

7th Historic teaser: The 8th decade of MWIA – Increasing visibility and the Young Forum is born (1989-1998)

As we journey into the Centenary celebration of MWIA in New York from 25th to 28th July, we look at the 8th decade with nostalgia as we tease you with our history.

MWIA Meetings and workshops

The 8th decade started in 1989 with MWIA 21st International Congress in Seoul, Korea, with the theme “*Incidence of Cancer in Women in Different Countries*”. In between in 1992, MWIA 22nd International Congress was held in Guatemala City with the theme “*Health for All Children*”, in 1995 MWIA’s 23rd International Congress was in Hague, the Netherlands with the theme “*Women’s Health in a Changing World*” and in 1998: MWIA’s 24th International Congress, Sao Paulo, Brazil with the theme “*The Health of Women in the XXIst Century*”.



MWIA International Congress Tokyo
1994



1995-1998 Executive



Executive, MWIA International Congress
Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1998-2001

The decade welcomed two firsts- the **1st Southern European Regional Meeting** held in Genoa, hosted by the Italian Medical Women’s Association in 1989 and the **1st MWIA Regional Central Asia Congress** in Mumbai (India). Also the **2nd regional Africa and Near East regional meeting** was held in Cairo (Egypt), where important strategic activities for the region were discussed.

Two successful strategic MWIA workshops were held: in Bellagio, Italy (December, 1996) and in association with an Executive meeting in Cologne, Germany (1994) to identify MWIA's objectives and their strategic goals for the future. At the end of the strategic meeting in Cologne a new publication, the "**MWIA UPDATE**" was introduced.

The MWIA workshop in Bellagio was organized by MWIA President Florence Manguyu (Kenya) and **succeeded to set 10 new goals** for MWIA and define strategies to meet these goals. This meeting was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

MWIA statements and resolutions of the decade

MWIA from inception has had an important voice and influence on issues of interest to medical women e.g. work-life balance, maternity leave, career progression, fighting discrimination, mentoring of young medical doctors and students.

During the general assembly's held in the 8th decade, the **following resolutions were made** on Human Rights, HIV/AIDS, Gender Related data, Maternal & Child Health, Violence, Child Abuse, Communicable diseases, Smoking and its effect on a child's health, Aging/ Menopause, cancers & screening, Medical Education & training (1992:9).

Some of statements and resolutions made are still relevant today:

- **MWIA condemns all forms of female genital mutilation** and harmful practices recommending health education of the communities concerning the health hazards of this practice. MWIA actively supported the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices and National Associations in their endeavor to eliminate such practices and offers to provide the committee with professional medical expertise. (1992.3 & 1995.9)
- **MWIA recognized culturally appropriate health education** provided by trained personnel to be essential to improving women's health (1995.20).
- **MWIA's recognition of the HIV pandemic**, then a global issue, urged all nations to provide community education about the transmission of HIV and about safe sexual practices which will diminish the spread of this pandemic. (1992.11; 1998.14)
- **MWIA strongly supported strategies to reduce peri-natal and infant mortality** (1995.1).
- As malaria constitutes a major threat to the health during the decade and especially in developing countries, **MWIA strongly supported the World Declaration on the Control of Malaria** made in Amsterdam on 29.10.92 at a conference of ministers from 90 countries. (1995.7)
- In 1998, MWIA made a statement on the **situation of women in Afghanistan presented at UN roundtable**.
- In November, 1998 an **Urgent Statement for the condemnation of traditional and cultural practices harmful to widows**, particularly in Africa and Asia was made in a call on the United Nations by MWIA
- In 1994, **3 new MWIA funds were established**: the Beijing, the Harumi Ono and the Alma Morani funds.

MWIA Membership development

The decade welcomed several new national member associations and individual members increasing to **44 member countries with 86 individual members from 31 Countries**. Sadly Colombia and Ecuador membership was put on hold for non-payment of dues for 3 consecutive years. While the Netherlands ceased to be members, Israel and Austria became inactive in 1998. Thankfully Austria has been reactivated and even hosted the successful MWIA Congress in Vienna July, 2016. The Young Forum, (The Special Interest Group of Doctors (less than 40 years) and medical Students were duly recognized.

The MWIA presidents of that decade were Il Ok CHOO*, Korea (1989-1992), Dorothy WARD*, U.K. (1992-1995), Florence MANGUYU, Kenya (1995-1998) and Lila STEIN KROSER, USA (1998-2001).

Honorary members were: Beverley Tamboline, Canada (1989), Fernanda de Benedetti-Venturini*, Italy (1992), Il Ok Choo*, Korea (1995), Vibeke Jørgensen, Denmark (1995) Catrin Williams*, U.K. (1995), Rinko Yamazaki, Japan (1995), Carolyn Motzel*, Germany and USA (1998) and Dorathy Ward; Scoteland, UK (1998).

Members of Honor added in the decade were Ruth Bonner*, Switzerland (1989) and Rita Levi-Montalcini, Italy (1998).

Other highlights of the decade

In 1995 was also the historic **Beijing women's conference** where Hilary Clinton proclaimed "Women's Rights are Human rights". A landmark celebration during the decade was the **50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** with the theme "*From Words to Deeds*".

Sources

Ward, Dorothy, They cure in a motherly spirit. History of the Medical Women's International Association, Glasgow, Fledging Press, 2010

MWIA website: www.mwia.net

Photos: courtesy of Waltraud Diekhaus