Lucina Hagman said, "The best way to help families is to teach the skills and knowledge needed in housekeeping." This is still very true in Europe, but also extremely true in development work.

Margaret Cadzow, National Federation of Women's Institutes, England

NFWI continues to work towards the survival of rural life and the support of British agriculture, particularly after the devastating effect of Foot and Mouth disease in 2001.

Many people living in villages, as well as farmers, required support as incomes became non-existent. In some areas food parcels were distributed by the Crisis Committee. Federations linked with this committee to collect items of food, and packed these into boxes for delivery to the more remote areas.

NFWI strives to maintain the existence of village shops and Post Offices, the centre of village life. We have also run a census recording how many volunteer hours are given to communities by WI members. One of the most interesting schemes involving volunteers is the Pathways scheme, and I now ask Betty Lloyd, Wales, to say a few words about it.

**Betty Lloyd, National Federation
of Women's Institutes, Wales**

The 3 year Project started in 1998 as a result of a resolution supporting Agenda 21. The aim was to improve the quality of life in local communities, for WI members to focus their efforts on protecting the environment, thus making a contribution towards achieving sustainable development. Eight hundred projects have been registered. Often what started as small projects quickly developed into much larger ones. It encouraged WIs to work with other groups, e.g. the Young Farmers.

We were fortunate to get initial funding. The funders were so proud of the projects undertaken that they offered to fund a book "Pathways to the Future", highlighting 18 local projects, and to use them as examples of good practice. Although the Project is officially ended the members still continue with its aims as it has become part of their lives.

**Urve Kaasik, Chairman Tartu Country
Women's Union, Estonia (spoken by Pii Kaasik)**

I would like to speak in my mother tongue so that you can hear how it sounds. I don't speak English. Tartu Country Women's Union was founded in 1928 and refounded in 1993, because we were not allowed any activity groups of women from 1973 to 1991. Our motto, said by the first Chairman of our society in 1938, is "In the hearts and souls of all serious countrywomen and mothers is love for family, home and fatherland. This is the miraculous power that supports and feeds the countrywomen movement and gives the value of deep content with it."

Each year we celebrate World Rural Women's Day. Each year women assemble at summer camp where they enjoy singing and learning, and they can communicate with each other.

Earlier this year the Tartu Country Women's School was founded. There we can learn Finnish, English, weaving, patchwork, knitting, glass and silk painting and health care. We have connections with many countries. The last visit was a trip to Sweden. In April we hosted a group of countrywomen from Finland, as guests at our conference. We talked about cooperation. We have also had a long connection with the countrywomen of Telemark in Norway.

Inger Schauman, Swedish Martha Association, Finland

For the past two years, the Swedish Martha Association in Finland has run a co-operative project together with women's organisations in Latvia. It is a "Help to Self Help" project that established a resource centre for women in Riga, giving education, consultations and information to women all over Latvia. The target group was unemployed or low paid women, e.g. single mothers, Russian minority women, disabled women. The project was financially supported by the European Commission, the Foreign Ministry of Finland and other Finnish sources, as well as my own organisation.

The goals of the project were to lessen social and national tension, to integrate unemployed or low paid women into society, to increase equality between men and women, to network women's organisations in Latvia and to link them with similar organisations in Finland and the Nordic countries. We established and opened the Resource Centre Marta in Riga on 5th May 2000.

Activities include courses in English, Latvian (for Russian-speaking women), computing and business courses. A very important activity was the availability of specialist consultations with a lawyer, psychologist and two social workers. The need of the women in the target group was immense. They had lots of problems covering housing, alimony, work problems, depression, etc.

Altogether over 3,000 women have received help from the Centre.

The project, as an EU funded project, is now finished, but the Marta Centre lives on as an independent Latvian organisation that we support and believe in. They have an increasing number of clients.

Elena Bashun, Women's Union of Russia

The Women's Union of Russia has been a member of ACWW since 1996. Over the past five years we have conducted different actions

each year in the framework of the programme called "Rural Women of Russia".

In 1998 it was the All Russia Conference of Rural Women. In 1999 we organised seminars and courses together with women's organisations of CIS states. In 2000 we organised the All Russia competition, "For creative work in agricultural production", like the competition of the World Women's Summit in Geneva. We participated three times in that and our nominees twice won prizes. At the beginning of 2001, the Women's Union of Russia summarised the results of our competition: 85 rural women workers from 35 regions of Russia were winners. They were farmers, leaders of different agriculture co-operatives and enterprises, who in spite of great difficulties in our country, managed to realise themselves in agriculture, to make the lives of their families and children stable and dignified.

In 2001 the most important action we conducted was called "Relay of Mother's Fame". The main idea was to attract the attention of government, the public and the media to the problems of parenthood and of motherhood in particular. We wanted to remind the authorities that our state is surviving through difficult structural changes, mostly due to family efforts and primarily the efforts of mothers who have taken upon themselves the burden of family, work and raising the new generation. We tried to raise the mother's status, to defend the mother's rights, to strengthen the educational function of the family.

For 2002, we have two big actions. We declare as a priority the problem of poverty. 90% of the Russian population (about 80 million people) are living below the poverty level. One of our main activities is the collection of signatures for an appeal to the Russian Government, protesting about citizens' poverty. We shall be collecting signatures until October 17th, International Day of Liquidation of Poverty, which we shall submit to the Government.

We have started a campaign of women's solidarity under the slogan, 'I Can'. By this activity we are calling people to contribute to good deeds: to collect clothes for schoolchildren in rural areas; to collect warm things for the homeless and refugees; to help start a small business or create new jobs for the jobless; to do what one can do personally and to vote for these people who can and will support the campaign.

