



Founded 1964

# N-Mara

Newsletter of the National Council of Women – Malta





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**International Council  
of Women**

Founded 1888

Motto: "Do unto others as ye would  
that they should do unto you."


**European Centre of the  
International Council of Women**

Founded 1961

**In Special Consultative  
Status with the Economic &  
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**Front Cover Photos**

NCW welcomes Professor Alexiei Dingli  
from University of Malta at NCW Centre  
Blata L-Bajda

ECICW-CECIF General Assembly in  
Geneva

**Office Hours**

Monday to Friday: 9.00 – 13.30

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Founded 1964

# Il-Mara

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN - MALTA

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**EDITORIAL**

Dear Colleagues and friends

Tis the season to be Jolly! Well, only if the weather eases up a little and gives us slightly nicer days – don't you agree? No matter – rainy days give us time indoors to wind down from our hectic and stressful lifestyles and reflect on this year and all its happenings. It's been a full one with multiple on goings, both personally and around us.

The rainy weather also makes it easier for the Council to get to work on the many initiatives it has going on. What a year it has been! Our amazing Council and participants kept busy in these past few months attending meetings and conferences, both locally and abroad. This newsletter and its content are a testament of that. Our dedicated team is happy to do it as it serves the noble cause of leaving a better world than we inherited.

I want to reference two Council initiatives that I have personally been involved in from different designations. The first being the Entrepreneurship course, where together with the Council, we helped develop a strong course on how to open up your own business. This year saw the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the "Getting Started: Start your own business", each with a strong turnout of students. I feel privileged to have been part of such a module; even more so since I was involved in the initial discussions and the execution, and had the privilege to witness the whole process as the module came to a full circle.

With around 30 students joining this year's course, it's always a pleasure going to these sessions to see such a variety of nationalities, cultures and even ages. Each of these women has brought with them their knowledge and life experiences, which ultimately added value to the sessions.

My involvement as both a trainer and a mentor in this course required a high level of commitment as I stood at the teacher's desk, delivering sessions on entrepreneurship, creativity, presentation skills and networking. It required preparation, and a lot of responsibility towards these students.

John Crosby said, "Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction." And I am sure that NCW's list of dedicated Trainers have managed to achieve just that – challenging the students with new material, offering an ear to listen and discuss their valuable contributions, and giving students a gentle nudge in the right direction.

Which leads me to the second Council initiative I am also part of, "The Weight Management Course". This time, however, not as a trainer but as a student looking to gain knowledge on how to lose weight (and hopefully not the other way round!) and lead a healthier lifestyle.

As we entered Summer, I took a decision that would send waves through my life. I longed for a change of pace and different energy in my life; so not only did I change my job, but changed industry altogether. I also wanted to challenge myself personally as well as professionally and do something that was out of my comfort zone. After being a trainer for so long, I wanted to follow a course as a student, to be able to learn about nutrition and, yes, lose a few excess weight that I've gained along the course of a full and challenging year. And let me tell you, all these changes have brought about a lot of excitement!

This time, I am no longer the one offering advice but rather receiving it. I am very pleased with learning new material, being listened to during class, and being gently nudged in the right direction by my trainer who invests the same level of commitment that I felt I held towards my students just a few months earlier.

Walt Disney had said, "Opportunities don't just happen – you create them." But you can only create them by seeking new experiences. I've experienced two exciting roles through NCW – teacher and student.

NCW has helped me meet new people, make new friends, and grow in a network of strong and intelligent women. This is my network, and yours too if you're reading this! In this group of people you may find your future mentor – someone who can light a lamp for someone else, and at the same time, brighten their own path. May we be resilient women who brighten paths of the people in our life.

So cheers to you and your loved ones, may we celebrate our successes and carry them with us into the new year, and may we reflect on the more challenging experiences, learn and grow from them, but take solace from leaving them behind us in 2019.

I'll leave you with one thought: **Surround yourself with people who allow you to see the hope inside yourself, and inspire you to follow your dreams, even if they might seem scary.**

On behalf of all of us at NCW, we wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.



Lara Dougall  
Editorial Board

## President's Message

Dear Friends

**I**n a few weeks' time it is Christmas and the year is gone. It is amazing how this year has literally flown at the blink of an eye and although for me it has not been one of the best years, I have survived it and I am a stronger person for it. Many a time, when adversity hits us we feel like the world has collapsed but with support from friends and family, prayer and self-healing we manage to pull through.

So a stronger Mary takes a quick look at all that we have accomplished this year. We have successfully finished our second Entrepreneurship course and the women that attended, feel empowered with more knowledge and capabilities in starting their own business. And all this apart from all the other educational classes we hold throughout the year, hosting several classes and tens of keen participants.

This year we have also worked on trafficking and prostitution in order to give our feedback in view of the reforms to the Human Trafficking and Prostitution law. We worked as a Council and also joined other NGOs as a coalition, giving a huge support to the proposals presented to the government. We hosted The Hon. Julia Farrugia Portelli MP, from the government, The Hon. Claudette Buttigieg MP from the Opposition and President Emeritus Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, who participated in a discussion based on the proposed law and the proposals that the NGO coalition was presenting as an alternative. The session was informative and the discussion that ensued was interesting and an enlightenment to those who were not so conversant with the subject.

The Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs as they are more commonly known, has become a buzz word since several companies, especially the larger multinationals have latched on to the sustainability

issues. There is concern about climate change, the sustainability of what we are taking from earth, especially knowing that July 29th was Overshoot Day this year. This means that we have taken all the resources that the earth could generate for this year and we are now on override, taking from year 2020. Unless we use more renewable resources such as solar, wind, we risk severe climate changes that will effect several nations. We see today the displacement of millions of people in search of work or as refugees, but there might be a far larger problem with migration from areas that will flood and even completely disappear. Climate change is no longer a speculative issue but a reality that we must all do something about. It starts with us reading more about it and doing something no matter how small, but on a daily basis. A commitment by each and everyone of us!

I shall not bore you with all this anymore but lets look forward to the joyful time of Christmas, with thoughts about family and those who are alone. May I also remind you as I did also last year about our forthcoming Annual General meeting in January. However before that we must prepare our resolutions. Please contact us regarding any issues that you wish us to put forward to the authorities. It is this way that problems are solved by being Change Makers.

