



## Letter from the President

Dear U.S. National Committee for UN Women,

After a busy spring at USNC-UN Women, we have been enjoying a slower pace (and the occasional side trip) this summer. Yet, while you may not hear as much from us this season, we are continuing our behind the scenes work on upcoming events, including this year's 16 Days of Activism and next year's conference. We are also very fortunate to have the talent and skills of five new national board members, several of whom are working in new areas, including corporate sponsorships and formalizing our presence at the Commission for the Status of Women.

However, what I find most exciting about this summer's activity is hearing about the ongoing connections made during our Congressional Education Day and Annual conference. Many members who participated in our first direct outreach on Capi-

tol Hill have continued their dialogue with congressional staffers about global women's empowerment and the key role that UN Women plays in securing gender equality. Our conference also presented an opportune venue to introduce ourselves to the many different women's organizations and policy centers. Many of us, me included, have begun to work with speakers, organizations, and participants on different ideas and projects.

Finally, I would like to give a quick update on the conclusion of a successful fiscal year. Membership is up, two new chapters formed, and, thanks to a generous grant from the Lattner Foundation, we have more funds for operational growth. During our June board meeting, we presented our donation in person to Mitushi Das of UN Women, a wonderful way to cap off the year.

Best regards,

Maggie Forster Schmitz

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## The National Conference in Washington, DC

“The USNC Conference was an inspirational, educational and motivating event. I had the pleasure of attending my first national conference as a new chapter board member and was impressed by the high level of professionalism, the quality of speakers and excellent content. The conference also offered a wonderful opportunity to network and to meet with many dynamic and successful women. It was very rewarding experience for me personally and I look forward to attending next year.”

*Kathie Bolognese (NY Metro Chapter)*

### SAVE the date:

#### 1. Mid-Year Board Meeting:

January 11-13, 2013,  
in Atlanta, Georgia.

#### 2. CSW: March 4-15, 2013, New York, NY.

#### 3. Annual Conference:

The 2013 Conference will be in Sarasota, FL, on June 8. The conference committee, chaired by Carol Poteat Buchanan, is interested in your ideas for speakers and panel participants. The theme for the 2013 conference is “The Power of One”. There will be more information in the Fall newsletter.



*Grace Richardson led the panel on Women's Leadership in Peace and Security*



## USNC 2012 Annual Conference - Women Lead: Politics, Civil Society, and Peacebuilding Worldwide

*by Caroline Slobodzian*  
On June 2nd, USNC hosted its

5th Annual Conference in Washington, DC at George Washington University. The conference focused on three areas of women's leadership - elected representation in the political arena, leading local organizations for change within civil society, and leadership in global post-conflict peacebuilding movements. Over 130 people participated in the conference.

Bathilde Diouf, Executive Director of AfricAgir, opened the conference with a compelling presentation. AfricAgir, a nonprofit organization that advocates for women's empowerment and children's education in



*The new Miami & East LA chapters' installation*

West Africa, is an example of the on-the-ground work that UN Women, as the world's only multilateral grant making organization for women and girls, supports. While each of the three panels focused on a different area of women's leadership, common themes emerged throughout the day's discussions: the crucial role of mentoring young women; the need to respect local cultures and customs in crafting solutions; and why more American women should run for public office. Independent film distributor ITVS was again on the agenda with a special trailer of the upcoming film series *Half the Sky*, based on the popular book by Nicholas Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn. Executive Producer Mikaela Beardsley spoke to members about the film, which is a part of their Women and

Girls Lead documentary series. After lunch was a presentation of the newly packaged DVD and USNC theme song, *I Can Touch the Sun* (lyrics by Lynne Revo-Cohen/Danielle Westphal). Proceeds from the sale of the DVD benefit USNC. The conference concluded with a bonus panel, "Working in Global Women's Health and Rights," that engaged the audience in a lively discussion about tips and best methods of working in Washington, DC.