Maria Zagorska, Rural Women's Clubs, Bulgaria

RWC were founded in 1924 and were the first rural women's organisation in Europe. In 1947 the organisation was banned and its property taken over. In 1993, 35 clubs were restored. By 1995, 250 clubs existed.

A main RWC issue and project in the past three years was gender equality and women's human rights. What we found was that Bulgarian laws and regulations are comparatively good. Women have formal rights on paper. But there is no national implementing and monitoring machine. A great number of Bulgarian women, irrespective of their education, do not know their rights.

A six-month campaign was launched, with a high level conference, many seminars, a bulletin "Women for Dignity", and the lobbying of Government.

Another issue was stimulating and training women in preparing business plans in the field of agriculture, services and tourism. The great interest of rural families meant that the project cannot accept all the applicants. We rely on the multiplying effect of the project and project repetition. Trainers have to be carefully selected in respect to the group of trainees, their interests and the regional conditions and possibilities.

Rural women in Bulgaria have a great advantage - they live in a fruitful land. They are workaholics by nature and are very responsible. They deserve to have a chance to help their families to survive. Most of them also have the advantage of being owners. We have to help them to use this advantage soon. The great disadvantage is the lack of information on constantly changing laws, regulations etc. RWC has the capability to change things so that rural areas are not ignored and receive understandable and timely information.

Betty Houghton, England

"Are Grandmothers Useful?"

If we could, we would make our world wonderful, our country contented and our families fabulous. "We can't do everything but we can do something" so I thought I'd start with the family - they are smaller, nearer and possibly easier to influence than my country or my

world. I slowly started planning a family holiday in Tobago in February 2000. There was my husband and I, our three children, three children-in-law and nine grandchildren aged from nine to nineteen.

Betty went on to describe a special family time together, where there was always someone from the family to share the fun with. Why do I tell you all this, she asks. How can a family enjoying a holiday together possibly influence the future of the world? I know that each of the seventeen people gained a sense of belonging, of relying on each other, of doing new things together and yet mixing with the community of the hotel and of the islanders.

Now, two years later, we still all remember. It was a truly memorable time for each of us. For the World, I have done only a little bit. For my Country, I have done perhaps a little bit more. For my Community I have done quite a lot. For my family I have done what I can, though, like everyone else I have frequently got it wrong. I hope that for all their lives our children and grandchildren will feel that, in spite of individual differences, we belong to one another and that that one week in Tobago will remain a magical memory of togetherness. I couldn't do everything but I did something.

Perhaps when I come to the end of my days I shall think of that week. I shall hear that Calypso sound: 'Daylight come and I want to go home'.

Where is home? With the family? In my country? In the whole world? Or just with Almighty God?

Ilse Andra, Germany

Project for self-examination of the breast

The Landfrauenverband Hessen e.V. organises meetings all over Hessen, to teach members to self-examine the breast, the project having been suggested and helped by the Ministry of Social Welfare in Hessen, a member state of Germany.

Breast cancer is the most frequent tumour illness of women in Germany. If the tumour is identified at an early stage, chances of recovery are much better. Self-examination leads to earlier identification of a tumour. So it is important for women to achieve the ability to examine their own breasts. The project is an essential health strategy for women. It gives them important personal competence.

The Landfrauenverband Hessen is the biggest women's organisation in Hessen, with more than 50,000 members. The

project has had an enormous resonance in a short time and with little monetary effort. It is exceptional in the field of health precaution.

The courses started in September 2001. A project-trained doctor teaches a group of maximum 25 women to examine the breast on a silicone breast model. Since then, 1,000 women have participated, and another 10,000 women will participate shortly.

Karolina Stepniak, Rural Women's Circles, Poland

"The Significance of KGW (Rural Women's Circles)

***in the Process of Reinforcing the Civilising
and Cultural Transformations of the Countryside"***

Rural Women's Circles is a voluntary, self-administrative and independent social and professional organisation of rural women. The KGW's scope of activities is broad and varied. It is predominated by the rural women's and family's needs and is rooted in the conditions of the countryside. It focuses on 5 areas of interest, namely:

- *providing support for the rural family in upbringing, educating and enabling the most extensive participation of rural children in different forms of vacation trips. Some rural women's circles undertake actions aimed at improving the state of the rural schools' amenities.

- *providing the social security and health care support for rural families by the development of health care awareness, improving the state of the farms and the general fitness of the rural community, as well as providing necessary help and support to elderly and disabled people.

- *stimulating different forms of business activity among women, elaborating new methods of preventing unemployment, searching for alternative sources of income and maintaining the diversity of rural development.

- *economising the methods of maintenance of the rural household and the branches of rural production dominated by women.

- *increasing the current degree of participation of the rural inhabitants in various cultural events, cultivating folk art and tradition.

On the whole, the Rural Women's Circles concentrate their actions upon improving professional awareness and increasing the current level of incomes of farming families.

Mollie Cawley, The Irish Countrywomen's Association, Ireland

County Meath Federation raised funds for a Mammography unit to detect breast cancer in its early stages. Due to staff shortages in Irish hospitals, the unit is not being used. Co. Meath is prepared to send this machine to any third world country which has a radiographer to operate it. Anyone interested should contact Mrs Kitty Harlin at Kilmessan House, Navan, Co. Meath, Ireland. (Mrs Harlin is a past President of the Association, and also of the EU's COFACE).

Marian Verstappen, Network of Catholic Rural Women's Organisations, Netherlands

This organisation, Zij Actief, represents both consumers and producers. One of its aims is to inform members about sustainable food production. Good healthy food is a subject of particular concern to women and their families. Many farm families suffered in 2001 as a result of foot-and-mouth disease, BSE problems and swine fever. As well as the financial and emotional impact on farmers, this crisis made customers wary and critical of food manufacturing and new developments such as biotechnology.

