Regional Meeting and HER Africa Film Festival  |  Johannesburg, South Africa  |  26th – 28th October 2016

International Association of Women in Radio and Television

www.iawrt.org

CONFERENCE THEME:
AFRICAN WOMEN AND THE MEDIA:
Escaping the Prison of Portrayal
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The overall theme chosen for the Regional Conference, held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 26-28 October 2016 – African Women and the Media: Escaping the Prison of Portrayal – proved to be a relevant theme, particularly in the present worldwide scenario, where there is rampant online/offline harassment and gender inequality in media.

Around 42 participants from Canada, USA, England, Norway, Sweden, Philippines, Egypt, India, Nepal, Cambodia, Cameroon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Australia, Philippines, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, assembled at the venue and shared their experiences. The conference was followed by the inauguration of the first-ever African Women film festival – HerAfrica. The conference and the film festival were organized by IAWRT in collaboration with Gender Links, an NGO and advocacy organization for equality and justice. The conference was supported by FOKUS, Norway.
Caroline Bailey, Member, South Africa Chapter, introduced the theme of the conference and invited the South Africa Chapter Head, Sara Chitambo, Gunilla Ivarsson, President, IAWRT and Colleen Lowe Morna, CEO, Gender Links to make the Opening Remarks.

Sara Chitambo welcomed the participants, showing a headline from that morning’s local new outlet, which had defined a powerful female politician as the ex-wife of a powerful male politician. “Such views and perceptions about women,” Sara said, “demonstrate the necessity for such a gathering.” She invited the IAWRT International President, Gunilla Ivarsson to make the opening remarks.

Talking about the topicality of the theme, Gunilla Ivarsson said, “The theme – Escaping the Prison of Portrayal – is an issue not only in Africa but all over the world in different degrees. It is an issue not only in professional media landscape of today, but also contains so many other sources from where people access their news and information and form their opinions.” Giving importance to the true and independent reporting, she said, “As media professionals it is our duty to make the content true and independent and to fight for fairness and women’s right, to secure that all perspectives are included, and that the lives and opinions of women and girls form an integral part in the content. Otherwise, we are not reporting the full picture.” She added, “It is time to live up to what we have been saying since a long time – to take declarations from words to everyday action. And for this we need to develop hands-on tools, easy to use in everyday work on the field or in the newsroom; tools which are effective in our local reality where we work.”

Colleen Lowe Morna, CEO, Gender Links compared the current situation for women’s voices being heard across African media to pre-apartheid censorship. “Last week was South Africa’s press freedom day – called Black Wednesday. On that day we remember how in the bad old days of apartheid, pages in newspapers were blotted out because the majority of voices were being silenced. Something we don’t think about is that, still, every day, everywhere, 52 percent of the population is effectively silenced.”
The “silent censorship” of women is widespread and the unnoticeable pace of women’s voices being raised in the media and in society is by no means limited to Africa. In southern Africa, a Gender Links research study pointed out that women’s voices have increased from 17 percent to just 20 percent in a decade. Globally the global media monitoring project has shown progress but is very limited as well. “What we need is a fifth estate - the people who watch our media from a gender perspective,” said Colleen.

The keynote speaker, a development entrepreneur and women’s right advocate in South Africa and on the UN stage, Dr Vuyo Mahlati, talked about the control of the media. “He who owns the gold makes the golden rule,” she said. She argued that the time had come to move beyond women’s visibility and portrayal. “We need to deepen the conversation around ownership. We need to broaden the parameters and as we try to decolonize the media space, we need to include the conversation around ownership. We need to be the part of change; we need to be the part of ownership. We need to fight our battles as co-owners,” said Dr Mahlati.

She said escaping the ‘Prison of Portrayal’ was all about breaking down the barriers, and “there cannot be a conversation about women and the media which does not deal with that [media control].” She emphasised that media institutes need to focus on the well researched stories.

