

**Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 13/31**  
**Provincial Delegates to 50<sup>th</sup> UNCSW**  
**Progress Report Summary**

This progress report is based on the responses received from 24 provinces represented at the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

**Dissemination of the resolution**

Since the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) Resolution 13/31 was passed in June 2005 it has been disseminated in the majority of provinces of the Anglican Communion. The degree to which it has been disseminated through the provinces down to diocese and parish levels varies considerably. In some provinces only the general synod standing committees have heard about it while in others it has been passed onto women's groups, and in some, articles have been written and published in provincial and diocesan newsletters. Women from four provinces that didn't have a representative at last years UNCSW had not heard about the resolution.

**Implementation of the resolution**

Although not explicitly stated by any one province, there does appear to be a relation between the commitment to implement the resolution and the perception of women's current representation on decision making bodies. In provinces where women already have representation at most levels, the resolution has been seen as a reinforcement of what they are already doing, not as something that necessarily requires action. Whereas in provinces where women have lower levels of representation it is seen as something that will enable women to move forward with the support they need, if the resolution is communicated to the relevant diocese and parish levels and taken up.

In those provinces where the resolution has been disseminated, its implementation has varied considerably. Some provinces have not proceeded with implementing the resolution due to time constraints, while others have put programs in place to ensure greater representation of women in decision making bodies. Another factor affecting the implementation of the resolution is that of women ordination: it will be difficult for countries to ensure equal representation of women at all levels of the church structure where the higher levels are occupied by ordained persons only. A couple of provinces noted that in some parish committees, especially social committees, women outnumber men. This indicates that provinces need to ensure that when considering gender equity at all levels they also look at increasing the number of men in areas traditionally dominated by women.

It was interesting to note the different levels of representation women currently have in different provinces. Statistics from various countries have been included at Appendix A to this report. Generally, parish committees are more gender balanced than diocesan or provincial, mainly due to the increasing role of Priests and Bishops in committees at diocesan and higher levels. We would like it noted that it is not the lack of suitable women being available to fill these roles that is slowing the progress.

**Effect of the resolution**

There is general consensus that the resolution has had little to no effect on the structures of decision making bodies to date. This comes as no surprise as it is less than 12 months since the resolution was passed. However, it was noted by a number of provinces that the resolution has raised awareness among those in the decision making bodies that they need to consider the ramifications of this resolution and how they will act. It has also sent a message that the inclusion of a token woman on a committee is no longer acceptable. Thus it is expected that any changes caused by the resolution will take some time to appear.

**The women's/gender desk**

While the question of representation of women on decision making bodies has raised a range of responses, a majority answered no regarding the establishment of a gender or women's desk. Some provinces have accepted it as a goal to be achieved, while two provinces have agreed to establish respectively a Women's Commission or a Women's Study Centre instead of a women's/gender desk. One province indicated that considerations will be given to incorporating a women's desk into the Mothers' Union. While another province indicated that their existing Women's League is considered to have that function. Four provinces have women's/gender desks: in one it is headed by a male Bishop; in another the desk is not working effectively due to limited networking opportunities for capacity building; in a third it is working relatively well, but there is more that can and should be done; and in the fourth a lack of funding meant the desk could not continue. A number of

provinces reported that the women's groups in the province are quite active, despite a women's desk, and capable of getting issues passed up the line.

### A global survey of Anglican women

The women consulted for this report were asked what questions they would like included in a survey of Anglican women around the world. Apart from a **general census of Anglican women**, to include:

- The number of women, their ages, urban/rural distribution;
- The number of women in decision making bodies at Province, Diocese, National, Parish or International levels and whether elected or appointed;
- The level of general and theological education including the number of women who have undertaken theological training and/or who are ordained;
- Existence of continuing education programs for women and consequent positions gained; and
- Projects by women (nature, effect) and sources of funding.

they would also like to know:

#### *Women in decision making in general*

- What local initiatives have proven effective in the inclusion of women in decision making? How can this promote the interest of women in development in all areas of church?
- What obstacles and difficulties do you encounter in realizing parity representation of the genders on committees in your structure? How did you overcome them? How substantive are their impact?
- How many Anglican women are involved in development programs?
- What are differences in women's situations between the provinces where women are ordained and where women are not ordained?

