

WUCWO Newsletter July 2017



World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations

This Newsletter is for

ALL WOMEN WHO ARE MEMBERS of WUCWO organisations.

Please send this Newsletter to all the members of your organisation. It's important that they know about the preparation for the General Assembly, Dakar 2018, and that they pray for it. Thank you very much!

Happy reading!

María Lía Zervino, *Servidora*, WUCWO Secretary General

PREPARATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN DAKAR



On behalf of the President General of WUCWO, Maria Giovanna Ruggeri, the Secretary General, María Lía Zervino, witnessed local preparations for the General Assembly (October 2018) during her three-week trip to Senegal, on a visit organised by Monique Faye Thiandoum, WUCWO Board member for Senegal and President of the *Coordination des Unions Dioceses of Associations Féminines Catholiques du Sénégal* (CUDAFCS). On her last week, she was joined by the Administrative Assistant, Virginia Pastor. As the culmination of this visit, a final proposal was drawn up with the local Commission, which was accepted in full by WUCWO President General and Executive.

ASSEMBLY AND ACCOMMODATIONS



Together with Marie Andrée Sene (Secretary of *Entreaide des Femmes Catholiques*) and Sophie Dossou (Treasurer of CUDAFCS), the main hotels - previously selected - were visited, in order to know their services and capacity. The Palm Beach hotel was chosen for having, among other things, a large room with about 1000 seats in which to hold the Plenary Sessions, several rooms for workshops, and a large restaurant. It is located by the seashore. There are some similar hotels in the nearby area, such as the Royal Saly (which can accommodate up to 400 people).



OPENING



Together with Monique Faye and Sister Anne Michel Sarr (Ecclesiastical Counselor of CUDAFCS) the International Conference Center Abdou Diouf (CICAD) was visited. This venue was previously selected by the Administrative Commission and the Chaplain. It is an excellent center, with first-rate architecture and technology. As of today, there are no hotels finished in the area. In that center, we will be celebrating the opening Mass and the official ceremony, both open to all WUCWO women of Senegal. The President of the Republic of Senegal, Macky Sall, and other authorities will be invited. The First Lady will be invited to the cultural dinner.

CLOSING



The Board member for Senegal, together with the Secretary General and the Administrative Assistant, visited the Sanctuary of Poponguine, "national cathedral" of the Blessed Virgin, and

prayed in its grotto for the General Assembly. This is the apex of the great diocesan Marian pilgrimages, and where St. John Paul II celebrated the Eucharist with the Senegalese People of God on his famous visit, which marks the 25th anniversary. The Closing Mass, open to all the faithful, will be celebrated in this historic shrine of Our Lady of the Liberation, located 70 kilometres from Dakar.

SHARING WORK AND UNITING EFFORTS



María Lía Zervino, had the grace to share and admire the work of women from the three WUCWO member organisations in Senegal. All three organizations will work in close cooperation. The religiosity and contagious joy of their songs, dances and colours, in addition to the desire to host the General Assembly, which for the first time in the life of WUCWO will be held in Africa, as well as their courage, apostolic dedication and ability to welcome, will make Dakar 2018 a memorable Assembly.

WITH MEMBERS OF CUDAFCS



Thanks to the invitation of its President, the Secretary General was able to participate in the Formation Day for the ecclesiastical and political commitment of some 50 women, parish delegates from the Diocese of Kaolack. She could also greet Clémentine Diop, the first President of CUDAFCS and present the General Assembly to the Women of the Executive Committee of *Union Diocésaine des Femmes Catholiques de Dakar*. All of them received the greeting on behalf of the President of WUCWO, Maria Giovanna Ruggieri. With great enthusiasm, they showed it is an honour for them to host other WUCWO members from different parts of the world. Virginia Pastor participated in a meeting with the women of the *Union Diocésaine de Thiès*.