**For a complete list of the panelists, please visit:**

**[http://www.unwomen-usnc.org/files/2012%20Conference%20Speaker%20Bios\\_2.pdf](http://www.unwomen-usnc.org/files/2012%20Conference%20Speaker%20Bios_2.pdf)**



**Bathilde Diouf**



**Conference attendees shared experience and ideas**



**Maggie Forster Schmitz**



**Enjoying the conference**

## Books Corner

The Gulf Coast Chapter has a very active book club, chaired by Leita Kaldi. These are the books chosen by club members for the coming year:

- Mary Kingsley: ***Travels in West Africa***
- Leslie Chen: ***Factory Girls*** (China)
- Karen Russell: ***Swamplandia*** (Florida)
- Carol Green: ***The Spiritual Transformation of America***
- Diane Ackerman: ***The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story***
- Jung Chang: ***Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China***
- Qanta Ahmed, M.D.: ***In the Land of Invisible Women*** (Saudi Arabia)
- Eilat Negev, Yehuda Koren: ***The First Lady of Fleet Street: The Life of Rachel Beer: Crusading Heiress and Newspaper Pioneer***
- Israeli authors Savyon Liebrecht and Ronit Matalon: Both authors have written several books, among which Book Club participants can choose and report on to the group. Two hours will be scheduled for this special exploration of readings from Israel.
- Rosie Carr: ***Land of One Thousand Hills*** (Rwanda)
- Sonia Pressman Fuentes: ***Eat First – You Don't Know What They'll Give You: The Adventures of an Immigrant Family and Their Feminist Daughter***

## CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS:

### The Metro NY Chapter

by Michelle Lira

• The Chapter is excited to announce that the Fall/Winter 2012 marks the 25th anniversary of our chapter. Founded in 1987, our organization has much to commemorate, from UN Luncheons at the UN Headquarters with speakers such as Hillary Clinton and Michelle Bachelet to fundraisers celebrating Abigail Disney and Lehymah Gbowee. October 24th marks our official celebration, to be held at the National Arts Club in NYC. We are still in our early planning stages but we hope you can join us in remembering our past 25 years and honoring past Presidents, as well as looking forward to our very bright future.

• “A Night to Say NO” 3rd Annual Fundraiser Benefiting the UN Trust Fund by Steve Hirst. A great cause, an assortment of prizes and an open bar led to a full house at the UN Women Metro NY Chapter Young Professionals’ 3rd annual “A Night to Say NO” to Violence Against Women fundraiser on May 16, 2012. Over 250 guests packed the bar and poured onto the dance floor of the upscale Lower East Side Hotel Chantelle to show their support, buy raffle tickets and raise the roof. The final tally? Over ten thousand dollars in cash, will go to support actions to eliminate violence against women.

The numerous raffle prizes included such diverse offerings as tickets to Yankee games and Saturday Night Live dress rehearsals, an UGG Australia leather bag with matching shoes, round trip JetBlue tickets and an iPad. This resounding success couldn’t have happened without the cooperation of Hotel Chantelle and a host of generous sponsors, including Sushi Samba, L’Oreal, Baja Fresh and of course, the hardworking members of the UN Women Metro NY Chapter Young Professionals Steering Committee, for making it all happen.

### Human Rights are Women’s Rights - *A Morning on the Hill*

In conjunction with the Annual Conference, USNC held the First Congressional Education Day on June 1st. Advocacy is a core mission of USNC; participants in the Congressional Education Day worked to raise awareness and provide information on how financial support of UN Women by the US government makes a difference for women around the globe.

The Congressional Education Day included a breakfast reception and training by Crystal Lander, USNC Advocacy Chair, on how to talk with elected officials and their staff about the role of USNC. She stressed that as an advocacy group, we are not targeting members of Congress; we are working to bring the work of USNC and UN Women to the attention of our representatives. The 50 Hill Day participants visited 15 offices of Senate representatives from Alabama, California, Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Virginia and Wisconsin. Participants have continued their outreach to congressional aides after the meetings.