Wishing you and your loved ones A Blessed Christmas and A New Year full of Love Health and Happiness.



**Mary Gaerty**  
*President, National Council of Women*

## Think, Learn and Succeed

### *A Short Digital Entrepreneurship Course*

*Sponsored*



**HSBC** | Malta Foundation

The National Council of Women is pleased to announce that the forthcoming course on Digital Entrepreneurship will commence on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020. NCW would like to thank HSBC Foundation for its support. For registration and further details please phone NCW Office on 21248881. The course duration is 20 weeks once a week between 5.30pm and 8.00pm. The course is free of charge.

## The female side of Artificial Intelligence

**A**rtificial Intelligence (AI) is genderless, yet it tends to have a bias towards males. The reason being that most AI systems were created by male engineers.

If we peep at the tech industry, we immediately realise that female engineers only account for around 25% of the tech workforce according to the Women In Tech report. What's more worrying is the fact that in 1991, the number of women in tech had reached 36% and there has been a steady decline ever since. This situation is rather sad, especially when one considers that the first programmer was a woman, Lady Ada Lovelace, daughter of Lord Byron (the famous English poet). She had written the first program for the Analytical Engine, a general-purpose computer designed by Charles Babbage around 1837.

Of course, one might wonder why we need female input in AI at all. First of all, we need everyone on board to bring forth this revolution, and we cannot afford to exclude anyone. Second, if our AI systems lack female input, our AI may not operate correctly. Let me give you some examples.

In 2015, Amazon created a hiring tool which uses AI. It immediately started discriminating against women. Their system was biased because they trained their AI algorithms to look for potential candidates based upon past resumes. They reasoned that if the AI learns to recognise people similar to those that were employed already, then it will successfully identify promising candidates. However, since tech companies have a 75% male-dominated workforce, the bias was inevitable. Amazon's system taught itself that male candidates were preferable and penalised resumes that included the word "women". It also preferred candidates who littered their resumes with verbs such as "executed" which have a male connotation.

Similar bias can be found in other case-studies. Virtual assistants like Amazon Alexa, Google Home and Apple's Siri have a female voice by default. A UNESCO report published in 2019 warns that such settings, together with some of the default responses, only contribute to widening the gender divide. When one of these virtual assistants was asked to do something inappropriate and verbally abused with sexist

comments, it responded with "I'd blush if I could". This reaction promotes the image of female submission in response to sexist abuse which is simply unacceptable.

However, the root of the problem is not the AI itself but rather the data which is fed into it. By default, most of our public information is already biased. A simple search on Google Images clearly shows this bias. A search for doctors or mechanics tends to return images of men, while a search for nurses or teachers returns images of women. Of course, this is nothing but a reflection of our society.

A couple of years ago, as part of our AI evangelisation initiatives, we requested to give a talk in a particular girls school. The Headmistress courteously declined because being a girls school, they did not teach them computers. This is a big misconception. AI is for everyone, and we do need everyone to move forward.

A study published in Scientific America found that there is very little difference between male and female grades for computing subjects. At University, female AI students are generally amongst the top students earning high grades. We have to move away from gender stereotyping. In the past decades, there have been various achievements for women in our field of study. Margaret Hamilton wrote the computer program for the Apollo project, Katie Bouman, the computer scientist behind the first image of a black hole and the list can go on.

Within the Faculty of ICT (University of Malta), the Department of AI is the only department with female academics, and they amount to 33% of the academics in the department. So if you're interested, speak to them and learn how they became AI academics. Each and every one of them took a different route, and today, they are top in their field of studies. There are also various voluntary organisations such as Miss In Tech or Women Techmakers. Don't let anyone stop you! AI needs more female participation. Only by reaching gender balance in the tech industry can we aspire to achieve an AI which is fair for everyone. That is why we desperately need, the female side of AI!

**Prof Alexiei Dingli**





## The Technological World and How it will affect our future

The National Council of Women organised a talk entitled, “The Technological World and How it will affect our future” on Wednesday 18th September 2019 at the National Council of Women Learning Centre. Dr Alexiei Dingli, Professor of Artificial Intelligence shared with all present what the future holds.

Prof. Dingli gave a very informative presentation about the country’s strategy. He said that the most critical resource, in any country, is human capital. A skilled workforce and an oiled educational system lie at the foundation of high-value-added services. With the proliferation of Artificial Intelligence, we expect existent work practices to be disrupted, thus creating not only new opportunities but also new challenges.

We have seen a lot of predictions in the past year. Some experts foretell that around 40% of all jobs will disappear in the coming years. Others say that the AI revolution will create millions of new posts, some of which have not even been invented yet.

There is nothing new in this. If we have a look at what happened when the banks introduced Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), we can see a similar pattern. With the deployment of ATMs, many predicted the end of bank tellers. However, statistics show otherwise. In 1985, there were 60,000 ATMs in the US and 485,000 bank tellers. In 2002, the number of ATMs rose to 352,000 while the number of bank tellers rose to 527,000.

Our interpretation of this is that many people were finding it convenient to make use of the new machines; hence, the number of banking transactions began to soar. On the other

hand, banks started focusing on better customer service; thus adding more employees to their branches to handle more complex tasks. We can also see this pattern happening today with online banking. Even though some banks closed several branches and 90% of transactions are taking place online, the number of bank employees in the US is practically the same. It goes to prove that it is not just a matter of automation taking over human jobs.

The truth of what will happen is most probably somewhere in between. Let’s make it clear that in most cases, AI will not take over jobs, but it will automate specific tasks within that job. In essence, the job market will change as follows;

- Some jobs will become obsolete such as driving. Self-driving cars will be able to transport people and goods around without the need of a human chauffeur.
- Some jobs will not be affected much by AI, such as nursing. In the caring profession, the human element is still critical and essential.
- Some new jobs will be created, such as Organ Creators, whose role will be to develop organs and body parts from organic material.
- Many existent jobs will change forever. These range from low paid jobs such as store assistants up to high paid jobs such as lawyers. AI will augment their tasks in such a way as to make them safer, faster and more precise.

