



# International Alliance of Women Alliance Internationale des Femmes

Athens, October 2016

## **Lecture by Torild Skard organized by IAW and WCC on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 in Geneva**

Whilst women around the world are slowly getting better represented in top level leadership positions in political and social spheres, they still face many barriers such as discrimination, gender stereotyping, balancing work/family commitments and prejudice. These barriers help maintain the gender gap and prevent women from fulfilling their potential and contributing to national and global goals for social, political and economic development. Examples of this issue's importance can be seen in Goal 5 of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is devoted to women's empowerment and the introduction of UN led initiatives such as the first ever high level UN panel on women and the economy which aims to intensify global efforts to reduce the gender gap in all spheres of social and political life.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 the IAW organized together with the World Council of Churches with the support of NGO/CSW Geneva an event and invited Torild Skard to give a lecture on her book 'Women of Power, Half a century of female presidents and prime ministers worldwide'. The lecture was followed by panel presentations and interactive discussion on the subject of women in top leadership and decision-making positions. The panellists were:

- Dr. Catherine Bosshart, Executive Secretary International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Intl.)
- Dr. Fulata L. Moyo, Programme Executive for Women in Church and Society, World Council of Churches (WCC)
- Rev. Dr. Elaine Neuenfeldt, Secretary for Women in Church and Society, Department for Theology and Public Witness, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- Sara Llot, Interim Secretary General, World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA)

Moderation: Dr Isabel Phiri, Associate General Secretary, World Council of Churches (WCC)

Closing statement and thanks

Joanna Manganara, President International Alliance of Women (IAW)

Joanna Manganara, President of IAW made a closing statement and elaborated on her position on this issue which is going to be posted on the website of the Alliance. She also thanked the WCC for hosting this event and offering a number of services that facilitated its realisation (free Hall, lounge, press work, invitations, photographer, and printing). The bulk of the work for this event was undertaken by Esther Sutter with the help of Arielle Wagenknecht. The city of Geneva offered the reception that took place in the Hall of the Ecumenical Centre, Visser't Hooft Hall before the event. The invitation to the city of Geneva was extended by Arielle Wagenknecht. The event was attended by all the members of the IAW delegation in Geneva (Esther Sutter, Arielle Wagenknecht, Mohinder Watson, Marie-Claude Julsaint, Seema Uplekar, and Helene Sackstein, with Lyda Verstegen at the head).