*Left to Right: Marisa Feito, Christina Blanco, Abigail Shearer Robinson (back), Alyssa Beaulieu, Luz Van Meek, Maggie Dougherty Legislative Correspondent, Other legislative staff, Ana Oliveira, and Lalita Janke (seated)*

### USNC re-Launch Fundraising Campaign Officially Kicked Off

by Kay Colson

How is our \$1m fund development goal going? The USNC Fund Development Committee is pleased to report great progress in the first quarter! Here are some highlights:

The database research and board fund development training is completed. We are now ready to start reaching out to our generous membership on a very personal level to start a dialogue about what their support means at this exciting time. Many thanks to Mary Beth Loucks-Sorrell (Clear Connections) and Mike Crum (TMC Consulting) for their tremendous expertise in helping us launch! We also welcome board member Francine Cerami, Lalita Janke, Musu Stewart and Mary Beth Loucks-Sorrell have joined the Fund Development Committee from the chapters to assist with the re-Launch campaign!

Our strategy for this campaign is to ask for a big picture commitment for 3 years. Your board and committee members have committed to personally giving \$59,000 over the next 3 years! This is a great “down payment” for this Campaign and for the future of USNC-UN Women.

We will be reaching out to share our journey with you. We invite you to renew your commitment and advocacy for women. **There is no time like now to re-Launch the US National Committee for UN Women as**

**the most powerful advocate for women and girls around the globe.**

The board has also been joined by three chapter members who will also be making calls and we are still seeking more members to support this great effort. If you are interested in joining the USNC Fund Development team, please contact **Kay Colson, 972.849.9732.**

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## **UN WOMEN PROJECT VISIT to NEJMA in Morocco**

*by Carol Poteat Buchanan*

While attending the International Women's Forum conference in Morocco, Jinee Chebihi of UN Women Rabat, took me to the see an NGO in Rabat called NEJMA - one of three offices of the Democratic Association of Women of Morocco (ADFM). Founded 26 years ago, ADFM has offices in Rabat, Casablanca and Marrakech. The Rabat office focuses on discrimination and violence against women; the office in Casablanca focuses on changing the political environment for women. The focus in Marrakech is on prevention of trafficking of women and girls.

This NGO is part of a network of NGOs called ANARUZ, all working towards equality for women focusing on law reform. The people with whom I met emphasized the importance of the collaboration efforts of the various groups in the country dealing with these issues. The group leaders were very generous with their time and explained the principals and values of ADFM.

There are 52 counseling centers throughout Morocco, all supported by UN Women, which provided the training for women leaders in the organization. UN Women also collects and prints the documentation of the work of the centers. Among the types of counseling centers are the following:

**Clef** - sponsoring training workshops

**Nejma** - serving as a center for advising and capability building for documentation

**School of Equality** - focusing on youth who learn to use technology as an advocacy tool.

*An interesting sidenote: At the School for Equality, young women with veils were surveyed as to why they wore them. Responses included such things as "I can't afford to have my hair done"; "It is easier to get a husband"; "It is easier to get a job"; "I cannot afford so many clothes". Very few of the girls gave religion as a reason.*

Every fourth year, the ADFM is obligated under the statutes of the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to provide a shadow report on the status of its work. UN Women provides the equipment for the centers to collect the work and then promulgates the necessary reports.

In 2011, Moroccans developed a new Constitution. Article 19 calls for equality of men and women. ADFM, along with other NGOs, was involved in ensuring that statute was incorporated. The

## **CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **Southern California Chapter**

*by Lori Vandermeir*

Late last year, Governor Jerry Brown shocked women's organizations by proposing to eliminate the California Commission on the Status of Women. As the only state agency that specifically examines proposed legislation and policies impacting women and girls, the Commission serves as an essential independent voice within state government for California's almost 19 million women and girls. This proposal came at a time when a report had just been released saying that women and children were being disproportionately affected by the state's budget cuts.

