

Dear MWIA Friends,

I am delighted that our **MWIA Committees and Special Interest Groups** are now up and running, with several hundred of our MWIA members from 6 continents participating. The enthusiasm is palpable, with suggestions for additional new advocacy areas, a survey on comparing work-life balance experiences in different countries, and how we can ensure a stronger voice and enhanced representation at the WHO, both in Geneva and at the Regional meetings. Just as an example, there are 50 members in the **MWIA WHO Special Interest Group**, ably led by Dr Eliza Chin (US) , Dr Rosemary Ogu (Nigeria) and Prof. Gabrielle Casper (Australia) . We want to ensure that not only do we engage with the WHO at the annual World Health Assembly and at the annual regional meetings, but that we maintain a relationship and provide input between meetings. MWIA and WHO have so many overlapping areas of interest.

Dr Magda Simonis (Western Pacific Region) has proposed an **MWIA Resolution** on the effects of climate change on women and children. Exposure to environmental toxins affects pregnancies, with obstetric complications, birth defects, and weaker babies; malnutrition in pregnancy results in higher maternal and infant mortality; infant formula milks can affect the environment and climate change; sexual violence against women increases and women lose reproductive control because of poor access to reproductive health services and more unplanned pregnancies. Thanks to members who expressed interest in a **MWIA Climate Change Special Interest Group**- please email me if you are interested in joining at [president@mwia.net](mailto:president@mwia.net)

The results of a fully independent review into **sexism and sexual harassment** at the British Medical Association (BMA) has just been published revealing an extensive culture of harassment and abuse: <https://www.bma.org.uk/news/2019/october/report-into-sexism-at-the-bma-published> This was precipitated by social media reports from senior female BMA doctor representatives of inappropriate comments and unwanted physical contact at a BMA conference earlier this year. The review sets out a series of impactful recommendations. A key recommendation is to empower members and staff to confidently call out bad behaviour. A fair and effective process to deal with complaints that commands confidence among those affected has been put in place. The objective is that no one feels deterred from bringing forward their concerns. The BMA has now launched an independent 24-hour support line, so that any member experiencing bullying or sexual harassment can speak to someone in confidence, and independent of the BMA. I hope that this report will be of some help to those of you in the many countries who are experiencing similar problems. We know from our recent MWIA survey that sexual harassment is widespread in the medical profession.

As I am sure you know, one of our priorities this triennium is **HPV vaccination and the elimination of cervical cancer**. Our Special Interest Group is led by Dr. Vivien Brown (Canada) , Chyong-Huey Lai, Shobha Krishnan(US) and Uzoma Agwu (Nigeria). At our centennial Congress, I was delighted to meet Ruth Frazier, the mother of a cervical cancer sufferer, Michelle Baldwin, also known as Lady Ganga. When diagnosed with cervical cancer, Michelle paddle-boarded over 700 miles down the River Ganges raising awareness about cervical cancer [www.ladyganga.org](http://www.ladyganga.org) . I would highly recommend this film to all of you. Here is Lady Ganga paddle-boarding.



It was very encouraging for me to receive an email from Lady Ganga's mother, which she wrote in response to reading about the Canadian Medical Women's HPV Awareness campaign recently.

'How wonderful to see this begin with such enthusiasm in Canada! Very happy to have Lady Ganga working away with you all'.

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/canada-encourages-global-participation-in-educating-and-raising-awareness-of-hpv-the-federation-of-medical-women-of-canada-welcomes-hpv-prevention-week-882572145.html>

Many congratulations to the Austrian Medical Women on their centenary recently, and to the Belgian Medical Women on their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Special congratulations must go to the founding member of the Belgian Medical Women's Association, Dr Christiane Pouliart.



Dr Christiane Pouliart

Several of you have asked me about an official report on the MWIA centenary in New York, and I am delighted to attach a very comprehensive description by Dr Eliza Chin, Chair of the Local Organising Committee.

All my very best wishes to you all, and I look forward to reporting to you next month on the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 (International Conference on Population and Development).

With best wishes  
Clarissa

Dr Clarissa Fabre  
MWIA President, 2019-2022