#### *ACC 13/31*

- What impact is expected out of the ACC 13/31? What lessons have been learnt in putting women's issues on your province's main agenda/thrust like the implementation of ACC 13/31? How best to implement 13/31 without causing problems in the provinces, especially African provinces?
- What impact has the gender desk made to Anglican women? Have any changes been observed within the province after the establishment of the gender desk?

#### *Support and Barriers for women getting involved*

- Have you felt supported and taken into consideration in equality within your church? What is the major obstacle that you have faced due to being a woman?
- What/who stops you from realizing your ministry goals?
- Why don't women support women who run for office? Why women do not always see other women as having leadership potential? How else can we support each other?
- What kind of empowerment would be needed for the furtherance of gender equity in the province?

#### *Women's priorities*

- What do women think are priorities of the church at parish, diocesan, provincial and world wide (ACC) levels?

### A way forward

Finally, the women were asked to suggest ways of implementing this resolution at all levels. Their responses are grouped below.

#### **Actions for all levels**

- Time line on implementation of 13/31; set annual goals of incremental rise of women in positions in all provinces
- All three to act in tandem in terms of monitoring and accountability
- Through education/nurture of both genders; through model-setting to demonstrate its desirability and that it can be achieved; through a rethink of information sharing and fellowship building.
- through continuing education that should cover all members (clergy, lay, men, women, youth); through exchange/interaction between and among church leaders and Anglican women on the best practices employed that may be applicable to ones province.
- To provide funding for the focal points and its activities.

#### **Actions for the ACC**

- Set a monitoring process in place and consideration of how to deal with provinces that do not implement ACC13/31

- Send questionnaires to the Primates, House of Bishops to the Provincial Council etc.
- Establish link dioceses within ACC and to have regional meetings in between ACC/CSW
- The ACC should have a committee to monitor reports from Provinces and urge Provinces to submit reports, compile and disseminate this information on what Provinces are doing with Resolution 13 and make recommendations to assist Provinces not making headway. Such reports should be on the agendas of all international meetings of lay and clergy.
- Define women's desk
- Conduct an evaluation in all the provinces, if possible, after a suitable amount of time for implementation. This is so that all will be able to move forward on this matter or where one province may be of assistance to another. Then measures may be adopted to determine the commitment or accountability of the provinces for the full implementation of 13/31
- ACC to write letters to our primates reminding them about 13/31
- Support action through Bishops/Primates
- Ensure that focal points are established both in the province and in the dioceses

#### **Actions for the provinces**

- Model the resolution in Provincial structures and encourage dioceses to comply
- Make regional platforms for action
- It is important that the Church and the theological school should have prepared a solid education system about gender issues, and for continuous education of clergymen/women
- Support action by local women's groups

#### **Actions for the dioceses**

- Primarily responsible for setting standards

#### **Conclusion**

The women who attended the 50<sup>th</sup> UNCSW see ACC 13/31 as a vital instrument in achieving equal numbers of men and women in the decision making structures across our Anglican Communion, but feel that they cannot really move forward with it until they have the solid support of their Primates, and through them, their Bishops. No province is exempt from this resolution, however some will need to take more drastic measures to ensure its implementation than others. It is felt that the ACC needs to take a leading role in demonstrating sustainable, responsible, respectful and timely implementation of this resolution. The women of the Anglican Communion are ready to take up the challenge.

#### **Appendix A – Statistics from various countries**

**Tanzania:** The executives of Anglican Church of Tanzania are all males, females have no representation this includes the Archbishop, General Secretary and Diocesan Bishops. The House of Bishops, which is an important decision-making body is all male, women have no representation. The provincial synod where many decisions are made the female representation is 33.3% and male 66.7%. Within diocese level we have 19 male diocesan secretaries and 19 female Mother's Union Secretaries. Females have a 50% representation. In the diocesan synod, there is 33.3% women representation. Women clergy have 0.25% representation

**Canada:** Diocesan Councils have between 26% to 55% women representation

**Australia:** At Provincial (National) level, 22% of positions are held by women, however only 9% of groups are chaired or convened by women.

**Jerusalem and the Middle East:** On church committees, women average 30% of the membership. On other committees and activities, the percentage is much higher.

**Pakistan:** There is 10% women representation at a provincial level.

**Japan:** The percentage of women in diocesan committees ranges from 10% to 35%. At the provincial level none of the Chairpersons are women, and female representation in the committees ranges from 11% to 30%.