Determined to save the Commission, women's organizations from around the state gathered in Newport Beach to highlight the continued need for the Commission. The Southern California chapter of UN Women joined with the California chapter of the National Organization for Women, the American Association of University Women, National Women's History Project, Planned Parenthood, National Women's Political Caucus, Women in Leadership and the Women's Foundation of California in hosting this event. Our own national president, Maggie Forster Schmitz, joined Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, California Secretary of State Debra Bowen, Orange County Sheriff Sandra Hutchens, State Senate Majority Leader Ellen Corbett, and California NOW President Patty Bellasalma.



## CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS:

### Georgia Chapter

by Linda Poteat Buchanan

The Georgia Chapter Spring Walk to End Violence, in Piedmont Park on June 1, was a grand success, raising awareness and money for UN Women and surpassing their last walk by earning 75% more money!! This year marked the 6th Georgia Chapter Walk, with 64% more registrants. The family-friendly day included happy children, energetic walkers of all ages, face painting and fun for everyone.



### The Gulf Coast Chapter

by Mary Dailey

The Gulf Coast Chapter-sponsored Through Women's Eyes Film Festival, in partnership with the Sarasota Film Festival, broke all records this year, presenting 10 feature films and a set of 5 short films. The festival is an opportunity to view the best current films by women filmmakers, directors and writers. The films, representing 13 countries, address topics that affect women around the globe, explore difficult issues and promote dialogue. Directors of several of the films are present after their films are shown.

The Gulf Coast Chapter of USNC UN-Women sponsors the festival to raise awareness of women's issues and the courageous women who work to address the problems. The US National Committee and the Gulf Coast Chapter raise funds to support projects which help women throughout the world, and support our advocacy efforts in the United States.



TWE Directors, Producers and featured artists at the Filmmakers' Reception 2012

organization is now in the process of helping write the laws to support the tenets of the Constitution.

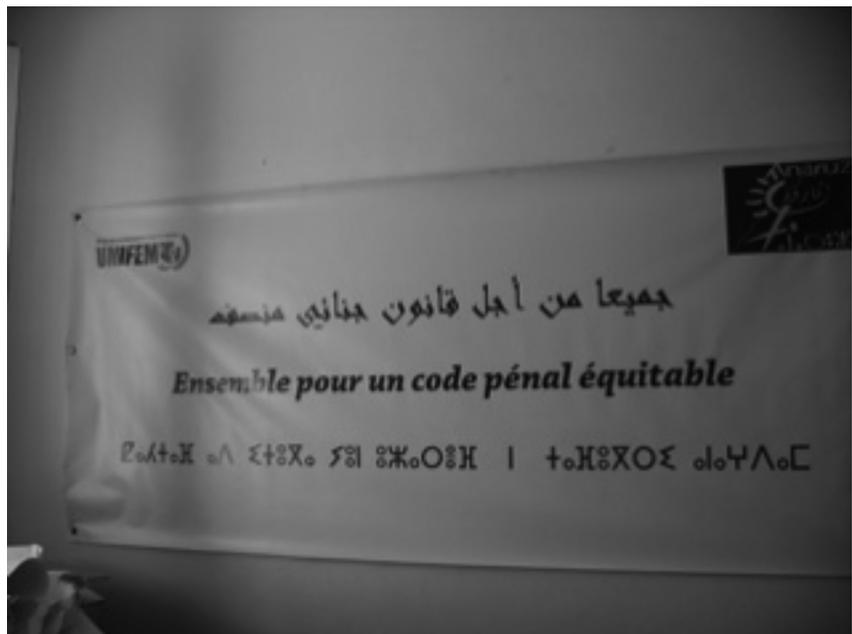
The ADFM members were very proud that in March of 2012, Michelet Bachelet visited the tribal women of the Soulalyate, what is commonly called the collective lands. (The Commission on the Status of Women identified rural women as a focus of

its activity for 2012.) Six years ago, many of the women came to ADFM to complain about not having the right to inherit land. ADFM has been teaching them how to advocate for themselves.