“Even though women are occupying influential places, they are not even aware that they are not aware.” With these profound words moderator, Linda Daniels moderated the session in a question – answer format.

She began the session quoting Bell Hooks (born Gloria Jean Watkins - an African-American author, feminist, and social activist) ‘Patriarchy has no gender’ and to this, Linda added ‘patriarchy has no class’ and asked panelists to give their reflections.

Both the panelists – Claire Mawisa and Lady Skollie – were of the view that often women are unaware of their own internalised patriarchy. “I believe that it starts with the individual and how she tells her story,” said Claire Mawisa. “Journalists,” she said, “need to expand, not accept limited roles; we need to see young, strong black women; and we as reporters need to stop and question ourselves and what we are writing so that stereotypes are not being reinforced in the stories we tell.” Most of the questions revolved around patriarchy, gender, media representation and ownership of content and how media representation can change perspectives about women. The panelists by and large were of the view that “One of the biggest problems in South Africa is gender-based violence and yet it isn’t narrated as much in the media.” (Lady Skollie)

Members also shared their viewpoints and asked questions. The session ended with Claire Mawisa stating that gathering information, having dialogues with people, processing it and sharing it with others is important to bring about a change in perspectives.
Moderator Tarisai Nyamweda discussed findings of her research study project – Whose news? Whose Views? The research study project was conducted in Southern African Development Community [SADC]. It is a gender and media handbook for Southern Africa media. She highlighted that about 18 percent of members in parliament in Southern Africa are women and this percentage is higher than in the United States and Europe. She also mentioned about survey findings from the other manual – Making Every Voice Counts: Reporting Southern Africa and said, “This handbook maps out the process including management, monitoring and evaluation tools. There are three sections in the manual – context, content and management and editing.” She elaborated that the modules proceed from the premise that in order to transform content, the media first needs to understand how gender plays itself out within the media. During the course of the presentation some of the questions raised were –

- Where are women within the media houses?
- Where do 60 percent of women who get trained in media go?
- Why as we go up the ladder, women appear to disappear?
- TV industry has most women. Why?

- Blatant stereotypes of women still exist and media continuously uses single source stories instead of multiple source journalism. Why?
- She concluded, “Media suffers from sins of omission and commission and missed opportunities to capture women’s voices and to discuss issues in a detailed context.”
- Madikana Matjila argued that to escape the prison of portrayal, women must write, publish and promote their own stories; they must get engaged in research and strategise on remedial actions; educate the general public on gender (media literacy); engage in meaningful partnerships (media, government and institutions). “Representation is the main point, if we don’t start there, we won’t get anywhere. Women should try to be at the helm of affairs to bring about a change and they should be empowered.” Madikana concluded, “If you put women in positions of power but don’t empower them, you are setting them up for failure. Empowerment is important.”

Topic: Media Ethics - What is the need for a Common Code of Conduct?

Moderator – Bibiana Piene, Norway Chapter Head, Co-opted IAWRT International Board Member

Panelists-

Janine Raftopoulos, South Africa, Manager, Communications & Public Education & Spokesperson, Film & Publication Board, South Africa
Abeer Saady – Egypt, IAWRT Board Member
Marie Melgako, Norway, Treasurer, Norway Films
Racheal Nakitare, Kenya, IAWRT Member (On Skype)
Nolwazi Tulsini, South Africa, Producer, Radio 702 & Presenter

Moderator Bibiana Piene introduced the panel and put questions to the panel regarding the importance of media ethics, challenges within the media that journalists face, and whether African countries have a strong code of conduct in journalism.

Janine Raftopoulos spoke about how in South Africa journalists when they do not follow the line of the management are often shown the pink slip. She said, “In vernacular press in regional South African areas journalists often do not undergo basic training. They have minimal knowledge about journalism and media ethics.” Nolwazi Tulsini agreed and said, “It is vital to train journalists where they learn about the code of ethics.” Panelists agreed with Racheal Nakitare, “Main challenges are in media ownership which has political patronage. Corporate houses also want to control media. Thus media houses are torn between commercial interest and public interests.”