In agriculture, genetic technology has been adopted on a large scale. According to a United Nations survey, 150 - 200 different genetically modified crops are now in an experimental phase.

In the Netherlands an extensive public debate was organised, in an effort to inform consumers on the subject. Experts, and people who knew little about the subject, discussed the pros and cons of biotechnology, with special attention being given to food safety, ecology and the environment.

The outcome was that, with better information, people find the use of biotechnology in food manufacturing more acceptable.

Sustainable production and consumption is a major topic of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg that will take place later this year. Zij Actief has actively participated in preparing the Dutch Women's Organisations for the World Summit, with special attention to sustainable food production and the use of genetically modified organisms. Consumers must be able to make a choice, which is why labelling is so important. In this way people can make a well-considered choice as to what they do or don't want to buy.

In conclusion, we want our food to be safe, but we cannot stop research and development of biotechnology. Sustainable food production is, and always will be, a subject of particular concern for women.

**Ilse Andra (on behalf of Evelyn Moscherosch,
President) Deutscher LandFrauenverband e.V.,
Germany**

German Countrywomen and the Internet

German countrywomen are producers, businesswomen and ambassadors for their regions. They are often also the mediators in village life. New ways of communication not only change the countrywoman's daily life, but also offer her business opportunities. The German Countrywomen's Association wishes to face this development and help women to find their way into the Internet.

To do this, a 3-year pilot scheme was started in January. It is funded by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and by the European Social Fund.

The project is called "New Media for Country Women - IT Country Women". The name is provocative, because it suggests something normally seen as a contrast. However, traditional village structures are a reliable source of progress and innovation, and the countrywomen want to prove this with their project.

The training programme has involved 44 women learning to teach others how to build a home page on the Internet and design it to be attractive and user-friendly. Later, they will help other countrywomen to market their products and services via the Internet.

The Country Website will unite countrywomen, consumers, and interested parties. It will serve as a source of information, a marketplace and a forum. Visitors to the website will find it easy to discover what the countrywomen are offering.

**Chrysoula Boulaki, Kasteli Branch,
Greek Country Women's Centre, Greece**

The Women's Society in Kasteli was founded in 1940 and has 300 members. The society was founded by Archbishop Eirineas, to enable women to have the opportunity to receive education and to

work together for the good of families, friends, other societies and the community, and especially to maintain culture, traditions and the Orthodox religion. In addition, it encourages continuing education, enjoys entertainment and helping the needy.

It does this by seeking the help of specialised people to participate in local, national and international celebrations.

It wishes to motivate rural women who are forced by unemployment to leave their villages. Rural women need to have continuing education through seminars or short training courses, which give information and keep them up to date.

**Demetra Ktistaki, Cretan Craft
Organisation, Greece**

The speaker reported that she has been teaching and making the old traditional Cretan costumes since 1986. This is a very difficult art which is beginning to disappear. The old craftsmen have gone and there are only a few continuing the tradition. Her dream is to start a workshop to enable young people to learn properly and become good enough to start their own small business. This will encourage them to discover the rich history that lies behind these costumes. This traditional skill requires at least 200 hours of teaching and practising. If only it could become part of an EU project, it might solve the problems of losing our tradition and of fighting unemployment.

**Jackie Gregory, Worcestershire Federation, NFWI,
England**

Jumpers Galore

This project began in 1997, when the speaker saw a fellow passenger knitting with a circular needle while on a plane to the Gambia. It was an Oxfam pattern and the resulting jumper was destined for a child in a deprived area of Delhi.

Having seen a newborn babe in a clinic in Sibano, Gambia, wearing only a garment made from an old shirt front, she was spurred on to speak of this at her annual meeting. After press releases and articles, in 1998 she collected 50 jumpers and carried them out to the Gambia. In 1999, she found herself with 600 jumpers to ship out, which would involve bills of lading, advice

notices, Customs and Excise, and would cost £135. This was covered by the sale of homemade preserves - a steep learning curve.

Through ACWW, Mariatu Kassim Loum of the W.I.S.D.O.M. group was contacted. She requested help with items for a craft centre, and in December that year £250 was sent.

By 2000, more knitters had been recruited, the word had spread and 1500 jumpers were sent.

A request for a link with Worcestershire Federation was made and in 2001 new offices were opened and an award received and presented in front of Gambian Television

On 28 November, the Shoe Box Appeal was launched, and in May 2002 a collection of shoe boxes plus

1475 jumpers and sundry items, weighing 600 kg, was despatched. In June or July 2002 Mariatu will visit Worcester Federation.

Koula Maltezou, Aegina Branch, Greek Country Women's Centre, Greece

Aegina is a small island 17 miles from Piraeus. The activities of the society cover the spectrum, including meetings, seminars, workshops on subjects such as icon making, embroidery and knitting. A group specialising in Greek Folk dances has been invited to appear in many cities at home and abroad.

Greece is well known all over the world for its archaeological sites. Many archaeologists from other countries, mainly from Germany, have come to work in official excavations and studies. They ask Conference participants to support their plea for the return of the Elgin marbles.

Lone Chadovarapu, Aktive Kvinder I Danmark, Denmark

Integration and Immigration (presentation received by fax)

Since the late 60s, Europe has faced a surge in the tide of immigration, which no-one expected to reach its present dimensions. It started because Europe needed more work forces and now there are large numbers of political refugees.

Muslims are the largest minority group of immigrants to the European Community. They become rootless and are facing a recognition problem. Naturally, while claiming recognition, they cling to their religion

and practice it more rigidly. This is the situation we now face. Politicians, for short-term gain, capitalise on it. We see a growing number of racially biased politicians gathering more voters all over Europe.