To prepare for this revolution, we need to help the workers of today and those of tomorrow, adapt and acquire new skills.

We can achieve this by implementing the following measures:

The first step in any AI strategy is to inform the general public on how AI can significantly improve their quality of life. A survey conducted by the Malta.AI task-force found that even though 60% of respondents had heard about AI, but they do not understand what it really is. Initially, only 42% of the respondents assumed that they had interacted with an AI system, but when they were confronted with specific examples, this number shot up to 80%. People do not realise that they are using AI because computerised systems do not explicitly mention it. Thus, it is essential to help people understand how to recognise an AI system. In so doing, they can harness its potential while shedding potential fears which they might have.



**PROF ALEXIEI DINGLI** is a Professor of AI at the University of Malta. He has been conducting research and working in the field of AI for more than two decades, assisting different companies to implement AI solutions. His work has been rated World Class by international experts and he won several local and international awards (such as those by the European Space Agency, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the United Nations to name a few). He has published several peer-reviewed publications and forms part of the Malta.AI task-force which was setup by the Maltese government, aimed at making Malta one of the top AI countries in the world.

# Beijing+25

## Regional Review Meeting – Geneva Switzerland

Recently the National Council of Women was invited to participate during the Civil Society Forum on Beijing+25 and UNECE Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting in Geneva Switzerland between 28<sup>th</sup> October and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

The Civil Society Forum was mainly on the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2020 Generation Equality Forum and CSW processes. Five hundred women from different countries spent an entire day sharing ideas and their recommendations. The day started with a cultural performance followed by civil society priorities – for Beijing+25 women's rights & gender equality process. The Participants' main aim was the commitments of gender equity and empowerment that was set out in CEDAW and in the Beijing Platform for Action. They were determined to strive to create diverse, vibrant, equal and just societies for all nations in particular for marginalized groups.

During the Civil Society forum representatives from Civil Society Organisations fighting for gender equality across the UNECE Region took to the streets to ensure governments' accountability to commitments set out almost 25 years ago in the Beijing Platform for Action. It is estimated that it will take over 100 years before we see gender equality. EIGE Gender Equality index released a few weeks ago highlighted that the European Union is moving at a snail's pace. The rally took place at the Broken Chair on the Place des Nations.

Some of the themes, which were discussed during the forum were: Ending discrimination against women and girls in all their diversity; Guarantee equal participation and decision-making; Ensure feminist economic policies and climate justice Ensure peace; Justice and accountability; Ending violence against women, girls and women human rights defenders; Ensure women's rights in media; education and technology access.

NCW Malta representatives, Doris Bingley, Doreen Borg Zammit, Marie Demicoli and Grace Attard took part in various working groups during the morning session and again during the afternoon session. We shared ideas, actively listened, discussed and



networked with other representatives of civil society from different countries. We shared the very valid work that NCW Malta does in the field of domestic violence especially violence against the Elderly, NCW educational programme for integration and the resolutions which are presented to government mainly on trafficking, children born at sea, women in the media and women in decision making. After the presentations by the working groups a report combining priorities was prepared.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019 we participated at the **Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting for the UNECE region at the Palais des Nations**. There were a number of side events which we participated. We had the opportunity to meet the Maltese Ambassador for the UN in Geneva, who was representing the Maltese Government. The programme opened with a musical performance followed by speeches by Ms Olga Algayerova *Under-Secretary General and UNECE Executive Secretary*, Ms Tatiana Valovay *Under-Secretary General, Director-General of the United Nations office at Geneva* and Ms Asa Regner *Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women* Ms İlayda Eskitaşçioğlu a 26 year old lawyer and a PhD student at Koç University in İstanbul researching International Human Rights Law was chosen to share the key messages to the official intergovernmental meeting the Beijing+25 UNECE Regional Review Meeting behalf of the civil society members from 45 countries in the region. NCW Malta representatives would like to **congratulate Dr Marcelline Naudi as President of the group of experts on Action against Violence against women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)** who was one of the speakers at the side events Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; Lessons and Solutions from the Region.

Below are a few extracts from the Civil Society Forum report.

### Rights of Women with Disabilities

Developing effective measures to mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities in policies, programs and measures, is the key, this must involve women and girls with disabilities in the development and implementation of such policies and programs. Further, the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing violence against women and girls with disabilities must be ratified by all States. The commitments that have been set in the CRPD must be upheld, including the Optional Protocol and General Comment 3 on women and girls with disabilities.

### Rights of Migrant Women

For the rights of migrant women, we recommend strict measures and penalties against racial profiling, to fight against institutional and structural racism. Safety from gender based violence in dangerous migration routes and detention centres must be ensured. Residential citizenships should be given to all children of migrant women after arrival, and migrant women who report abuse in their informal work environments should be protected from deportation and sanctions.





### Rights of Widows

The rights of widows are a critically neglected human rights issue. The numbers of widows are increasing exponentially in the region due to conflict, migration, natural disasters, harmful traditional practices, and longer life spans. Widows' rights to inheritance, land and property must be enshrined and enforced in law, and legal documentation, resources, and special attention to their access to services is urgent. Widows are of all ages and include young refugee women.

### Rights of Older Women

Older women routinely have their rights and needs denied due to ageism, stigma, poverty, and violence perpetrated against them. Recognition of their economic and social contributions is essential. Resources must be committed to ensuring their economic security, safety, and dignity..

### Climate, Environment and Women's Rights

The climate crisis is having devastating impacts on the rights of women on the frontlines, in particular rural and indigenous women, whose needs and participation must be prioritized in national climate programs and in climate funding to achieve the Paris Agreement. Governments must divest from extractive and fossil fuel sectors and invest in sustainable local sectors that have committed to gender equality, set and fulfill targets for women's participation and leadership in sustainable energy and climate policy decision-making and climate actions, and protect environmental and climate defenders who suffer from violence and harassment due to their gender.

### Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

There are many dimensions to violence against women and girls. Deeply ingrained patriarchal structures reinforce harmful gender stereotypes and violate women's rights to bodily integrity and autonomy. The main recommendations focus on improving access to justice and removing barriers to reporting. We also call for national action plans on violence against women based on gender equality, gender mainstreaming and budgeting, including steps for prevention through education and awareness, starting from pre-school age. Faster investigation and prosecution processes, better coordination among state agencies in cases of emergency, preventing impunity of perpetrators yet also rehabilitating them with a purpose of transforming toxic masculinity, multisectoral teams of well-trained health staff are important. Governments must focus on implementing policies to combat all forms of gender based violence, domestic violence, cyber violence, femicide, female genital mutilation, human trafficking and other harmful practices.

The ratification and implementation of existing comprehensive international legal frameworks such as the Istanbul Convention, and International Labor Organization Convention No. 190, adoption of domestic non-discrimination legislations, preparing comprehensive national action plans on violence against women and gender equality, trainings and awareness-raising including men and boys, the adoption of an intersectional approach, ensuring confidentiality of the proceedings, and addressing the data gap on violence against women are crucial.

Human trafficking, as a subsection of violence against women in the Beijing Platform for Action, remains a prevailing issue within the region. Governments must take the appropriate measures to guarantee



the support and protection of victims of trafficking, including trafficking for the purpose of exploitation of prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, and trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, as well as address torture by non-state actors. Besides protection, governments need to focus on prevention and prosecution.

### Women's Political Participation

Women's political participation can be ensured through two areas: promotion and protection. States must introduce, where not present, and implement in full, affirmative measures in legislation and regulations (also within political parties) to ensure parity and equal participation of women at all levels of decision making. These measures must include sanctions for non-compliance. Importantly, women and girls active in political life must be protected against all forms of violence, abuse, and sexism.

### Women in the Media

Regarding women in the media, comprehensive legislations, regulations, and mechanisms (not only by States but also through codes of conducts by multinational media corporations) are needed to promote gender balance in media decision-making at all levels, and to tackle online harassment, gender bias and implicit discrimination in Artificial Intelligence, algorithms, and Automated Decision-Making, as well as to combat the impunity of social media corporations and advertisement sectors. We need to ensure digital and media literacy for all, so that women can use digital media as an educational tool and to transition from passive consumers to active content creators.

### Women Labour Movements

Regarding Trade unions and women's labour movements, the ILO Convention 190 and accompanying Recommendation 106 on violence and harassment at the workplace must be ratified urgently, with a particular focus on sectors which are more exposed to violence against women such as care, domestic work, media, and informal work. Over-representation of women in precarious employment, low wage employment, and the informal economy must be addressed by ensuring universal access to a living wage and social protection, a global care crisis must be averted by committing a minimum of 2% of income to public care services.

### Education, Knowledge Transfer and Access to Technologies

We call on governments to ensure free quality education that is well resourced and accessible for all throughout early childhood to further, higher, technical, and vocational education. It is important to have an educational paradigm which focuses on global citizenship that is inclusive of peace and reconciliation, human rights trauma-informed education, community development processes, and includes comprehensive sexuality education.

Participating at the UN in Geneva was a great opportunity we meet many colleagues from all over the global all with one common aim that of helping governments and stakeholders make the SDGs a reality. The National Council of Women Malta has had consultative status with the United Nations and the Council of Europe for many years being well established on both the local and international fora.

**Marie Demicoli**  
NCW Office Administrator





# NCW LEARN

*TOGETHER WE LEARN • TOGETHER WE GROW*





# ING CENTRE

*TOGETHER WE GROW IN KNOWLEDGE*



The National Council of Women welcomes the many adult learners, who will be participating in different courses held at the National Council of Women this new scholastic year. Courses started during the first week of October and we look forward to another successful year. Together we learn Together we grow in Knowledge. NCW would like to thank the Minister for Education and Employment, the Hon Evarist Bartolo, who greatly appreciates the valid work that the National Council of Women does for the benefit of society, the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability and also the Department for Primary Health for their support with regards the Weight Management Courses.

## ECICW Autumn Assembly in Geneva

**T**he European Centre of the International Council of Women (ECICW) General Assembly took place at the Maison Internationale des Addociations de Geneve Geneva on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Doris Bingley, Grace Attard, Doreen Borg Zammit and Marie Demicoli represented NCW Malta

President Brigitte Polonovski read her report and presented a draft program of action for 2020. The main theme in 2020 will be Violence against Women and girls and the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention. As violence against women and girls still remains a big issue in all our countries, ECICW could make a roundup of what happens in the different countries, how the Istanbul convention is ratified and implemented, exchanging good practices. She also thanked Lydimyla Porokhnyak NCW Ukraine President for hosting the Spring General Assembly in Kiev and Chernihive Ukraine in May, which was very fruitful and indeed a great success.

The Vice Secretary of the National Council of Spain as ECICW representative in the Observatory on Gender Violence of the European Women's Lobby reported that during the first meeting of the observatory (33 experts, 7 of them representing EU wide organisations) set up an action plan as 96% of the countries have not yet implemented the Istanbul Convention. Neus Pociello Cayela ECICW representative is leading a working group on shadow reporting which incorporates the work called "Brussels Call" to discuss strategies to end prostitution and sexual exploitation.

Mohinder Watson UN ICW Representative in Geneva spoke about Beijing+25, the work done for the NGO forum and for the UNECE session, which were taking place the following days. She explained she was in a steering group to prepare Beijing+25 and was one of the coordinators of the working group on violence. A questionnaire was sent to all ECICW members and most the NCWs answered on time which enabled Mohinder to produce a fact sheet of two pages. The fact sheet mentions some important issues such as free legal aid, support women's independence (free childcare), tax credit for single mothers, prevention campaigns aimed at men (one of the big football teams showed images against VAWG in the stadiums, mostly males in public, also seen on TV at home). Most important recommendations were to improve access to justice, to have National Action Plans on Violence

against women and to organize prevention through education and awareness.