The group was gracious enough to give me an entire morning. I met some of the counselors, received some of their literature (which is all in French) and took photos.



Carol Poteat Buchanan meeting with staff at ADFM



Sign in office: "Come together for an equitable penal code"

## Know Your Board Members



### **Luz Van Meek**

Luz is the founding President of the East Florida Chapter of USNC-UN Women; she served as the Chapter President Representative to the Board and currently holds the position of USNC National Board Member. For four years she has charted the Step Out to Stop Violence against Women and Girls walk; facilitated the creation of two Learners to Leaders Programs; advocated for increasing funding for UN Women and launched campaigns for the ratification of CEDAW and the prevention of child marriage. Her board responsibilities include working on new chapter development and being the co-chair of the National Advocacy Committee.

Luz grew up in Medellin, Colombia, and Caracas, Venezuela; she is the mother of three children and grandmother to five. She loves arts, reading, traveling and especially spending time with family and friends. Amazingly, this busy woman is also beginning studies for a Masters Degree in Public Health at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Van Meek has served as a congressional delegate to advocate for teen pregnancy prevention, parental education and maternal health at national and state levels under the Hispanic-American Jewish Committee of South Florida and the Child Welfare League of America. As Director of Public Policy of the American Association of University Women in North Palm Beach, she advocated for equal pay, equal access to suffrage and equal access for girls to education in hard sciences and participation in male dominated sports. She worked with the Ford Foundation on women's health in migrant agricultural camps and devoted years of research to immigrant women's mental health, acculturation, social networks and social support. In addition to women's issues, she worked for children's empowerment and held the position of Board member of the Florida After-School Alliance where she worked on policy for after school programming.

## The Electronic Connection:

- Every week UN Women's Say NO – UNiTE to End Violence Against Women YouTube Channel features a different video. Say NO - UNiTE is on the lookout for compelling and insightful videos addressing violence against women to feature in its weekly slot. Have a suggestion? Send the name of the video and YouTube URL link directly to [ryan.brown@unwomen.org](mailto:ryan.brown@unwomen.org).
- Like the UN on Facebook: This FB page has information on many programs and is a wonderful way to keep in touch with UN Projects.
- Chapter FB pages: Does your chapter have a Facebook page? If not, set one up, spread the word.
- Check out what the NC & Greater LA chapters post on their pages and remember to like these chapters to keep up to date.
- [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org): Spend some time learning about projects and programs of your favorite international organization.
- International AIDS conference was held in Washington, DC in July. HIV is a core area of UN Women. To access information from the conference go to: <http://www.kff.org/hiv/aids/index.cfm>



**Neale Godfrey**

A dedicated USNC Board member, Neale, has served on multiple committees, recruited board members and been a strong financial supporter since 1993. In her own words:

“Dr. Gwendolyn Baker, past Pres. of the U.S. Committee to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), invited me to join a meeting of UNIFEM. During the meeting, the members asked me to join the board. I am passionately committed to the mission of UN Women and felt it was important to do what I could to help.”

“I was one of the first female execs at Chase Manhattan Bank and was asked to become President of the First Women’s Bank in 1985 (while pregnant with my son). It was pretty interesting moving from handling giant corporations to then handling small retail clients. It was incredibly important to empower women to take charge of their financial lives.”

“My mother had a huge influence on my life. She was a very courageous role model for me. Her philosophy of life was, ‘none of us are born knowing anything - we have to create ourselves every day.’ She also instilled the value of travel and really getting out there to understand the world. We went to Washington in 1964 to see the Civil Rights Marches, etc.”

A financial guru with a most impressive professional resume, Neale’s current program is LIFE, INC: The Ultimate Career Guide for Young People, sponsored by Deloitte Foundation. This program serves over 500,000 middle and high school students. LIFE, Inc. also serves 200,000 youth of U.S. Military Personnel.