We have to understand this and do something about it. Working in various societies such as ACWW we have a challenge to face. In the western world, we set religion aside for a while and think individually while working democratically. None of us has lost our respect for religion and are better trained to take problems in our stride. But many immigrants value their religion differently, and take shelter in it.

Keeping this in mind, we have a great opportunity to build a mutual understanding. The feeling of "US & THEM" will not vanish away in one generation but seeds of understanding will be sown if we can meet each other half way.

It is a huge challenge to meet. Coming from different walks of life, with different interests and different ambitions, we are trained to work in our associations, debating each other's standpoints and arguments to reach a common goal. Once a democratic decision has been made, we have the will to work together, whatever the disagreements of our arguments.

If we invite these groups of people into our society work, we have a chance to further this life style. But it is very important that we should not be yielding, involving them as equal partners and giving responsibility and expecting responsibility back.

Let us invite our new citizens to be a part of our societies. We will get the benefit of their cultural and human qualities, they will receive similar benefits from us and they and their families will enjoy a better life in our countries.

Respect breeds respect; with respect you build society, with compulsion you kill it.

Dr Papaderos, Director of the Orthodox Academy, Crete asked delegates to sign a petition requesting that a truce be recognised in any conflicts occurring in the world during the period of the Olympic Games which will take place in Athens in 2004.

FOLLOW-UP OF ACWW RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**passed at the 2001 World Conference in Hamilton,
Ontario, Canada**

"What has your Society done since Hamilton?"

Margaret MacKay, Scottish Women's Rural Institutes

SWRI contacted the appropriate government departments and research organisations. The Scottish Executive Education Department gave information on their policy on the teaching of Home Economics. Responsibility for this rests with each Education Authority, but Scottish Executive guidelines seek to ensure that the curriculum offers sufficient opportunities at all levels of primary and secondary education. The Department also responded to our enquiry about work being done for preparation for parenthood and family life. Support is available through many sources: Parentline Scotland provides a confidential help-line for parents; Sure Start Scotland offers targeted support for families with young children in areas of greatest need; a Scottish Parenting Forum is administered by the Church of Scotland to promote collaborative work and information exchange amongst organisations, many in the voluntary sector, working with parents.

The Scottish Executive Health Department sent information on the work of assessing the impact of the cultivation of GM crops and claimed that there will be no commercial cultivation of these crops in Scotland until the results of the research are known and assessed for safety. They also confirmed the level of funding to Scottish Health Boards for work in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDs. There are six city-based clinics in Scotland and opportunities to take up counselling and to access welfare facilities and services. They also gave us information on the research funding of work on the prevention of malaria.

The Medical Research Council sent us information on work on HIV/AIDs and Malaria in UK.

Annie Van der Horst, Netherlands Housewives Organisation

The ACWW committee of the Netherlands, representing 120,000 members, has sent the Resolutions and Recommendations to our

Government and Members of Parliament or other relevant organisations.

We received an answer with compliments and support from the Minister of Development regarding our own Resolution against trafficking in Women and Children.

The Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries replied, asking us to monitor his policy and warn him if he doesn't mention ACWW's accepted resolutions.

Other ACWW action was described in Marian Verstappen's presentation.

Birgitte Opsahl, Norwegian Women and Family Organisation

On behalf of the members of the Norwegian Women and Farm Association, the following action has been taken.

The Resolutions were sent to:

- a) The Prime Minister
- b) The relevant Ministers and Ministries
- c) Offices of UN bodies in Norway
- d) Press and Television News
- e) All the Resolutions and Recommendations appeared in our own magazine
- f) The President took part in debates on Television and gave interviews

CONFERENCE SUMMATION by Sandra Broadrick-Allen

Sandra Broadrick-Allen, ACWW UN Committee Chairman, who described herself as a "punch-hitter", gave a witty and comprehensive summation of Conference.

She began by saying that as a first time attendee of a European Area Conference, she felt that perhaps she saw things differently, and in any case she brought yet another language to Conference - American English Slang. She referred to the physical site of the Conference as beautiful, beautiful, beautiful! It was such a treat to take coffee breaks and eat meals surrounded by the blue sea. (At home she is surrounded by 2 shades of green: soybeans and corn!)

The Conference facilities in the Orthodox Academy of Crete afforded modern technology, soft comfortable chairs and an atmosphere in which it was very easy to hear. The hotel rooms were some of the nicest she had stayed in, although some of us "flood" the entire room when taking a shower! She also mentioned the friendly and helpful staff.

We had been honoured to meet and to listen to some very important people: an Archbishop and an Ambassador, a Prefect and a Mayor, as well as the internationally famous Director of the Academy. Prominent University faculty members, with world-wide reputations, had been our speakers, and never before had she heard of a Professor bringing his entire class all the way from the mainland to listen to the deliberations of a Conference.

Excellent entertainment had been provided, with live musical groups and dancers night after night. It was very splendid to be invited to participate in a memorial for Fotini Anoussaki, a remembrance of the Battle of Crete and a visit to the olive tree which will provide the wreath for the first Gold Medallist at the forth-coming Olympics.

It was wonderful to be so warmly welcomed and given beautiful gifts at all the places we had visited: the olive oil processing plant, the organic farm and the ceramic workshop - somewhere in her luggage is a turtle named Helen.

We had been entertained to meals by the Archbishop and the Mayor, but these very personal insights and experiences were only possible because of the very high esteem in which our hostess organisation is held.

The Greek Country Women's Centre and the Orthodox Academy of Crete made this special insiders' view of Crete possible.

On a lighter note, she made reference to the loss of her luggage, saying that several delegates had come to her rescue with offers of trousers, a dress for the Gala dinner and, most importantly, cigarettes, on learning that her suitcase was gone! To them all she proffered profound thanks.