Brigitte Le Gouis the Council of Europe representative gave a short overview of the work of the CoE. There are 47 countries in the Council of Europe, the meetings take place twice a year

Madame Michele Vianes President of Regards de Femmes gave a presentation and emphasized the importance that every child should be registered. One child out of three worldwide (60 million children per year) is still not registered at birth, despite international conventions and universal norms. It is also reported that it is hard or even impossible for women to register the birth of their child in many parts of the world. The serious consequences of this, is that they have no legal status and no access to programs and services when growing up.

Madame Vianes added that each State should implement a public civil registration system, free of charge, mandatory and opened to all individuals living in the territory, irrespective of their marital status, ethnic origin political opinions, economic status, language and place of residence.

Children who do not have an official established existence are the first to fall through the cracks in the protection systems, Their invisibility makes it more likely that they will experience discrimination, neglect and abuse and they will have no protection against child labour, against forcible conscription in armed forces, against child marriage and trafficking.

ICW President Jungsook Kim travelled all the way from South Korea to attend the GA and the Beijing +25. She congratulated the new ECICW president and said to be very happy that ECICW was able to organize a side event October 30 during the UNECE session at the UN in Geneva on Violence against Women and Girls. She hoped to have an event also at the CSW in March 2020 in New York.

Cosima Schenk outgoing president of ECICW thanked everyone for their support during her tenure. She also invited everyone to dinner to personally express her gratitude for the cooperation she got from all councils during her presidency.

The General Assembly 2019 in Geneva was closed by the President Brigitte Polonovski who thanked all participants

**Marie Demicoli**  
*NCW Office Administrator*





## Europa Donna Malta – 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Europa Donna Malta is celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Breast Care support Group which was started in 1989 by Hilda Schembri, Laura Bajada and Helen Muscat.

In those days breast cancer was a taboo subject and no body spoke about it. When Hilda was asked to visit a lady who had just been diagnosed with BC she went to meet with her, and from there the idea was born of setting a support group to help these patients and to raise awareness among the health professionals about the importance that a woman needs help after her diagnosis and during her treatment, not only from the medical side but from someone who had already passed through the experience.

Hilda Schembri had different meetings with the health department to raise awareness about the needs of women going through this disease, and what had to be done to make life easier for the women. She organised lectures for health professionals and then to the general public.

Monthly meetings were organised which were and still are very popular with the women. When one meets in a support group they can discuss and talk about their fears and anxiety with other people who are going through the same trauma. The first meetings were held at Hospice in St Venera and then Balzan. Speakers were invited who presented talks on different topics of interest to the members.

In 2004 the group was affiliated with Europa Donna the Breast Cancer Coalition which at the moment has 47 forums from all over Europe.

In 2013 Europa Donna Malta moved to their new premises in Floriana.

Awareness talks, seminars for health professionals and the general public, in schools and other women's clubs are organised regularly.



The Hilda Schembri Memorial Lecture is held in her memory with a different topic every year. The present committee is committed to continue with the work started 30 years ago, to help and support patients.

Europa Donna Malta is advocating for more cancer research so all funds collected over the next 3 years will be donated for breast cancer research.

*If you need more information please contact us on:*

**info@europadonnamalta.org.mt / www.europadonnamalta.org.mt**  
**99994666 / 99330330 / Facebook Page Europa Donna Malta**

**Gertrude Abela**  
*President Europa Donna Malta*

## Women4IT

*One year into the project: 2 extensive studies, 7 collaboration platforms and 8 digital job profiles developed*

Women4IT partners enter the second year of the project with ambition to create innovative solutions promoting the employment of young women into digital jobs.

September marked the end of the first year of the "YOUNG-ICT WOMEN: Innovative Solutions to increase the numbers of EU vulnerable girls and young women the into digital agenda" project. The Women4IT project aims to increase the employability of young women (15 -29 years) in digital technologies and boost the opportunities female talent brings to economic growth. The project will assess the digital skills of 1,000 women in 7 countries and depending on the need and support of employers, provide digital skills training and personalized career guidance to a minimum of 700 women. Additionally, it will reach 10,000 youths by digital career awareness activities. In Malta, the project is spearheaded by Tech.mt.

During the first year, the partners released two research studies. The first one explores good practices and initiatives regarding improving the employment for women in the ICT sector for those that are not in education, employment or training, within the partner countries (Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Spain). It offers innovative solutions to promote the employment of young women in digital jobs, taking into account the current needs of the labour market from the perspective of employers, stakeholders and young women.

The second study presents the results of the desk and field needs assessment research to highlight key elements and issues regarding young women's access to technology, labour markets, digital training as well as labour market demands. The study identifies future digital skills trends in employability to prepare trainees for the work challenges ahead of them and provides input for designing new innovative profiling solutions.

Finally, partners have identified eight digital job profiles found to be the most suitable for the target group and appropriate for the needs of the future labour market. These include: Customer Support Specialist, Data Analyst, Data Protection Specialist, Digital Media Specialist, Graphic designer, Personal / Project Assistant, Software Tester and Web developer.

During the first year, the project has gained considerable visibility through various initiatives including: a presentation at the ICT 2018 EU Commission Conference in Vienna in December 2018; the e- skills4diversity European high-level digital skills conference in February and the Start-Up Europe Summit during the Romanian EU Presidency Conference in Cluj in March this year; as well as through broad social media outreach.

This month, project partners will meet in Dublin to kick off the second year of the project by presenting a test version of the online profiling platform. Once finetuned, the tool will be translated into 7 languages and used to assess digital competences for the specific digital job profiles to prepare for the launch of the new online platform in all countries.

The Women4IT project is funded by the Youth Employment Programme of the EEA and Norway Grants and implemented under the leadership of the Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association (LIKTA), with partners from Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Romania and Spain years 2018-2021.

For more information visit: <https://women4it.eu/>

Twitter: @WomenForIT

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WomenForIT/](https://www.facebook.com/WomenForIT/)

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/women4it/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/women4it/)

Interested participants may contact Tech.mt by email on [Techmt.Info@tech.mt](mailto:Techmt.Info@tech.mt) or via our social media channels.

## Food and Mental Health

**M**s. Nadine Castillo, B.Psy Hons, MBA, M.Gest Psych, a registered Psychotherapist and founder of the “Mind Your Food” Network, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 at NCW Centre shared with members and friends her knowledge about the yet underexplored relationship between diet and mental health. All those present, and it was indeed a full house, enjoyed her presentation which was very informative and enlightening.