WITH MEMBERS OF *MOUVEMENT DES FEMMES CATHOLIQUES DU SENEGAL*



There was a meeting with Father Pascal, national coordinator of the Apostolate of the Laity, Monique Faye, Board member for Senegal, Jeanne Diokh Yansunnu, President of the *Mouvement des Femmes Catholiques du Sénégal* and the Secretary General. They agreed on providing all their willingness and collaboration for the preparation of the Assembly; they could also count on the testimony of who is currently in charge of the first African organisation to join WUCWO. Another day, María Lía and Virginia shared Jeanne's apostolate at the Don Bosco Center and had a meeting with some 30 women of the *Mouvement*, to whom the GA was presented.

WITH *ENTRAIDE DES FEMMES CATHOLIQUES DU SÉNÉGAL*



Accompanied by Monique Faye, local responsible for the General Assembly, the Secretary had a meeting with the President of *Entraide*, Flora Coly Tavares de Souza, and part of its Executive Committee. She also participated, together with Virginia Pastor, the Administrative Assistant, in a fraternal lunch, which is an annual activity to fundraise. On that occasion, both Monique Faye and María Lía Zervino were interviewed by the channel DTV of the Senegalese television. They presented WUCWO and the General Assembly. The Secretary General extended the greeting of the President General to all the Senegalese people.

NUNCIATURE



The Board member, the Secretary and the Assistant participated in the reception offered by Her Excellency Mons. Michel Banach, Apostolic Nuncio in Senegal, to whom Monique Faye presented WUCWO and the General Assembly. She did the same with the other attending authorities and with a member of the cabinet of the President of the Republic, the Minister of the Armed Forces of Senegal, who is a Catholic. (Approximately 94% of Senegal's population is Muslim, therefore Catholics are a small minority.)

MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS



There was a meeting with the Minister Counselor of the President of the Republic, Ms Zahra Ianne Thiam, with whom Muslim-Catholic dialogue and collaboration are frequent. In addition, there were also working sessions with Minister Jean Maxime Simon NDIAYE, Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic, and with Ms Sophie Siby, former Minister of Communications and current Director of the National Agency for Applied Research, both Catholics. All expressed the support that the Government, as publicly manifested by the President of the Republic, is willing to offer.



EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE



There was a meeting with Mons. André Guèye, bishop in charge of the Apostolate of the Laity, Monique Faye, Board member and local responsible, and Virginia Pastor, representing the President General. During this meeting, the bishop heard the desire that he would lead the Local Commission in the preparation of the General Assembly in order to receive full support from Senegal's Government. The bishop was very pleased that Africa was finally the site of an event of such importance for the Church.

WATER WELL IN SENEGAL



Virginia Pastor, together with Monique Faye and other WUCWO women, visited the small Muslim community of Keur Mbar, in the rural heart of Senegal, where, thanks to WUCWO's work of coordination and the financing by *Manos Unidas*, a well of drinking water, based on solar energy, and a tank were built. In addition to that, a drip irrigation system will be completed. During the visit, a mango plantation was done in the village that will be irrigated with water from the well. One of these plants was placed by Virginia and "baptised" with her name by the Chief of the village. Before that, people living in the village had to walk 10 kilometres to obtain drinking water.



INVALUABLE SUPPORT



Throughout the whole stay in Senegal there was the advice of Sister Anne Michel Sarr, Ecclesiastical Counselor of CUDAFCS, with whom several working sessions were held, and her Community of the Immaculate Conception, provided all the support. Also with her, a visit to the great theatres of Dakar, Grand Théâtre and Daniel Sorano, to see if they were suitable as venues for the Assembly, was made.

Their prayers and commitment to WUCWO are a guarantee for the success of the international meeting in Dakar, from October 15 to 22, 2018.

**May the Lord and Mary, Queen of Peace,
bless Senegal,
a place of dialogue and cooperation
between Muslims and Christians,
and the General Assembly of WUCWO!**