It was agreed by all the panelists and members present at the conference that there was a need to have common ethics curriculum that cuts across the continents. It was agreed that there should be laws that deal with those who break the common ethical laws and that media regulations need stronger tenets in the law of the land.

Abeer Saady, Board Member, IAWRT discussed ‘Media Ethics and Women during conflicts.’ She said, “It is not about what you write; it is about how you implement it.” On the screen, she showed images of the struggle of women and journalists for their rights and social causes. To the belief by many editors that women cannot be good journalists because they are emotional, she said, “Yes, some women in journalism can be at fault but there are many female journalists who think straight without emotions.”

The discussion was wrapped up with the thought that journalists need to stick to their gut instincts and write what they think is right. Real stories should be reported accurately and more often.
Both the panelists showed video clips and shared their experiences in starting a community radio station, the challenges they faced, and how they train local community radio production. Jola Diones-Mamangun shared how the women-led disaster response and rehabilitation community radio station in Tacloban City was approved for funding support by IAWRT in mid-2015. In cooperation with local partner Eastern Vista and the People’s Alternative Media Network, volunteers were selected and were taken to Cebu City for an intermediate level training on radio documentary and digital audio editing in March, 2016. She said, “Community radio has united the community and it does empower them.”

Inger-Lill Persett also showed a video clip about how her community radio station was established in Kenya and how the community got involved in the project. “The local community, children, are very much motivated and inspired by the community radio station. But initially, it was a little difficult to gain their confidence,” she said. Linda Daniels also shared her experience in starting a community radio station in a public school –COSAT in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. She shared how community radio station is impacting the lives of young children; making them independent and imparting critical thinking and gradually motivating them to take on leadership positions. “We teach them everything about radio – pre-production, production, conceptualizing a show, different formats of radio shows, etc. It is a very valuable tool to initiate a dialogue with the community.” All the speakers were of the view that radio is an important tool to initiate dialogue with the community and to empower them. “Though meeting financial expectations and to sustain the functioning of community radio is really difficult,” said Jola. She thanked IAWRT for financial and technical support and guidance to run Philippine’s radio project.
Sheila Katzman introduced the topic that how in politics and media the representation of women falls short of accuracy. Natalie Ridgard showed a video of women living with HIV/AIDS. It was an inspirational video where many HIV positive women happen to be leaders. Through her video, she tried to give a broader idea of HIV, the stigma attached to it and how media ethics and sensitive reporting on such cases is vital.

Eunice Kasirye from Uganda gave a small presentation of politics in Uganda and its impact on women. She said, “We just elected our president this year. Politics in Uganda is to think like a man and to act like a woman. If women don’t act like that, then she does not qualify for politics in Uganda. We have more women in politics and they are not just women, they are women who think like men.” She showed a video where brutal attacks were being inflicted on women journalists. “If you can’t stand up and forget everything else around you, you can’t be a woman politician in Uganda,” she concluded.

Antje Schuhmann talked about gender-based movements and how family reputation and male members’ dignity has always been associated with the body of a woman. She traced the sociological and psychological mental framework of men, women, and society. “[The] Body and desire of a woman are never hers.”

Mariatu Fonnah while tracing the trajectory of women in African politics said, “Nearly a century after women were granted the right to vote, and based on the fact that women make up over 50% of most African countries, most women are still underdogs and second class citizens. They are seen as a woman next to a man, never as a leader.” She laid importance on the need for a change in the media – “The media is the tool and means of change. Media must work to cover various women in different positions, not to demean them.”

Sheila asked the panelists and a few members to improvise a scene about a woman campaigning for the office in parliament. The outcome was that although women fighting for a leadership post in politics and other spheres of life, might have the support of their families, the public often thinks otherwise and belittles them and defines them as per stereotypical notions. Antje Schuhmann concluded that there are several issues which need attention, like getting gender sensitisation in journalism curricula, writing unbiased ethical reports, covering more stories about people with HIV/AIDS and spelling out the stigma attached to it. She concluded, “We need to take responsibility about how to publish stories and work within the framework of media ethics and legislations. Women should be empowered to take up leadership positions.”