### Could nutrition affect our mental health?

We are experiencing a bad mood epidemic: we are 100 times more likely to have significant mood problems than people born a century ago and unwittingly, our mood is the first casualty of malnutrition. In fact, up to 40% of how we feel right now is related to our last meal.

With the increase in incidence of mental illness we are also seeing an increase in prescription medications, and a rise in the cost of treatment. This begs the question, “are the current psychiatric medications not working as expected?”. With several long-term studies suggesting that medication may do more harm than good, it is now time to revisit the old adage “you are what you eat”. Indeed, over the past decade, research is showing a clear link between mental health and the food we consume. For example, Jacka et al. (2012) found that diets higher in vegetables and fruits are associated with lower depression and anxiety, whereas diets low in vegetables and fruits and higher in processed foods are related to higher rates of depression and anxiety.

Current studies confirm that the Western diet, made up of highly processed and refined foods, is known to trigger inflammation resulting in a significantly greater risk of depression. Our high (and ever-increasing) sugar consumption is linked to anxiety, aggression, hyperactivity, depression, learning difficulty, fatigue, dementia and Alzheimer’s. Trans-fats are another culprit: a Spanish study revealed that these unhealthy fats can increase inflammation and create poor circulation in the brain contributing to mood problems. Indeed, the study found a 48% increase in rates of depression in people who had higher levels of trans fats in their blood.

Fortunately, while the infamous western diet causes inflammation and disease, the traditional Mediterranean diet has been found to decrease inflammation and positively affect mental health. One of the key nutrients found in the Mediterranean diet strongly linked to brain health are omega-3 fatty acids. They reduce inflammation which has been linked to autism, ADHD, Alzheimer’s and depression. They balance blood sugar, stimulate new brain cell growth and increase connections between brain cells. The best sources of Omega 3 are found in wild salmon, sardines, anchovies and mackerel.

Micro-nutrients (vitamins and minerals) are also critical for



optimal brain function; they can help prevent depression, irritability, insomnia, poor concentration, poor memory, anxiety and psychosis. A varied Mediterranean diet provides a good balance of all the essential micronutrients. This consists of plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, wholegrains, nuts and seeds, beans and legumes, oily fish, extra-virgin olive oil, and some eggs, poultry and dairy products. Red meats are best avoided because they increase inflammation. This diet is not only good for us, but it also provides vital nutrition for our gut microbiota, the microbe population living in our intestine. Our gut microbiota contains tens of trillions of microorganisms, including at least 1000 different species of known bacteria.

The Gut microbes regulate digestion and metabolism: they extract and make vitamins and other nutrients from food that we eat which we otherwise would not be able to synthesize ourselves. Gut bacteria also produce hundreds of neurochemicals that the brain uses to regulate basic physiological and mental processes such as learning, memory and mood. It is the gut bacteria which manufacture 80 to 95 % of the body’s supply of serotonin, a key neurotransmitter often known as the “happy chemical”. Today, researchers are beginning to understand that what we eat can alter the composition and function of the gut bacteria and this has an effect not only on our metabolism but also on brain function. Foods high in sugars and saturated fats are preferred by pathogenic bacteria and can lead to digestive disturbances, increased inflammation and subsequent mental health issues. On the contrary, healthy foods found in the Mediterranean diet, with the addition of fermented foods like yoghurt, plus some red wine, green tea, coffee and dark chocolate feed the “good” bacteria which boost our natural immune defences. The study of these beneficial microbes or “probiotics” is especially interesting in the area of mental health, since some strains of microbes like *Lactobacillus*, *Bifidobacterium* and the yeast *Saccharomyces* could reduce cortisol levels, help improve cognition, performance and coping skills and exert anti-anxiety and antidepressant effects.

The field of nutritional psychiatry is still in its infancy, but the results are promising. Of course, translation of this research to mainstream clinical interventions will take time, however “the growing body of literature on the effect of nutrients on mental health is compelling enough and consistent enough for us to pay attention” (Rucklidge et al, 2015). It is time to rethink our dependency on traditional psychotropic medication with its high cost and disturbing side-effects and invest more in research, policies and treatments for mental health based on a nu

**Ms. Nadine Castillo**  
B.Psy Hons, MBA, M.Gest Psych





# Reform of Human Trafficking and Prostitution

Submission to Government Consultation

Press Release 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**T**oday we gave the Hon. Julia Farrugia a submission in response to the government's consultation on the reform of human trafficking and prostitution. Later this afternoon, we will share our proposals with members of the Opposition.

The submission was drafted by a multi-disciplinary coalition of academics, lawyers, and people who work directly with prostituted and trafficked persons. It has been endorsed by thirty-five local organisations ranging from: women's organisations; the academia; medical associations; and other organisations that support societal wellbeing. It has also been endorsed by five international organisations and other key people.

Our proposal is founded on the fundamental value that trafficking and prostitution are forms of coercive violence; and that violence cannot be legalised or regulated, only outlawed.

The reality of prostitution is not 42 million 'happy hookers' making a free choice and earning good money. It is millions of psychologically unwell, physically trapped and injured women – nearly all of whom want to leave, but cannot find a way out.

Trafficking and prostitution exist because they are profitable and legislative regimes allow it. The global sex industry is worth US\$3 billion, annually. Where prostitution is decriminalised, demand soars and trafficking increases.

Our proposal is predicated on values that prioritise the promotion of human rights and gender equality and embrace freedom and wellbeing. Our values also eschew



the commercialisation of human beings and their bodies for exploitation and/ profit.

Translating these values into policy and legislative reform, we strongly urge the Government to: **1.** Decriminalise those who are prostituted – People caught in prostitution should not be criminalised or victimised further for the abuse they endure. **2.** Make buying sex a criminal offence – Buying human beings for sex is exploitative and harmful. **3.** Create exit services – Offer a comprehensive range of legal, health, financial, educational and social services to support those in prostitution, enable them to recover from their abuse and build a life outside it.

