



President's Message for Candle Light Ceremony 2018

by

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BPW International President 2017-2020

My very dear BPW sisters across the World,

It gives me great pleasure to address you during this year's Candle Light Ceremony. Today, we remember all of our sisters from our BPW family across the globe.

I am sure each one of us joined BPW with an aspiration to be a "**game changer**" in our joined journey towards gender equality and women empowerment, a great cause that we all hold dear to our hearts.

It is an honor for me to be elected as the world President of this great Organization BPW International. When I first started my company for medical equipment as a 3rd year medical student and was successful at an early age of my life, Thank God. I thought of starting an organization to empower young women entrepreneurs and to train them for building their careers and support them to start their businesses as I started my business and was successful.

Then I discovered that working in Egypt alone would not achieve my dreams of uniting the women of the world to fight for women empowerment and defend women economic rights. So I searched for the biggest and the leading organization for women in Business and Profession in the world. I discovered BPW International which had its head office in London UK. I travelled in person to UK in search for my dream to join a global Network full of aspiring and inspiring women so that we all join our efforts together and fight for our rights, lobby for better legislation and advocate for women empowerment.

At that time of my life I did not know that I will be honored to be elected as the world president in 2017. Being the president was not my aim but being a **game changer** was my dream.

Throughout my journey with BPW, I discovered the recipe for success, what I call the five P's:

1. Pioneer in the work you are doing but also in the dreams you are aspiring to reach.
2. Passion about the objectives you are standing for is crucial to achieve your goals.
3. Plan for the actions and advocate for the policies that serve your cause
4. Perform at the best of your abilities and continue learning from others.
5. Persistence and perseverance on the route you honorably choose and never lose hope.

As many of you great women know, my theme for the triennium is "**Empowering women to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**". SDGs consist of 17 inter-related goals set up by the United Nations for the world to achieve by 2030. They span from ending poverty, ensuring food security, healthy lives for all, quality education, ensuring gender equality and

women empowerment, access to clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, reduce inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate changes, life below water and life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions; and partnerships for the Goals.

Empowering women and promoting Gender Equality is crucial in striving towards achieving the SDGs. Throughout our Affiliates across the world we have lot of projects that are contributing to realizing the SDGs . They range from promoting entrepreneurship, support of Women owned enterprises ,opening new markets and promoting She Trades , promoting STEM Education for Girls or fighting illiteracy , Equal Pay Campaigns and lobbying for women on Boards and Women in Decision Making ,Promoting Financial Inclusion and Financial discipline, empowering women in the rural areas through Agriculture and Agribusiness , promoting UN Women initiatives as Women Empowerment Principles ,or fighting for the girls rights for preventing Child Marriage ,or raising awareness about Women's Health and wellbeing , promoting women in Media ,or promoting Inter Cultural Dialogue or Arts for Peace .

Throughout the triennium I hope we will have hundreds of stories to share how BPW contribute towards the SDGs. That is why we will have our new website to highlight all our projects so I encourage you all to register your projects on the website and raise the visibility of our great BPW International organization and the great role your Federations and Clubs are all playing to realize the SDGs.

Today, we shall strengthen our wings with the spirits and power of those who came before us, look forwards to those who will come after us Inspired by the words of our founder Dr. Lena Madesin Phillips to be a **Game Changer**

"Make no small plans. They have no power to stir the blood"

As sisters around the world each of us has our own priorities and challenges but it is only when we decided to unite under our BPW International Umbrella that we feel the strength around us and the true spirit that will enable us to achieve our dreams when we feel that other sisters around the world is lighting a candle for you. In this Candle light ceremony believe in your abilities to be a **game changer** and have confidence that you are never alone in the world and that you have your family of BPW members across the world that are lighting a candle for you now.

And as I always quote an African Proverb

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

My sincerest and warmest wishes to all of you for a great Candle light Ceremony.

Dr. Amany Asfour
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