(Links to Mariatu Fonnah presentation who traced the trajectory of women in politics in the session Breakthrough or Backlash: Women, Media, and Politics.

The Internet has become a basic need. Abeer Saady explained that though the internet has become a necessity, there has been a 10% increase in its misuse. “Internet violence has increased. Both men and women are treated by hate speech but threats that women face are much more dangerous in nature. Increasingly more harassment happens in an online environment. Female journalists experience three times as many abusive comments on twitter than their male colleagues,” she said. The images of journalists from Egypt were shown where women journalists became the target of hate speech. “Hate speech is not free speech. Every time hate speech is permitted it costs someone a part of his or her identity; part of their self-respect and confidence is killed,” she said. About the question on who controls the internet, she shared the following statistics on men in senior leadership position in media -

- Facebook - 77%
- Twitter - 78%
- Google - 76%.

And in IT [Information Technology] industry the ratio shown was as under -

- Facebook - 85%
- Twitter - 87%
- Google - 81%.

She said, “According to the statistics, the senior leadership space shared on the internet by men and women speaks volumes about the dismal role played by women in the senior leadership platform.” It was suggested that young girls should be encouraged to study technology.

Ananya Chakroborti’s presentation was on the Information Technology Act 2000, India, prepared by the Kolkata (India), Police. She explained through the police presentation what computer crime is and who becomes the victim and how it is investigated.

In the panel discussion, it was pointed that there are cases where some journalists experienced cyberbullying and the publication had distanced itself from the woman journalist who happened to be a victim – leaving her alone to fight her battle. It was also stated that how in the recent past cyberbullying cases have increased all over the world where one gets charged or arrested for even clicking on ‘Like’ icon on the Facebook page. The discussion was expanded to women in politics and how social media becomes a dangerous place for them. “Social media can be a pretty ugly place if you are a woman in politics,” said Abeer. The discussion concluded by reiterating that women need to stand and support each other – be it in politics or fighting sexual harassment or cyberbullying.
South Africa was a part of the Gender Mainstreaming Project (GMP) research report and Carmine Amaro outlined how the chapter has had a number of radio broadcasts, television appearances and held an all-female event. “We discussed the importance of GMP and shared the findings of the project.”

Gunilla Ivarsson shared the magnitude of the work which was conducted by different countries under the GMP. Thereafter, representatives from three chapters – India, Tanzania, and Kenya summarised their respective GMP reports and work.

Chandita Mukherjee, representing India Chapter Head – Archana Kapoor, gave updates. Salient points from her report:-
 Context of study in 2014-2015:
 - India’s TV industry reaches 168 out of 234 million people.
 - TV-owning households have been growing at 8-10% percent.
 - IAWRT had access to women workers and had discussions, interviews, and random questions.

Findings and Summary:
 - In Doordarshan (India’s Public Broadcasting House) number of women employees - about 11% of 14,318 employees
 - Freeze in recruitment has reduced a number of employed women.

The conditions of work:
 - Women have to prove themselves constantly and work harder than men.
 - Discrimination is very pervasive.
 - Women have been stagnating in same positions for 20-25 years.
 - A large number of workers are hired contractually.
 - Women - especially mothers - don’t get social welfare.

Sexual Harassment:
 - Despite a zero tolerance policy, sexual harassment still happen
 - High officials who are found guilty of sexual harassment are often not suspended and it does not impact their work.

Conclusion:
A long way to go.

Josephine Karani, Kenya Chapter Head:-
She began by asking a few questions like:-
What is Gender?
 - From a young age, we instill gender stereotypes in our children’s minds.

How are Gender Roles Maintained?
 - Through gender roles, socialisation, perceptions and stereotypes.
 - Gender roles are dynamic – change in response to changing circumstances, historical innovations, etc.