All three policies **MUST** be included in the legislation and implemented as a 'package'. Decriminalising those who are prostituted for example, without making the buying sex a criminal offence, would open up the sex industry and increase trafficking.

Giving effect to these changes requires a zero-tolerance approach by the police and the courts, along with specialist investigatory capacity to prosecute offenders.

We congratulate the Government for tackling this difficult and multi-faceted issue. We congratulate the Government also for tackling it holistically by recognising the connection between trafficking and prostitution with fake massage parlours and strip clubs. In partnership with the Government and other stakeholders, we are confident that the policy and legislative reform we are proposing, will address the insidious impacts of human trafficking and prostitution in Malta.



## *The Cyprus Parliament has voted unanimously to amend the law around penalising buyers of sex services from victims of trafficking*

The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) is pleased with the unanimous vote cast by members of the Cyprus Parliament to amend the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings and Protection of Victims Law of 2014. With this amendment, persons who solicit or receive or use sexual services from victims of trafficking will be prosecuted without having recourse to mitigating arguments, such as they did not know the person was underage or had been trafficked. The passing of the current amendment, which took place on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June, effectively removes the "reasonable suspicion" requirement, which has been to date the reason why perpetrators could not be prosecuted and brought to justice. The Institute considers this a huge step forward in the struggle to eliminate one of the most heinous forms of violence against women and girls. It is also a blow to the culture of impunity that has continued to prevail in Cyprus regarding human beings trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

MIGS wants to thank in particular MP Christiana Erotokritou who, spurred by MIGS, introduced the amendment in Parliament in 2016 and has been a tireless advocate of seeing it passed ever since. In closing, we look forward to the next steps: an efficient implementation of the amended legislation, one which must include a wide dissemination of its stipulations to the public.

**Grace Attard**  
NCW Vice President

## Statement to Mark International Day of Peace

The United Nations Member States adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with the understanding that “it would not be possible to build a peaceful world if steps were not taken to achieve economic and social development for all people everywhere, and ensure that their rights were protected”. Sustainable Development Goal 13 “Climate Action” is a serious call for immediate action by all to lower greenhouse emissions, embrace technology that reduces pollutants and improve education on climate change.

The 2019 International Day of Peace theme, “Climate Action for Peace”, draws attention to the importance of combatting climate change as one way to contribute to the promotion of international peace and security throughout the world. Clearly, global warming may increase the potential causes of wars, conflicts, waves of refugees, and more. These, in sum, are powerful factors affecting international peace and security. Adverse byproducts of climate change affecting peace include displacement of people from natural disasters, scarcity of potable water supply, impact on public health and tensions over diminishing natural resources. So, what does this mean in terms of the involvement of women in fostering peace and specifically in terms of climate change impacts on women?

Twenty-five years ago, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing recognized that environmental degradation and disasters affect all human lives, but often have a more direct impact on women. Consequently, it was recommended that countries should strengthen assessments of the impact of environmental policies on women and that women should take an active role in environmental decision making.

From its inception, the International Council of Women (ICW-CIF) has held a very strong regard for nature and the environment. During the Disarmament Decade in the 1970s, ICW-CIF incorporated ecological concerns in its debate for peace and the control of nuclear energy. Further demand has

come in the form of the call for friendly use of the sea bed on the basis of respect for human rights and preservation of nature. In 1976, ICW-CIF proposed to its National Councils that they should urge their governments to ensure that more effective means for conservation and recycling materials be set up, to devote attention to the protection of the marine environment and to enact laws with regard to radioactive pollution. At its General Assembly in 2018, ICW-CIF adopted resolutions for its National Councils to promote women’s active role in decision making on access and availability of safe clean water and women’s empowerment through access to environmental information and education.

Climate action needs women. Women are often the first victims of natural disasters and the strongest contributors to post-recovery community building. Therefore, it is essential that proposed solutions to combat the climate crisis include women. These solutions include increasing capacity-building and empowerment of women as key variables in climate action. We expect greater emphasis on the promotion of renewable energy, as well as expansion of outreach activities and educational programs for women and youth designed to encourage sustainable and healthy lifestyles. When rural and indigenous women are excluded from the process, policies or projects can actually increase existing inequalities and decrease the effectiveness of such policies.

In conclusion, let us be inspired by the teenage climate action activist, Greta Thunberg who was proclaimed the most important woman of the year 2019 in Sweden. Let us learn from her belief that hope and determination can make a difference. Let us be driven as individuals and as members of nations around the world to take action. Our actions not only can provide remedies to the deteriorating natural environment, but also, can demonstrate the powerful relationship between climate and conflict.

## International Day for the Elimination of VAW: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

The Commonwealth Women’s Network was represented at an event hosted at Commonwealth headquarters in London, to mark **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**. A new partnership was launched designed to reduce domestic violence in Commonwealth member countries.

Secretary-General Patricia Scotland signed a memorandum of understanding with the **NO MORE Foundation** which is a global movement of 1,400 allied organisations and 40 international chapters working together to stop and prevent domestic violence and sexual assault.

The two parties have agreed to work together to implement initiatives that work on the prevention of domestic violence and sexual abuse as part of wider efforts to achieve the 2030 sustainable development goals.

The partnership is designed to help member countries record accurate data on the prevalence of violence, deliver grassroots projects, train community leaders, educate bystanders’ responses and provide awareness resources.

The Secretary-General said: “We must say no more to violence against women and girls in both words and action. We



must do everything we can to ensure every child in our home and our community grows up in a safe environment. This is the only way to fulfil our Sustainable Development Goal commitments. We are looking forward to engaging a wide array of governmental, business, human rights and community leaders in this initiative.”

