

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **PHILIPPINE EMBASSY LADIES STAND IN SOLIDARITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

In a gesture of solidarity with the world's women, the Philippine Embassy's lady officers and employees attended the International Women's Day (IWD) Lunch organized by UN Women Australia at the National Convention Centre on 5 March 2015.

Highlights of the program included the keynote speech of H.E. General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, Governor General of Australia, speeches by representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, UN Women Australia, and the Commonwealth Bank, which was one of the sponsors of the event, and a panel discussion.

In his remarks, Governor General Cosgrove said that the "essential reason" that IWD exists and persists is because the world has yet to achieve gender equality. He supported his statement by mentioning statistics that point to gender inequality.

He said that the product of inequality is violence against women and their children, which is predominantly perpetrated by men. He called for action against violence against women and children, dubbing it a "heinous crime and violation of human rights," and pledged his support for women champions in their work on violence against women and children.

He ended his speech with another statistic by saying that only around 30% of the nominations for awards in the Australian honours system are for women. He made a plea to nominate women to the honours system as "the rest of us need to see and learn" from what they do.

Ms. Virginia Haussegger, ABC News journalist, steered a panel discussion with the following as speakers:

1. Ms. Irene Santiago, Lead Convenor, WOMEN SERIOUSLY! Global Campaign on Women, Peace and Security (also served in the GRP Negotiating Panel in peace talks with the MILF)
2. Air Marshal Geoff Brown AO, Chief of the Australian Air Force, and
3. Ms. Miriam Silva, Acting Chief Executive of TAFE South Australia.

Key points that the panellists mentioned included the importance of education, shared parenting, the need for adequate funding for projects in support of gender equality, as well as women in leadership roles and in the workforce.

Ms. Santiago gave a fitting conclusion to the panel discussion by saying that the international community must “keep talking,” share stories about the things that work and constantly renew its commitment to the task of achieving gender equality.

Over 1,200 people attended the IWD event.



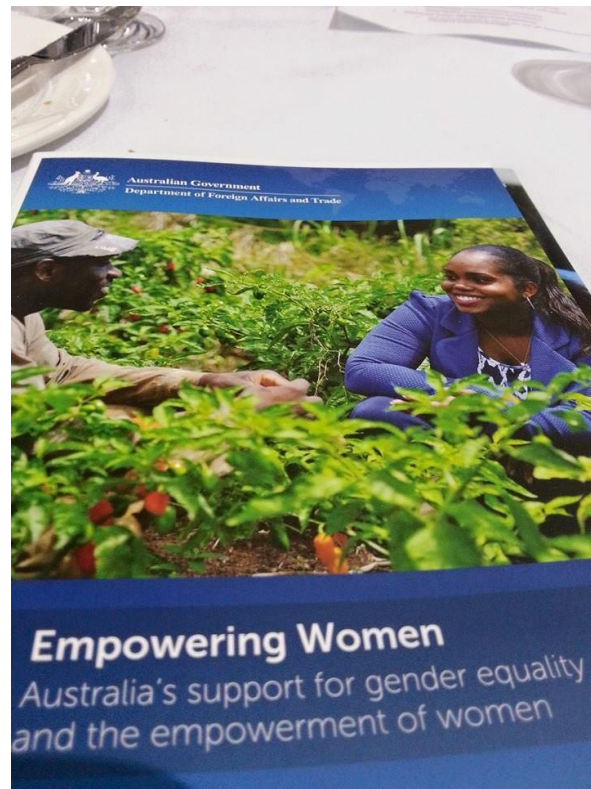
*The Philippine Embassy ladies joined women all over the world in marking International Women’s Day (IWD) by attending the IWD lunch organized by UN Women Australia at the National Convention Centre on 5 March 2015.*



*The guest panelists pose for posterity during the UN Women’s IWD lunch. Shown in photo are Ms. Miriam Silva, Air Marshal Geoff Brown AO, Ms. Julie McKay, UN Women Australia Executive Director, Ms. Irene Santos and Ms. Virginia Haussegger.*



*The Philippine Embassy lady officers and staff pose with Ms. Irene Santiago, one of the guest panellists at the UN Women's IWD lunch. Ms. Santiago mentioned during the discussions that the most revolutionary thing that can happen for gender equality is shared parenting.*



*The DFAT publication "Empowering Women" was presented during the event.*