Challenges:
 - In engineering and technical sectors of the national broadcasting unit, the men are highly placed in occupations as compared to women.
 - In radio and television programming - it is slightly better. Women lead in the TV sector.
 - Media houses give men higher positions – this is yet to change.
 - There have been massive layoffs which have largely affected women. In Kenya, 100 women were laid off recently in a big media house.
  - In legislature (parliament) 2/3 gender rule is yet to be realized.
  - In the executive, president and deputy president are men.

Way forward:
 - To share IAWRT report with Public Broadcaster, National Gender, and Equity Commission & UNESCO
 - Use document to lobby.

Raziah Mwawanga, Tanzania, (representing Rose Mwalimu, Tanzania Chapter Head):-
 - Men dominate media 63% to 36%.
 - Increase training in GM on capacity development, content and gender equity.
 - Training media owners, managers, and journalists.
 - Incorporation of gender training in media institutions, media curricula and newsroom code of conduct.
 - Influence Ministry of Information to emphasise and put guidelines on gender issues in programme.
 - Train producer of the programme shows to be gender sensitive.
 - There must be a continuous monitoring by the government.
 - More committed gender activists required.

General Media Practice:
 - Media is the mouthpiece of government.
 - Media is very powerful and considered as source of information and reference.

Gender in newsrooms:
 - Progress has been made.
 - More women promoted to leadership positions.

Gender Based Violence and media:
 - Sexual harassment is still a big challenge.
The Gender Mainstreaming Project Report session was followed by Beata Kasale’s (Botswana) speech. She is the owner and publisher of The Voice – currently Botswana’s best-selling news magazine. She is working on a project with Gender Links aimed at developing Gender policies in Botswana media houses. She traced the trajectory of the media houses in Botswana and how imperative it has become to implement gender media policy. She gave a Power Point presentation. Some excerpts from her presentation -

Explanations:
- Several media houses like The Voice and The Echo have developed a gender media policy and are committed to it.
- In-house workshops include all departments of media house for training.
- Employees are encouraged to contribute on what they think should be included in the media policy.
- Interactive forums.
- Media houses discuss the need for a gender policy.
- Task force members are chosen from the media houses and they discuss the drafting of a policy.

Gender Policy Templates:
- All media houses came up with different templates.
- Task force members had to compile a report from the templates.
- There was a meeting to discuss the booklet.
- Next step was educating the Editors on the Gender policy.
- It was crucial for the publishers to sign the statement of commitment.

- Gender Policy - Botswana Media Gender Policy - was launched by the speaker of the Parliament, Dr Margaret Nasha.
- Action Plans:
  - Media houses drafted action plans that needed to be reviewed post-2015 GM.
  - ‘Actions speak louder than words’ and Botswana media now has gender as part of their mandate.
  - Now we are just waiting to implement the policies.
  - Gender is not a top priority so it is challenging to gather people to take action.
  - Set goals or targets for the achievement of gender balance among media personnel.
  - Establish policies and transparent procedures for recruitment, remuneration and promotion, etc.
- In view of growing evidence that many women are dropping out of media research to be conducted and reasons to be addressed.
- To establish mentoring systems and other supportive strategies to enhance women’s capabilities and potential for advancement in the media.

Beata Kasale concluded with a quote – “A women with a voice is by definition a strong woman.”

(Link to her presentation on IAWRT website - http://www.iawrt.org/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2016/12/beata%20IAWRT%20present.pdf)
Violet Gonda introduced the topic and laid stress on the importance of representation of women in media. She invited Ms T Mpumlwama, Chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and Chairperson of the Film and Publications Board, South Africa to talk about the gaps in it, the status of women and how women are seen in media.

Ms T Mpumlwama was of the view that the Commission for gender equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality. She said that the mission is to work with authorities to change the representation of women in media and that there needs to be a balance between how women are projected and how they should be represented. She presented the following statistics -

Facts and Figures
- Women are more likely to be seen in the media than heard.
- Women constitute 25% of all images in newspapers in SA compared with 19% of news sources in print media.
- Women’s voices are most likely to be heard in “soft” beats.

