



BPW International President's Message

Dear Fran Donaldson, BPW Canada President
and members of BPW Canada,

It's a pleasure for me to send this message for BPW Canada's Annual General Meeting in July 2007. As 2007 is the year when BPW International celebrates its 60th anniversary of holding Consultative Status to the United Nations, I would like to thank BPW Canada for decades of contribution to help improve the status of women.

BPW International, as an organization, has reached a turning point. To continue to be influential in the 21st Century, we need to reform our organization. The three goals of Organization Review and Reform are for BPW International to be recognized as:

- An organization whose members are identified with high values;
- An organization that continues to grow and make a difference in the world of changes;
- A professionally managed organization that can sustain itself financially.

The world is changing, and so shall we. We need to understand the present and future needs of working women in order to expand the network. We should do things together and work in partnership to have global impact and enhance BPW's influence world-wide.

While the challenges in the 21st Century are numerous, I would like to bring your attention to "International Migration." Canada received 3.2% of 191 million migrants. Half of all international migrants are women. A lot of female migrants today are skilled and highly educated women. They become "brain-gain" for Canada as well as potential new members for BPW. Yet, I would urge BPW Canada to pay close attention to whether female migrants still face discrimination: exploitative working conditions; inadequate legal protection; limited job choices or restriction to change employments. If so, BPW Canada can seize this as an opportunity to make a difference by enabling immigrant women to integrate into Canadian society and give them better chances to live up to their potential.

Climate changes and water shortage will only make international migration progressively worse. By 2080, water shortage could threaten 1.1 to 3.2 billion people. Natural disasters can also lead to sudden and unexpected migration for hundreds of thousands people. BPW Canada should be prepared for the inevitable.

However, I believe that BPW Canada, together with other BPW affiliates world-wide, is strong enough to face any challenges this century may bring and come out on top!

Chonchanok Viravan
BPW International President
5 July 2007