

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

A report on recent activities from Branch Chair, Hazel Holmlund:-

The Branch held its 13th Annual General Meeting in Belfast on Tuesday 2 June, the hottest day of the year so far. The turnout was very good considering the heat and we were delighted to welcome representatives from Women's Forum, Northern Ireland, BPW, Soroptimist International, the Association of Bahá'í Women and a representative, other than the speaker, from the office of the Chief Commissioner for Human Rights, Northern Ireland. A minute's silence was held to commemorate a founder member of the Branch and former National Committee Member, Sadie McClelland, who passed away in December and who had attended last year's AGM.

In her report, Chairperson Hazel Holmlund spoke of the increasing recognition of the National Committees by UNIFEM New York and the ongoing success nationally and internationally of the Say NO to Violence against Women campaign. She updated members on the work of Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman on behalf of UNIFEM and informed them of the excellent 'plugs' for UNIFEM in Ms Kidman's interview in the June edition of Easy Living magazine. Guests and members were also impressed by the contribution of Avon Cosmetics in the UK to UNIFEM.

The Guest Speaker at the AGM was Dr Nazia Latif who is an Investigations and Policy Worker with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission where she leads the Commission's work on asylum, immigration and criminal justice issues. She gave a well documented and thought provoking presentation on her research into the extent to which human rights are engaged in the UK Border Agency's decisions to detain perceived immigrants and how those detained are being protected. The extensive report, 'Our Hidden Borders', which she co-wrote with Agnieszka Martynowicz can be viewed online at www.nihrc.org

Coming Events

The next planned event in Northern Ireland will be an information stand at the Belfast Mela, an annual international event hosted by the Indian community on Sunday 30 August.

Our difficulty in holding regular meetings for members has been in finding low cost venues close to the city centre but we are hopeful that we have now found a good solution and are in the process of organising an event in October.

Our main challenge is to establish a branch in the Coleraine, Ballymoney area where we already have four members and we intend to launch the initiative with an exhibition during Freshers' Week at the University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus in October.

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