

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEETING, BUDAPEST, SEPTEMBER 2018

The recently restructured board of Soroptimist International (SI) held its annual face to face meeting and Annual General Meeting in Budapest, Hungary from 06 to 08 September. The board now comprising eleven directors, two from each of the four SI Federations plus the SI President, SI Advocacy Director and SI Treasurer who are also appointed as directors of the company. All directors are members of SI committees which enables SI to utilise professional skills and bring skills-based leadership to our global table.

The meetings commenced with a structured Review and Planning Day led by SI Director Beverly Bucur. In preparation, all directors completed a specific board assessment tool to determine focus areas for the day which included reviewing where SI is performing well, where it can improve and potential areas for development. This formula proved very successful with key recommendations regarding: strategic plans, holding more electronic SI board meetings, routine use of surveys and the potential for a global campaign in 2021, being taken forward as agreed resolutions in the formal board meeting.

Day one of the board meeting commenced on Friday 7 September with core business functions being first on the agenda. A complete review of finances was undertaken, with the 2017 Financial Statements presented by company auditors, Streets; these were approved by the board. A comprehensive review of SI Governance items included: the company risk register, revisions to the procedure to form a new Federation, policies for code of conduct, conflict of interest, confidentiality and revisions to the SI Roles and Responsibilities Manual were all unanimously agreed.

Day two of the meeting featured SI Advocacy work, with revised SI Where We Stand Statements regarding Poverty, Terrorism and Social Protection Systems approved for immediate use (*now available in the Members area of the SI website, see <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/members-area/si-statements/>*) The directors also agreed to SI having permanent representation in a seventh UN Centre, Bangkok, and to increase the SI UN Representative team in Geneva.

SI Advocacy was followed by updates by Chairs of SI President Appeals: Educate To Lead: Nepal (2015 – 2017) and Women, Water and Leadership (2017 – 2019); with plans agreed for presentation of a final report of the SI work in Nepal to be ready for July 2019, and a wonderful overview of all the projects currently taking place, which not only link women and water, but provide a step change in women's lives and position women as leaders in the water sector.

SI quadrennial international conventions were also on the agenda for the board; firstly reviewing the global programme for Kuala Lumpur, July 2019, noting that Early Bird registration has recently opened (see <https://siconventionkl2019.org/registration/>). Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland gave a presentation, proposing Dublin, Ireland as the venue for the 2023 international convention; the board were delighted to unanimously approve this proposal. In her closing remarks, Chair of the meeting, SI President Mariet Verhoef Cohen, congratulated the board for a successful meeting and thanked all present for their hard work, input and commitment. The next face to face meeting will be held in Kuala Lumpur, July 2019.

The company Annual General Meeting was also held in Budapest on Friday 7 September, with Silent Observers in attendance. The four Authorised Representatives of the SI Federations received the 2017 company financial statements which were formally signed by Director, Ann Hodgson and Company Secretary, Deborah Thomas. The Authorised Representatives also received the 2017 annual report and appointed auditors for the operating years 2018 and 2019. Following the formal business, a presentation was given to showcase the possibilities of an online lab for Soroptimist International. The next AGM will be held in Kuala Lumpur, July 2019, prior to the Soroptimist International convention, date to be announced.