She had learnt that one of the most important issues facing Greece was the abandonment of the countryside and rural life. It was frightening to hear that the city population of Athens has more than doubled in the decade between 1990 and 2000. How do you get the young Greek woman to stay in the countryside? Thankfully, it is apparent that many organisations and the Government are working

on this problem, especially our ACWW member society, The Greek Country Women's Centre. Co-operation by everyone concerned is important. "If one part suffers, all suffer together: if one flourishes, all rejoice together". Over and over again during this Conference, whether during reports from member societies, in discussion groups, from speakers and in personal conversations, it has become overwhelmingly apparent that we must all work together. How extremely lucky we are that we are members of ACWW, an organisation that has existed for over 70 years. We can enable this co-operation among rural women to prosper.

A most interesting thought came from one speaker - suppose all Ministers of War were women, and they were now called Ministers of Peace. If we really believe that "Peace is not just the absence of hostilities - it is also a quality of life", this is just what ACWW member societies are trying to do, and in so doing, to improve the quality of life. Friendships and the ACWW family - this is the glue that binds families together, with shared experiences to unite us.

She had learnt things: such as the significance of a red hardboiled egg, and from the "You entertain us" evening that Liza and Henry with their holey bucket came from Scotland and not the mid-West! She recalled a beautifully enacted version of a Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale relating how the sale of a cow led to one thing after another until it became a bag of rotten apples. It had been inspiring to hear the whole of Finlandia and to sing Auld Lang Syne at the end of a memorable evening.

She recalled the recurring questions on everybody's lips: What number is my bus? Where are we going? Are you hungry? Also the number of times she had seen a hug, a smile, a pat on the arm or shoulder.

In conclusion, she gave us some food for thought. Ordinary people believe only in the possible. Extraordinary people visualise not what is possible or probable, but rather what is impossible. And by visualising the impossible, they begin to see it as possible. "I ask all of you and each of your societies, to become extraordinary people and groups so that we can make the impossible POSSIBLE"

CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Heleni Chrysohoou, President of the Greek Country Women's Centre, presented handmade gifts to the many people who had worked very hard to ensure the success of Conference.

May Kidd then warmly thanked the hostess organisation. The hospitality and generosity of the Greek people knew no bounds. In particular, she singled out Heleni Chrysohoou, Areti Tsagou, Petti Gerolimatou and Artemis Pavella for their contributions, and she ended with a special word of thanks to Menie Pavella.

Margaret Cadzow, NFWI, England, proposed a vote of thanks to May Kidd for the competent way in which she had chaired the Conference, thereby assuring its success.

The final word came from Dr Papaderos, who thanked everyone for coming to visit the Academy, and for the kindness shown to Archbishop Eirineas.

The conference closed with the singing of Auld Lang Syne.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Monday 20 May

"You entertain Us" Presenter: Areti Tsagou, Greece.

All delegates and countries joined in this Fun Evening. The programme included the following:

- Finland started things off in style with the music of Finlandia.
- Northern Ireland delighted with songs and poems from their counties.
- Ireland sang sweetly too.
- Scotland danced with everyone, and made us laugh with "Oh Sara, Oh Henery".
- England had lots of fun with hats.
- North Yorkshire West nearly caused a riot playing "Statues" and "Bang! Bang!"
- Estonia proved they are pop-stars with their version of the Eurovision Song Contest.
- Denmark deserve an Oscar for their enactment of a Hans Christian Andersen fable.

Tuesday 21 May

**Gala Dinner hosted by the Municipal Authority
of Kolympari**

We left in coaches and travelled up the mountains to be greeted by the Mayor of Kolympari beside the oldest Olive Tree in the world - could it really be five thousand years old? A branch of this tree will be carried into the arena at the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004.

We travelled on to another mountain village where it seemed the entire population of the area awaited us, at an outdoor restaurant in the village square. After another warm welcome from the Mayor, Greek musicians played as we did our best to consume course after course of delicious Greek dishes. Between courses and after the meal, some of us joined the Greek Dancers on stage and were soon dancing as if we too were Greek! It was a memorable evening, not least because the lights went out, the music stopped and the ground shook. No, it was not the strength of the local brew, but an EARTHQUAKE, six on the Richter scale no less. We knew our conference was important, but we did not expect the earth to move!

WEEKEND PROGRAMME

Friday 17 May

Welcome Reception

At the Welcome Reception, held on the terrace in the open air, May Kidd, ACWW Area President Europe, welcomed delegates to the Conference. Menie Pavella translated to/from Greek as appropriate throughout the evening.

Alexander Papaderos, General Director of the Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC) gave his welcome to the College in English for 3 reasons: to express thanks, to encourage others to speak English and to appeal for patience from English speakers. He was pleased that the ACWW European Area Conference had come to OAC. With 25 countries registered, such a pan-European meeting was very special.

Although the official welcome was scheduled for Monday, some members were introduced. Everdine Sanders-Vonk, Past ACWW Area President Europe said it was wonderful to see so many friends;

Zdenka Hajna, President of the Czech Women's Union, hosts of the 1999 Conference, said it was good to be there without responsibility and gave good wishes for a wonderful conference; Heleni Chrysochoou, President of the Greek Country Women's Centre was delighted to see so many members and thanked the OAC for their hospitality. Other members of the Organising Committee were then introduced.

After dinner we were entertained by Vassilis Carefillakis and his group, playing traditional musical instruments (e.g. a Cretan violin) and singing Cretan songs - a most enjoyable start to the proceedings.

Saturday 18 May

Field trips

Three field trips were arranged for the morning. First we visited an Olive Oil Co-operative in Kolympari. Forty-seven people work in the factory. The olives, harvested from November to January, are cold pressed and then bottled or canned in the factory. The main product is extra virgin olive oil.