Issues of Concern:
- Women continue to be under-represented as sources of news in media, with women occupying only 21% of news language.
- There is a need for more female voices to be amplified.

Successes: Representation of Women:
- Women’s media networks has contributed to the global arena whereby there tends to be more information dissemination.
- Noticeable improvement in usage of information technology by women.

Women in Newsrooms:
- Now nearly equal numbers of women and men in newsrooms.
- Women journalists do access more women sources.
- Media Ownership - Men and women:
- Very less percentage of women owning media.

Interventions:
- UN Women’s Beijing + 2020 Media Compact Campaign.

Violet Gonda & Ms T Mpumlwama
- Solidarity to be encouraged.
- More similar interventions with global partners to ensure awareness.
- Journalists and producers to access first-hand information on gender sensitive content.

Further interventions needed:
It is important for journalists and media to be part of civil society organisations to stand up for members of the community who are being harassed when legislation fails.

Mme Sidonie Pongomi, Cameroon, Chapter Head, gave her views about implementing a policy for gender equality in Cameroon. She said, “Things have changed positively in Cameroon. Now we have five out of ten women station managers in radio.” However, she said more commitment and solidarity is required for progress.

(Feed to her presentation on IAWRT website- http://www.iawrt.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2016/12/Ms%20Thoko%20.pdf)
This was an open session, moderated by Bibiana Piene, Chapter Head, IAWRT Norway and Co-opted member of IAWRT international Board. The topics included in the discussion were creation of gender-sensitive policies in media houses, training, implementation, and representation of women in media.

Tarisai Nyamweda said, “Change does not happen overnight. It happens gradually. For example, in Mauritius, it started at 14% of women sources in 2005 to 48% in 2010. The portrayal of women is different now. People are no more discriminatory towards women. So, the attitude definitely changes with time.”

Pearl Luthuli remarked, “The challenge is to have conscious women. Policies in South Africa are about empowerment. However, little change happens, unless women know that it is their duty to change perceptions.” To a question by one of the members from the audience about why women journalists in South Africa do not report on issues that talk about the marginalisation of other women, Pearl replied, “Because of the media houses apathy, no space in the publications, etc. In 2005 South Africa had more women in parliament than any other country in the world (22nd highest). But today we have gone back. There has been a high women staff turnover in different sectors, particularly in media. This has happened because there is no support to them. That’s why we need more organisations like Gender Link to play an active role in advocacy.”

The issues regarding programming, soap operas, having a dedicated women’s channel were also discussed along with the financial and advertisement challenges that such a channel would face.

Writer Duduzile Mabaso said, “My unwritten policy has been to first work with black women and then the rest. As a writer, we have a wide representation of women. However, it does not mean that the content is representative.”

Eunice Kasirye from Uganda shared, “In Uganda, if a woman is hired for an executive position, people become upset and they resign. This happens because the perception is that women don’t take good decisions. They are not capable. The issue is - having mere policies is not enough for the content to change; being in a good position is not good enough; one has to make good decisions when we, women, are at a responsible, leadership post.”
The workshop provided an opportunity to discover the best ways to deal with a wide range of safety concerns and to hear the different experiences of participants.

Abeer used a visual representation of how to assess any situation, to determine how we can behave in the safest way, in the field.

Physical safety relates to the safety of a person; e.g. if traveling abroad, provision for any medical concerns; where one will be; and does one have plans in place for unexpected happenings. Abeer Saady said, “It is crucial for female journalists to dress up in comfortable way. It is necessary for their safety.”

Psychosocial Fitness relates to matters around the support structures. Abeer Saady said, “Journalists needs a ‘circle of trust’ amongst peers and colleagues to whom one can tell the details about ones travel itinerary, the place where one is going to stay and for how many days would one be away, etc. And from within this circle, one should also choose a trustworthy friend with whom one should share the minute details of the meeting – who is one meeting and where. Besides all this, it is important to form relationships with the local journalists.”

