



International Association of Women in Radio & Television

www.iawrt.org

Regional Conference Statement: IAWRT – looking into the future

Dear Members,

On behalf of the IAWRT Board, I wish to express my appreciation to you for attending the IAWRT Regional Conference in Entebbe, Uganda, Oct 2-5. Thank you for being such active participants. Your contributions made this particular meeting a landmark one in the history of IAWRT. For those who could not make it we really missed you because this was truly four days of introspection and engagement.

IAWRT has been expanding and we are happy to inform all about the installation of two new chapters – Afghanistan and Iraq. They have already started working on projects in line with the themes initiated by IAWRT.

The theme for the conference **IAWRT – looking into the future** is self explanatory. IAWRT had the opportunity to do some reflections on not only our activities but to also question past actions and identify lessons to be learnt from those past actions. It was indeed refreshing and gave us the drive for the future embedded in our theme. It was energizing for the board.

We were delighted to have over 45 members including 11 out of 14 Chapter Heads which speaks volumes for the involvement of Chapters and individual members in IAWRT.

It was a good opportunity for us to revisit our strengths, our weaknesses and the areas we needed more improvement on. Our strength is members who help deliver on projects that we believe in like the Community Radio project, Long Documentary Series, Rural Women and Media, Gender Mainstreaming Project, Chapter Activities, Film Festivals and Safety Training.

To their enriching experiences we are able to showcase on international platforms our projects like the CSW and others.

Every two years, IAWRT produces a long documentary, which is screened in festivals, chapters and UN forums. We had a soft launch of the recently commissioned film - *Displacement and Resilience: Women live for a new day*. Discussions brought in stories of the displaced women around the world. The film, which stimulated constructive discussion on issues raised about the plight of refugees projected in the film, is a collaboration between IAWRT film makers from the Philippines, Tunisia, Canada, India

and executive producer, Chandita Mukherjee. We will share it with the members as soon as the final cut is ready.

IAWRT has a new handbook. A book on community radio has been launched showcasing the relevance and power of community Radio. It reminds us of what IAWRT truly stands for; radio and television and allied media. The Mobile Disaster Radio handbook was produced by our chapter in the Philippines.

The conference gave us many takeaways:

- *The new intimate One on One conversations with individual Chapter Members was a great learning experience for the board as well as the respective chapter representatives*
- *IAWRT is running 13 committees to look into projects and ideas that the association stands for and these four days gave us an opportunity to understand the journey covered, the challenges and the wayforward*
- *As a step to build an identity and ownership among all members the Board issued IAWRT Press Cards, which will increase a sense of belonging and help you have an affiliation to an international network of women in media. We are in the process of updating our database and the secretariat will be reaching out to you as soon as possible.*

A lot has been done. A lot needs to be done. One of the major challenges that the board, elected in November 2017, is facing is the absence of any funds beyond 31 Dec 2018. It is an uphill task to raise money for such a large organisation spread thinly across 60 countries. FOKUS - our major funder for the last 20 years has revamped its funding policy and has become country and project specific – more development oriented, which is the mantle of FOKUS. We were indeed special to FOKUS because we are a media association, which made most of what we did over the past 20 years, media for development.

Additionally, our projects, which are media related, did not fit into FOKUS' future plans. Previous Boards were aware that funding would be cut, however, we did not expect it to happen so soon and without a weaning period. The Board found itself in unfamiliar territory. But we strongly believe that together, with our resilience we will be able to overcome this set back as **we only lost money not our spirit.**

We no longer take this as a challenge but an opportunity to rebuild the IAWRT, the projects, our membership and build international visibility.

At the members' meeting the participants expressed solidarity and extended our mandate for one year to restructure the organization, raise funds, setting up e-voting guidelines for future elections and this includes postponing the 2019 Biennial too.

The Board will be reaching out to you for your support, your intellectual input, initiatives and experiences to help. And over the next few months we will develop a

strategic plan with the support of all IAWRT members and hope to meet your expectations where possible.

A detailed President's Narrative Report and Treasurer's Financial Report presented to the members at the Extra-Ordinary Members Meeting will be shared in the Regional Conference Report and posted in the members' room on the website. Please contact webjournalist@iawrt.org or secretariat@iawrt.org if you have problems accessing this internal member's page.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gonda". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Violet Gonda
IAWRT President
president@iawrt.org
10.10.18