We then went to a ceramic workshop at Nohia. The pottery is a family business, now in the hands of a mother and daughter. The clay of the area is among the best in the world for pottery and the display included a wonderful selection of vivid blue bowls, plates, lamps, etc. A very special exhibit and a family treasure, was a pottery font with candleholders, used in the Greek Orthodox Church for immersing babies at baptism.

The next stop was in an olive grove belonging to Nikos Psillakis, who told us how he had established his Ecological Farm in 1994. He farms 30 hectares, with 6,000 trees, without the use of insecticide, herbicide or artificial fertilisers. The costs of ecological farming are 30% more than non-ecological as the methods are labour intensive, but demand is growing for the quality product. We then were invited to his home for refreshments and were each given a bottle of organic olive oil.

In the late afternoon we visited the Venizélos Graves. Elefthérios Venizelos, who became Prime Minister of Greece in 1910, was a Cretan hero and a prominent figure in the War of Independence. He is buried with his son Sophoklés, in a wooded park on a beautiful hill top site above Chania. The views are outstanding.

Before returning to OAC for dinner, delegates had some time in Chania, visiting the harbour, seeing the sites and just relaxing in the sunshine.

After dinner we were entertained to traditional dances by members of the Women's Greek Lyceum.

Sunday 19 May

Greek Orthodox Service

As is customary, we set off before breakfast to go to part of the Greek Orthodox service in Metropolitan Church in Platanos. The Church, a short walk from where the coaches parked, was most attractive with sunlight coming through small panes of glass in the dome to light up the rich interior. The service was relayed to those outside through a loudspeaker and, during the service, the priest welcomed delegates in English.

Breakfast was taken in a restaurant, with a terrace overlooking the sea, at Phalassarna. Coffee, juice, many breads, cakes and delicacies were enjoyed by all. There was time to enjoy the wonderful view before rejoining the coaches for the drive to Platanos. Some delegates chose to walk.

Memorial tribute to Fotini Anousaki

Fotini Anousaki, Founder of Greek Country Women's Centre, is buried at Saint Kyr-Yiannis graveyard, a very special place with beautiful flowers and on the migration route for many birds. It was her dream that the ACWW European Area Conference would be held in Crete and it was fitting that a memorial to her was included in the programme.

We were told that the area had been active in Roman times, with its own coinage, and that archaeologists were still exploring the area. It is also reputed to have the best seafood in the world and we were given jars of shells, collected by members, as a mark of love and understanding. May Kidd conveyed our thanks for the kindness, generosity and hospitality received.

The Memorial started with a prayer for Fotini Anousaki and in remembrance of all beloved ones who are dead. Hilda Stewart, ACWW World President, laid a spray of flowers at the memorial and said a few words on her memory of Fotini as a friend in ACWW.

Olive wood workshop

A brief visit was made to the Wood Workshop Kissamos Ltd., founded by Nikos Lainakis in 1980. Olive wood has a wonderful grain and feel and many delegates took the opportunity to purchase mementos of the visit.

Lunch in Kastelli

This was a very special event, given that it was at the invitation of Archbishop Eirineas, Founder of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, and he graced the occasion with his presence. A wonderful meal of traditional Greek dishes was served to the delegates by priests. Jugs of local wine and bowls of fruit were plentiful. Towards the end of the meal dishes of red dyed, hard-boiled eggs were passed round and we were invited to tap eggs with our neighbours, the ceremony being started by Archbishop Eirineas and the ACWW World President.

Women's Handcraft Co-operative Fair, City Hall, Castelli

Members of the Greek Country Women's Centre make many attractive items in traditional crafts and had staged a Women's Handcraft Co-operative Fair in the City Hall, Castelli, which delegates visited before returning to OAC.

Celebration of the Battle of Crete

The Battle of Crete began on 20 May 1941 and is commemorated annually on the anniversary. The local people call it a Celebration, when respect and honour are given to people from all nations who died in war. The ceremonies are in the spirit of reconciliation and peace. ACWW European Conference delegates formally paid their respects to all those involved in the Battle of Crete with a short ceremony at the War Memorial in Castelli. Two Cretan survivors dressed in national dress, a man of 92 and his 88 year old wife, were present to see Hilda Stewart, ACWW World President, accompanied by May Kidd, ACWW Area President Europe and Heleni Chryssochoou, President of the Greek Country Women's Centre, lay a wreath at the memorial.

We then proceeded to the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Centre, a

new venture by OAC. They are building a village for youth, especially those from Europe and the Mediterranean Area, on 17 acres of land. Each of the ACWW delegates was asked to contribute to building the Centre by each carrying a small stone into the Centre.

Already young people from 42 countries have been there and some helped to build an open-air theatre overlooking the sea. It was inaugurated during the Battle of Crete celebrations in 1992. Delegates were welcomed to the Centre by Alexander Papaderos. To commemorate the Conference an olive tree was planted. In turn Hilda Stewart, Ursula Goh, Heleni Chrysochoou and May Kidd each added a spadeful of earth, followed by one delegate from each country represented.

After the ceremony, we sat in the steeply sloping auditorium and heard from a few of the survivors of the Battle of Crete about their experiences and memories. One woman recounted how many people had moved to the villages to avoid the bombardment of the towns. On the evening of 21 May 1941 her family were entertaining relatives. She was walking up to the village to meet a friend when there was the noise of aeroplanes and the sky turned black. Parachutists came down where the Memorial now is. She stayed in the mountains for eleven days before venturing home.

The couple who had been with us at the Memorial then told their story. The men of their age group were mainly involved in the war in Italy and were not allowed to come back to defend Crete. When the parachutists came, their equipment and provisions were dropped separately in boxes. The gentleman's father-in-law took one of the boxes and discovered telephones, radios, hand grenades, etc., which he kept. Two planes came down near their village and they freed the German crew members. One problem was that many of the fighting men from Crete were away from the island taking part in other campaigns.

