

# Target Program: Human Rights for Women

## Target Awareness Program Introduction **(SLIDE 1 - title)**

### Regional Meetings, Fall 2013

#### What is FAWCO'S Target Program?

**(SLIDE 2)** FAWCO's Resolution #1, adopted at the Bern Conference in March 2013, establishes our common goal: To improve the lives of women and girls worldwide, especially in the areas of human rights, health, education and environment.

The Target Program offers opportunities for local Clubs to make a global difference, by actively contributing toward the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Demonstrates the power of FAWCO Clubs working together toward a common goal.

Brings a critical global issue to the attention of FAWCO Clubs, their members and their host communities. Increases knowledge and awareness of global issues affecting women.

**(SLIDE 3)** Follows a three-year cycle of issue awareness and education, project selection, fundraising including corporate sponsorships, project monitoring, review and evaluation.

**(SLIDE 4)** Our 2009 – 2013 Target Program – Environment: Water – supported Wells for Clean Water in Cambodia. FAWCO Clubs raised over \$160,000 to support this and other water projects. In Cambodia alone, we were able to fund over 650 water wells, and improve the lives of 1,500 families.

**(SLIDE 5)** The current Target Program addresses the goal of Human Rights for Women. We'll look at the Target Timeline in more detail at the end of this presentation. This is to show you how the Target Awareness Program we are now launching fits in to the overall framework. This presentation – the first in the new Target Awareness Program – will introduce Human Rights for Women issues.

*Take a few minutes to ask about human rights and women's rights to get the group thinking about the issues -- how they affect us personally.*

So, what do you think of when you hear Human Rights for Women? How is this issue important to you personally?

### **Transition to showing the UN Women video**

Before we get started with the Target Awareness Program introduction, I'd like to show a short video, produced by UN Women, which gives a good overview and highlights the UN's work on the issue of human rights for women in several countries.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co3-Uech1Fc>

**End after Ban Ki-Moon's statement, at 7:34 minutes, after he says “...full participation of half the world's population.”**

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### Introduction

As Hilary Clinton famously said in her speech at the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995: *“...human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights -- once and for all.”*

Clinton went on to say: *“Women must enjoy the rights to participate fully in the social and political lives of their countries, if we want freedom and democracy to thrive and endure. If we take bold steps to better the lives of women, we will be taking bold steps to better the lives of children and families too.”*

Human Rights for Women has been on the agenda for decades. Recently, we have seen renewed attention to the need to empower women and girls, from FAWCO and the international community. Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and it is essential to achieving all of the goals, from preventing the spread of HIV to sustaining the environment. At the United Nations, women’s rights are being debated as representatives work to adopt a development agenda that reflects these fundamental issues.

We women who have the advantages of living in developed economies demand an end to violence against women. We mobilize for equality of opportunity, pay equity, child care, family leave, work-family balance – as we strive to “have it all.” At the same time, we should not forget the millions of women living in poverty, without access to education and health care, without basic human rights. With this Target Program, we can help our sisters who are less fortunate.

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### Overview of Goals

Women and girls – among the poorest and most at risk in almost every community -- face an uphill struggle to realize their human rights to equality and dignity. Women are one half of the world's population, yet we work two-thirds of the world's working hours and produce half of the world's food. Women represent 70% of the world's poor, earning only 10 percent of the world's income, and owning less than 1 percent of the world's property.

Though many constitutions around the world outlaw gender discrimination, gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched. Women are under-represented in political and economic decision-making. They lack access to decent work, basic education and health care. Women in all parts of the world suffer from violence -- in war zones and in their own homes.

At FAWCO's international conference in Bern in March 2013, our distinguished guest US Ambassador to the UN Betty King said:

“We have seen the results of our collective efforts in communities around the world: if women work, they drive economic growth across all sectors. Send a girl to school, even just for one year, and her income dramatically increases for life, her children are more likely to survive, and her family more likely to be healthier for years to come. Give women equal rights, and entire nations are more stable and secure. Deny women equal rights, and the instability of nations is almost certain. The subjugation of women is, therefore, a threat to the common security of our world and to the national security of our country.”

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### Political Empowerment

In many areas of life, in politics and in corporations, women have too little say in the decisions that affect them. Quotas and other measures can promote women's participation. Developing new skills can enable women to realize their leadership potential. We saw examples in the UN Women video – the program in India that helped a million women get elected to local village councils, and in Egypt where women got ID cards so they could vote, be more active citizens, and enroll their children in school.

Another example is Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, nicknamed "Iron Lady" as an opposition leader, she was openly critical of one of the world's most treacherous regimes. In 2005, the people of Liberia elected her Africa's first female head of state. She inherited a country ravaged by civil wars that left 250,000 people dead.

Since then, Johnson Sirleaf has increased Liberia's annual budget from \$80 million to \$350 million, and paid off a \$4.9 billion debt. Girls' school enrollment has gone up, as well as women in the legislature, making Liberia the 2010 winner of the Millennium Development Goal award for gender equity.