Digital safety – From the point of view of safety, Abeer Saady said, “In this technological era when we all are on at least one social media platform, it is important not to share our location details on social media. It poses a security threat.”

In a conflict situation if one has to leave the place without being able to assemble equipments, “then it is better to protect oneself by letting equipments to be taken away,” she said. Abeer Saady’s workshop highlighted various critical situations and how best to handle them.

(With inputs by Naxalo P. Mshweshwe, volunteer editor and founder of www.kaspeda.com an African township encyclopedia. Details of the workshop can be accessed on the website.)
28 October 2016

Financial briefing by FOKUS and Members’ Meeting: Marianne Gulli from FOKUS briefly outlined grant status. Salient points –
- There is a lot of pressure to raise the funds.
- Fundraising is something that IAWRT needs to work on together.
- IAWRT International needs to discuss with IAWRT Norway, how they can support them.
MEMBERS’ MEETING

The Conference concluded with Members’ Meeting. Gunilla Ivarsson opened the meeting. The first issue that was debated upon was the election procedure. (During the 2015 Biennial, the new elected Board was entrusted to come up with a more democratic suggestion for the Board’s election.) Various options were thrown open and critically discussed. Finally it was agreed that the Board would send an email to the members, inviting their suggestions about whether to continue with the present nominating procedure or to go for an electronic voting, whereby maximum number of members can participate.

After this there was a short briefing on the financial governance. Violet Gonda, Treasurer, IAWRT, outlined the financials. She said, “After the Biennial in 2015, IAWRT closed its Nairobi office and began to function through virtual Secretariat. It opened a bank account with DNB, one of the major banks in Norway and for the first time IAWRT has got a credit card. We are on the way of creating a Paypal account to allow the members to pay easily over internet from their country. The membership database has been updated by Nonee Walsh, our webjournalist. We’ll create an automatic email reminder about paying the membership fee. We will have a budget line for 2017 biennial conference, even if slightly lower than 2015. We urgently need to think about fundraising. Like this year [2016] the chapters would be asked to raise 10% for FOKUS-funded local activities in 2017 also.” She also asked Chapter Heads to submit their financial and narrative report before the year end. “FOKUS funding is connected with the financial and narrative report by the chapters,” she said. This was followed by open question-answer session by the members. Some of the members were of the view that IAWRT membership cards should be restarted.

Marianne Gulli from FOKUS explained about the FOKUS support. “FOKUS as umbrella organisation receives money from NORAD and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affair. The funding they receive comes from Civil Society Development Corporation. There are multi-leveled demands. Civil Society Corporation has no guarantee it will continue. There’s no guarantee that NORAD will give FOKUS money after 2018. How then do you think about sustainability?” She questioned. She also emphasized that chapters should send their reports and “it should be supported by statistics and figures and not by words and sentences as women were empowered.”

Finally, Nonee Walsh, briefly updated members about the database, the importance of logging-in to IAWRT website and their respective accounts. “Members’ profiles should be updated,” she said.

The decision about publication of Newsletter was also discussed. Most of the members felt that it can be done away as most of the articles are uploaded on the website.

Gunilla concluded one hour long members’ session and told them that if they have any suggestions or questions, they can email to the board.

(For detailed Members’ Meeting Report kindly log on to your IAWRT account and visit Members’ Room - http://www.iawrt.org/downloads)
It was time for excursion to Soweto
Her Africa
The Inaugural IAWRT African Film Festival introduced an amazing diversity of black women: trendy fashionistas in Manhattan; a woman who takes on champion wrestlers in a Burkina Faso village; an Egyptian woman taking us through the unrest and a South African ‘virgin-vegan’. Women questioned or tested their relationships, their sexuality, and women’s roles in their homes, in their cultures and in politics.