Another man told how he and his father were both captured. The Germans offered the opportunity for one of them to survive. A heated debate ensued, both father and son arguing that it was more important that the other survived. Eventually the Germans interrupted, and impressed by the men's attitudes, allowed both to survive - compassion from ordinary men caught up in a war not of their making.

Alexander Papaderos concluded by telling us how his generation also had stories to tell, for example experiences in concentration

camps. However, the purpose of the meeting was to build the future and not dwell on the past. The people of Crete look forward, not back – hence the building of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Centre. As a mark of this new hope for the future, a group of young Cretan dancers ended the evening with music and dance. A very moving and fitting tribute to a difficult time in the history of all European countries.

Dinner that evening was given by the Prefectural and Municipal authorities – again a wonderful menu of traditional Greek dishes.

ACWW EUROPEAN AREA CONFERENCE

17-22 MAY 2002

Orthodox Academy of Crete, Chania, Crete, Greece

AREA BUSINESS

In line with the resolution passed at the Post-Conference Area Meeting of 18 September 1999 in Celakovice, Czech Republic, Area Business was dealt with throughout the conference agenda.

MINUTES

Welcome

Area President May Kidd welcomed delegates.

Alison Bayley (Scotland) was introduced and accepted as reporter for the first business session.

Betty Lloyd (Wales) was introduced and accepted as reporter for all subsequent business sessions

Menie Pavella (Greece) acted as translator for the first session. Simultaneous translation Greek/English/Greek was available at subsequent sessions.

Introductions

Hilda Stewart (Northern Ireland) ACWW World President

Ursula Goh (Malaysia) Deputy World President

Sandra Broadrick-Allen (USA) Chairman UN Committee

Jean Blair (Northern Ireland) Chairman P&P Committee

Everdine Sanders-Vonk (Netherlands) Immediate Past ACWW Area President Europe

Heleni Chrysochoou (Greece) President of the Greek Country Women's Centre

Other Office-Bearers and Board Members of the Greek Country Women's Centre.

Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 17 June 2001 in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, were read. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Drifa Hjartardottir (Iceland) and seconded by Margaret MacKay (Scotland).

Matters Arising

Thea Huyberts van Oers (Netherlands) again drew attention to the needs of immigrant women in Europe and stressed that we need to be concerned about the refugee problem.

Ingun Birkeland (Norway) proposed that conference send a resolution on this subject to the next ACWW World Conference.

ACWW World President Hilda Stewart advised making the resolution an international concern, not just a European concern. As such, the resolution would have a better chance of being selected to go forward to the World Conference.

ACWW Deputy President Ursula Goh was not in favour of such a resolution, because ACWW is not in a position to solve the problem.

Mariana Varela (Thessalonika, Greece) asked if steps had been taken by ACWW to aid women and children suffering in Israel. The World President replied that we cannot help there, because it is a war situation, and furthermore we have no member society in Israel.

Mira Miskulin (Croatia) said that the issues were very painful for her, as she had first-hand experience of the problem, and knew the needs of women sufferers coping with trauma. She suggested there were many simple ways of helping, teaching language and basic skills. It is our obligation to open our eyes to the problem and to help in any way we can.

A small group was formed to meet and formulate the wording of a resolution and to report back to conference at a later session. Fiona Ross (England) volunteered to be a member of the group along with Thea Huyberts and Ingunn Birkeland.

Discussion took place as to whether this should be a resolution or a recommendation. A majority wished it to be a resolution. Discussion

took place as to the length of the resolution, and whether it should be shortened. A majority voted in favour of the longer version.

After the proposed wording was read to conference by the subgroup, conference agreed in principle with the resolution.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

Be it resolved that ACWW encourage UN bodies, governments and member societies to work for commitment to:

- the right to protection of immigrant women and children
- the right to social protection
- the right to freedom of movement
- the right to employment and remuneration
- the right to improved living and working conditions
- the right of immigrant elderly women to receive an income that guarantees an adequate standard of living
- the rights of disabled women.

Any Other Business

Area Communications

The Area President writes and distributes regular Area Newsletters, and these appear to be much appreciated. Bethan Williams (Wales) asked if the Area Newsletters could be put on the ACWW Website. Ilse Andra (Germany) supported this idea and also suggested greater use of email.

The World President said that was not possible, as some other Area Newsletters were 24 pages long and not suitable to go on the website.

Drug Abuse. HIV/Aids.

Elena Bashun (Russia) voiced concern about drug abuse in rural areas. Otilie Gambrell (Austria) one of ACWW's UN representatives in Vienna, reported on a meeting in Vienna which she had just attended, concerning drug abuse and the resultant spread of HIV/Aids.

The Area President acknowledged that these are matters of great concern and hoped delegates would be able to voice their views and address these issues in their conference discussion groups. She made reference to the resolution on HIV/Aids passed at the 2001 ACWW Conference in Canada.

GM Foods

Stamatina Marinova (Bulgaria) raised the issue of GM Foods. The World President recalled the Resolution passed unanimously in Canada.

Crete Conference Sponsorship Fund

It was decided that any funds remaining in the Crete Conference Sponsorship Fund should be carried over to a sponsorship fund for the next European Area Conference.

2005 European Area Conference

Offers were invited from member societies to host the next European Area Conference in 2005 or 2006. Three offers to consider hosting the Conference were made, by Iceland, Poland and Scotland. After discussion a vote was taken. Conference voted in favour of Iceland.

The Area President thanked those responsible for all three offers and confirmed that the next European Area Conference would be held in Iceland in 2005.