Johnson Sirleaf won a Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 – together with two other women: Leymah Gbowee of Liberia and Tawakkol Karman of Yemen. These politically-empowered women are role models, making change possible for other women.

(The narrator of the UN Women video, Michelle Bachelet, was President of Chile before she served as Director of UN Women. She has recently returned to Chile to run for the presidency again.)

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### Economic Empowerment

Worldwide, women have less access to land, credit and employment than men, even though research shows that enhancing women's economic options boosts economic growth. Many women have no choice but to accept low-wage employment under hazardous working conditions. Remember the Bangladesh factory collapse in April this year. Over 1,000 people lost their lives, the vast majority of them women who worked there because they had no other opportunities.

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, it has enormous socio-economic ramifications. In the video we heard: "All the studies show, when women are economically empowered, everybody wins." We saw examples in the video: when illiterate rural women were trained to build simple solar-powered lights, children could study longer, health care facilities could stay open longer, and women could generate an income by selling the lamps.

Some other positive outcomes of women's economic empowerment, from research by the International Center for Research on Women:

- Where women's participation in the labor force grew fastest, economies experienced the largest reduction in poverty rates.
- When women farmers have access to the resources they need, their production increases, so their families don't go hungry.
- When women own property and earn money, they have more bargaining power at home, reducing their vulnerability to domestic violence and HIV infection.
- When women have access to time-saving technologies – such as a foot-pedaled water pump or a motorized scooter – economic

benefits follow. Technology helps women increase their productivity, launch income-generating entrepreneurial ventures. These outcomes empower women to become stronger leaders and contribute financially to their families, communities and countries.

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### Peace and Security

Women bear the brunt of modern conflicts, especially where rape is used as a weapon of war. These threats to women must be identified and stopped. Women must be part of peace-making and community-building. In the UN Women video, we heard that when conflicts end, violence against women doesn't stop. We saw the model of Peace Huts, where women take their security into their own hands. Remember their shouts: "We are women. We want peace!"

As one example, violence against women in the Congo's civil war has been in the news for years. In The Economist magazine in 2011, an article "Violence against women: War's overlooked victims" stated that the International Rescue Committee treated 40,000 rape survivors in just one province between 2003 and 2008.

The International Criminal Court is investigating war crimes including rape in the Congo, but gathering the necessary evidence is difficult. Raising global awareness can help lessen the stigma of rape. UN resolutions have condemned sexual violence against women and girls and called on countries to do more to combat it. But worthy language will not be enough.

Recent policy statements from the UN Security Council and other institutions call for the inclusion of women in all efforts to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict. The Institute for Inclusive Security in Washington, DC has a project called Women Waging Peace. They have issued a report, "In the Midst of War: Women's Contributions to Peace in Colombia," assessing the importance of a gender

perspective in peace negotiations, and documenting women's contribution to renewed dialogues and preparations for the next cycle of peace-making in Colombia.

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### Ending Violence against Women

Gender-based violence is a fundamental violation of women's human rights. According to the World Bank, women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, car accidents, war and malaria. The UN estimates that worldwide, one in three women will experience violence in her lifetime. Every year, violence devastates the lives of millions of women and girls.

What can be done to fight the scourge of violence against women? As we've seen in the UN Women video, and in the book Half the Sky which many of us have read, women can be advocates, working together to end violence. Governments, UN agencies, and NGOs advocate for ending violence, increasing awareness of the causes and consequences of violence, and working to prevent and respond to violence. Prevention is the most effective means to stop violence, so we need to change men and boys attitudes and behaviors. Women need access to safety, shelter, health, justice and other services.

FAWCO's Ending Violence Against Women and Children Task Force has been informing and educating our members on these issues, and many local clubs support shelters for women and children in their communities.

There has been progress, even in some unlikely places: Recently (Sept. 2013), for the first time in Saudi Arabia's history, the kingdom's cabinet has approved a ban on domestic violence and other forms of abuse both at home and in the workplace. The law is meant to protect every citizen, but in particular the most vulnerable, including children, women and domestic workers. So there is hope for better legislation. Enforcement will be the next step.

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### Next steps

To conclude, with this new Target Program on Human Rights for Women, FAWCO clubs can make an impact to address these persistent problems which are finally receiving their due attention on the world stage.

(In September) There's still time for your club to submit a Target project proposal, due Sept. 30.

Target project vote – use the voting process as an opportunity to raise awareness and discuss the issues – publicize the Target Program.

This Target Awareness Program will continue throughout the program cycle. Together with FAWCO's Global Issues Task Forces and UN Team, we will be rolling out a series on these issues for you to share with your club, to raise awareness, fuel lively discussions, and get your members involved.

We encourage all FAWCO clubs to raise funds for the Target project. Think about fundraisers and watch for fundraising ideas from the Foundation.

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### Timeline Dates (can refer back to timeline graphic Slide)

Questions? For more information... Email [target@fawco.org](mailto:target@fawco.org)

I'd like to end with a statement from a woman in the video: “I want to be sitting at the table, but that's not all. I want to discuss the shape of the table where we're gonna be sitting.” Now that's a goal we can all support, and a big step in the direction of improving women's lives.