The well-curated presentation of features and documentaries at the Bioscope in Johannesburg, South Africa, on the 28th and 29th of October, 2016, featured African based and expatriate women producers, along with two IAWRT produced international documentaries. It well and truly addressed the lack of diversity and women’s voices in film, with passion, humour and skill.

Members of IAWRT from around the world attended opening night at the independent film house in trendy Fox St, Maboneng, which featured Africa’s first screening of the acclaimed film In the Morning, directed by Nefertite Nguvu.

Nguvu’s debut feature-film examining love, friendship and marriage and it’s change and decline in a group of nine friends, took place over the course of 24 hours in Brooklyn, New York. The U.S. director told the audience that the crowd- funded drama was partially promoted by her exhaustion with the one-dimensional portrayal of black women on US Television. She wanted to examine love and its dimensions, through “regular folk”. And she simply wanted to examine the timeless questions about love.

Members of the audience were also appreciative of her ability to create likeable, multi-dimensional black male characters who did not live lives of constant violent conflict. In the Morning has received a number of accolades including the jury award for Best International Film at Siena, Italy’s 1st annual Terra Di Siena Film Festival “for the great ability in directing a convincing ensemble with great skill and direction, penetrating into the depths of human soul.”

The audience was taken on a completely different direction with a much lower budget, village-based documentary, The Fight Goes On by Laurentine Bayala from Burkina Faso. Notwithstanding the title, it was not dealing with the wider conflict in that country, but the universal violence of the uneven division of labour in the home between males and females. The ensuing battle, both physical and psychological, between the macho wrestlers of the village and their strong wives ended with an unrepentantly gentle twist.

Another award-winning film from an expatriate Director, Cameroon born Canadian, Dorothy Atabong, Sounds of Tears, a heart-breaking portrayal of forbidden love and the perpetuation of patriarchal notions of shame which lead to murders by family members. So-called honour killings are continuing even in more liberal cultures such as Canada.

The delightful short film, A groom’s price by Mmabatho Monthso, has Meme and her two aunts, who she dragoons in to help her, use her own finances to pay a groom price for her long-term boyfriend, Musa. He cannot propose because he can’t afford the bride price.

By Nonee Walsh
Nefertite is a graduate of New York’s School of Visual Arts, where she obtained a B.F.A in Film. Her thesis project at SVA won the award for Outstanding Screenplay. Nefertite has written, produced, and directed two short films: a uniquely stylized black and white romance entitled “I Want You,” in 2007, and “The End of Winter,” an emotional meditation on loss in 2009, both of which screened at numerous film festivals. Amongst other web-based programming, Nefertite also directed a ten-part web series entitled “U.N.I.T.Y Reignited” which chronicles the life of five aspiring female emcees hand picked by, and featuring Queen Latifah for Cover Girl and Flavor Unit Entertainment. As writer/director/producer, Nefertite recently made her feature film debut with “In The Morning,” a film about love and its inevitable change/decline charting the emotional anatomy of several relationships over the course of one day. “In The Morning” debuted at the UrbanWorld Film Festival in New York City and won the Audience Award for Best Feature Film. After a string of successful film festival screenings across the country and in Paris, France, the film also won the award for Best International Film at the Terra Di Siena Film Festival in Italy, Best Narrative Feature at the BlackStar Film Festival in Philadelphia, and Best Feature Film and Best Overall at the Bronzelens Film Festival in Atlanta. Online: www.about.me/NefertiteNguvu www.inthemorning-thefilm.com www.facebook.com/INthemorningthefilm www.twitter.com/NefertiteNguvu www.instagram.com/hollywdafricans
Communications & Publicity Committee:
Gunilla Ivarsson
Iphigénie Marcoux-Fortier

Report Prepared By
Geeta Sahai

Layout & Design
Ajay Negi

Photographs
Sara Chitambo
Iphigénie Marcoux-Fortier

Inputs by
Nonee Walsh
Noxolo P. Mshweshwe