Date of next European Area Meeting

The next European Area Meeting will take place in Tasmania in March 2004, during the ACWW World Conference

The Area President thanked Alison Bayley and Betty Lloyd for acting as reporters for the business sessions.

LIST OF CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Austria Otilie Gambrill, Agnete Weigl

Bulgaria Stamatina Marinova, Maria Zagorska

Croatia Mira Miskulin

Czech Republic Zdenka Hajna, Alena Malcevova

Denmark Anne-Marie Hansen, Karen Andersen Hindsgaul, Erik Jorgensen, Rut Jorgensen, Aase Poulsen, Niels Poulsen

England Antony Addams, Susan Addams, Elisabeth Appleton, Anne Ashton, Margot Atkinson, Jeanne Barsby, Margaret Cadzow, Brenda Drake, John Drake, Peggy Fowden, Hilde Frankel, Jackie Gregory, Barbara Harvey, Betty Houghton, John Houghton, Mary Howse, Janice Langley, Delia Petty, Fiona Ross, Trixey Slade, Christine Trigger

Estonia Piia Kaasik, Urve Kaasik, Erika Prants

Finland Kyosti Kallio, Marja Kallio, Sanna Lento-Kemppi, Liisa Niilola, Pirkko Ruuskanen-Parrukosh, Inger Schauman, Leena Venna

Germany Ilse Andra, Evelyn Moscherosch

Greece Maria Anoussaki Paliou, Areti Anoussaki Tzagou, Heleni Chryssohoou, Petti Gerolimatou, Rita Ioannidi, Nellie Lagakou, Maria Marakaki, Artemis Pavella, Menie Pavella, Klio Presvelou, Kyriakos Rodoussakis, Koula Stamouli, Harikleia Tjiannoudaki Kalliteraki, Eleni Tokari, Antonia Trihopoulou, Bessie Tzavara, Popi Vilou, Takis Vrongistinos, Koula Vrongistinou

Crete Heleni Annoussaki, Amalia Bassia, Chrysoula Boulaki, Antonia Daratsianou, Katina Digenaki, Anastasia Kapi, Vagelis Kastrinakis, Virginia Katakaki, Maria Kavarligou, Anna Koutsounaki, Maria Louvitaki, Evagelia Marentaki, Alexandros Papaderos, Efthia Pefkianaki, Heleni Proussalidou, Nicolas Psillakis, Despina Simantircki, Marika Touloupaki, Chrysoula Varouhaki

Aegina Eleni Emmanouel, Manos Maltezos, Koula Maltezou, Sofia Mira, Irene Palamidou

Livadia Alexandra Housiada, Koula Panayotopoulou,

Thessalonika Eleftheria Milioti, Barbara Papatrezi, Nicolaos Papatrezi, Mariana Varela

Iceland Halla Adalsteinsdottir, Hildur Eythonsdottir, Helga Gudmundsdottir, Ragnhildur Gudmundsdottir, Drifa Hjartardottir

Ireland Mollie Cawley, Mary Clifford, Maeve Dunn, Kathleen Feehily, Eilish Hamill, Clara Hanna, Jean Wilkinson, Raymond Wilkinson

Latvia Ilze Karsa

Lithuania Grazina Paliokiene

Malaysia Ursula Goh

Netherlands Simon Huyberts, Thea Huyberts van Oers, Everdine Sanders-Vonk, Annie Van der Horst, Marian Verstappen

Northern Ireland Blossom Beattie, Jean Blair, Mary Fox, Wilhelmina Juleff, Betty Lyttle, Roberta Macauley, Angela Martin, Esther Mayne, Zena McAllister, Helen McKeown, Margaret McMillan, Heather Neill, Eleanor Newton, Joan Shanks, Hilda Stewart, Agnes Woodside

Norway Ingunn Birkeland, Gunhild Haugum, Bjarnhild Hodneland, Birgitte Opsahl

Poland Bernadetta Niemczyk, Krystyna Stachu, Karolina Stepniak, Genowefa Szatkowska

Romania Simona Cernusca, Maria Ciochirca, Cristina Mates, Afrodita Roman, Doina Solomon

Russia Elena Bashun

Scotland Betty Anderson, Margot Baird, Alison Bayley, Elsie Brown, Molly Fleming, Emily Fraser, Sheila Gillon, Ann Kay, Helen Kelly, May Kidd, Rita Lindsay, Margaret Mackay, Ella Shaw, Agnes Warnock, Noel Whamond

Sweden Annika Boxtröm

USA Sandra Broadrick-Allen

Wales Betty Lloyd, Bethan Williams

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Archbishop of Kissamou and
Selinou, Eirineas
May Kidd, ACWW Area President
Europe
Heleni Chrysochou, President
Greek Country Women's Centre
George Katsanevakis, Prefect of
Chania
Kyriakos Rodousakis, Ambassador
Maria Anoussaki-Paliou,
newspaper editor, ex. Vice
President of GCWC
Nicolaos Phsillakis, Agriculturist

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

May Kidd, ACWW Area President
Europe
Alexander Papaderos, General
Director of OAC
Areti Anoussaki-Tsagou, Vice
President GCWC
Menie Pavella, General Secretary
GCWC
Artemis Pavella, Treasurer GCWC
Peti Gerolymatou, Board Member
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Maria Anoussaki-Palliou, Editor,
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Hariklia Kalliteraki, Former
Director Charokopios, Home
Economics College

Virginia Kataki, Member GCWC,
Crete

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Heleni Chrysochou, President
Greek Country Women's Centre
Areti Anoussaki-Tsagou, Vice
President GCWC
Menie Pavella, General Secretary
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Artemis Pavella, Treasurer GCWC
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Virginia Kataki, Member GCWC,
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