**Doris Bingley**  
NCW Malta

*Commonwealth Women’s Network*



# DIARY OF EVENTS

## July

- 1<sup>st</sup> Italian Conversation Courses for Adult
- 2<sup>nd</sup> US Embassy Reception
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Maltese Conversation Courses for Adults
- 4<sup>th</sup> Mathematics Revision Course
- 9<sup>th</sup> Talking Science Course for Guardians with Children
- 10<sup>th</sup> CCWR Meeting
- 12<sup>th</sup> NCW attended the meeting at Dar L-Ewropa to meet the new MEPs
- 15<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting  
Weight Management Program at NCW
- 16<sup>th</sup> Lifelong learning launch of 2019/2020 courses Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended emPOWER meeting at Naxxar
- 17<sup>th</sup> emPOWER sub- committee on Domestic Violence
- 18<sup>th</sup> Launch of the Education Campaign on Human Trafficking by Parliamentary Secretary Julia Portelli Farrugia at the Inquisitors Palace Vittoriosa
- 25<sup>th</sup> Business Female Café (Smart City) Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 26<sup>th</sup> USA Embassy – Meeting to discuss women's empowerment Initiative
- 30<sup>th</sup> Civil Society Fund

## August

- 19<sup>th</sup> MCCA meeting on Standards required by UNECE – Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
- 21<sup>st</sup> BOV St. Venera Meeting Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
- 22<sup>nd</sup> NCW President Mary Gaerty interviewed by Radio St Leonard Band Club Kirkop.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Farewell reception for the Hon Helena Dalli and the welcoming of the Hon Edward Zammit, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended

## September

- 2<sup>nd</sup> SIS + VOPs information Meeting Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Pre Budget Consultation Breakfast Meeting at the Casino Maltese Valletta Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and

- Marie Demicoli attended
- Empower EGM at Microsoft Offices Skypark
- 4<sup>th</sup> Minister Bartolo's Talk
- 5<sup>th</sup> APS Talk
- 6<sup>th</sup> Victory Day Celebrations – Doreen Borg Zammit and Rebecca Wellman represented NCW
- 7<sup>th</sup> Victory Day Celebrations Mass
- 7<sup>th</sup> NCW Summer Barbeque at The Palace Hotel Sliema
- 9<sup>th</sup> Konferenza Nazzjonali "Flimkien Għal Saħħa Mentali Ahjar". at Verdala Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 10<sup>th</sup> Weight Matters Conference Doris Bingley, Marie Demicoli attended
- 13<sup>th</sup> Human Right Conference towards 100 % advancing LGBTIQ equality nationally and globally (The Palace Hotel)
- 16<sup>th</sup> Executive and Central Committee Meeting
- 17<sup>th</sup> HSBC Meeting Mary Gaerty, Doris Bingley and Marie Demicoli attended
- 19<sup>th</sup> Artificial Intelligence Talk by Prof Alexia Dingli at NCW Centre  
CCWR meeting in Valletta
- 20<sup>th</sup> China National Day Mary Gaerty and Doris Bingley attended
- 21<sup>st</sup> Independence Celebrations Mass  
Concert Doreen Borg Zammit represented NCW
- 23-26<sup>th</sup> Sensiela ta' Laqgħat mal-Klijenti at MUZA Valletta  
Doris Bingley and Anabel Apap represented MCVS at the Commonwealth Secretariat, London and had a courtesy call with the Maltese High Commissioner to the UK, HE Mr Joseph Cole.
- 26<sup>th</sup> CCWR Meeting at Valletta
- 28<sup>th</sup> Doris Bingley participated in a MCVS meeting at Tas Silg, Marsaxlokk
- 30<sup>th</sup> Empower Session at NCW Centre on Prostitution and Trafficking
- 30<sup>th</sup> Enterprise Consultative Council meeting Mary Gaerty attended

## The 2020 Commonwealth Women's Forum in Rwanda

The women's forum, one of four meetings will be held on the margins of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) from 22 to 23 June 2020 in Kigali, Rwanda with the theme 'Delivering a Common Future: Transforming for Equitable Access and Inclusive Growth'.

Doris Bingley was invited to Commonwealth House on 18th November 2019 to participate in the preparations of the Women's Forum.

The Women's Forum will attract 500 participants from governments, civil society, not-for-profits, women's rights organisations and human rights groups from 53 Commonwealth member countries and the rest of the world.

Participants will share and strategise solutions to address pressing challenges affecting women and girls across the Commonwealth to ensure member countries have robust frameworks and programmes to meet gender equality targets by 2030.

Proposed solutions from the two-day forum will inform Commonwealth leaders' discussions and decisions on ending gender inequality – involving women at the highest level of policymaking to address challenges directly affecting them.



**Doris Bingley**  
NCW Malta

*Commonwealth Women's Network*



**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**SATURDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020**  
**VICTORIA HOTEL, GORG BORG OLIVIER STREET, SLIEMA**

**Registration and Coffee starts at 8.30am**

**We are pleased to announce that this year's guest speaker is**  
**Ms Angele Galea, Artistic Consultant of the project**  
**"Wahda Minna". The project in collaboration with Dar Hosea looks at three**  
**generations of Maltese women who were brought into the world of prostitution.**

***Buffet Lunch will follow after the AGM***

*Please confirm your attendance by Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.*

*Those wishing to become members can do so during registration.*

*Only paid up members are entitled to vote.*

*AGM with Coffee breaks €5*

*AGM, Coffee breaks and lunch €20*

## **Weight Management Programme at the National Council of Women Centre**

***Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 9.30am and Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 17.30hrs***

Due to popular demand the National Council of Women in collaboration with the department for Primary Health Care are organising two more Weight Management Programme to help overweight and obese individuals lose weight, prevent weight regain and avoid further weight gain for life.

The programme consists of eleven sessions of 2 hours duration each. Here, various topics relating to healthy nutrition and weight loss are presented and discussions take place in a group setting.

For registration please phone NCW Malta office on 21248881 or send an email to [ncwmalta@camline.net.mt](mailto:ncwmalta@camline.net.mt)

## **United Nations CSW64 Registration**

Registrations for the 64<sup>th</sup> Session on the UN Commission for the Status of Women (CSW64) which will be held on 9-20 March 2020 in New York are open till January 2020. Those intending to attend are to contact NCW Office for further information. They will be able to join the International Council of Women (ICW) and participate in all the side and parallel events that ICW and its member Councils will organise during CSW64. In 2020, the global community will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). A five-year milestone will be reached towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2020 is therefore a pivotal year for the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere.



## **Seasons Greetings**

*NCW President and the Executive Committee  
 wish all NCW Members and their loved ones  
 a Holy and Peaceful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year*

