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CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2012

“Women will increasingly play a part in the solution of the serious problems of the future: leisure time, the quality of life, migration, social services, euthanasia, drugs, health care, the ecology, etc. In all these areas a greater presence of women in society will prove most valuable, for it will help to manifest the contradictions present when society is organized solely according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity, and it will force systems to be redesigned in a way which favours the processes of humanization which mark the “civilization of love”. ***Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women.***

The Catholic Women Organization of Tanzania (WAWATA) had a one year long celebration their 40th anniversary in 2012. The formation of WAWATA 40 as a unifying Body of all Catholic Women in Tanzania for the promotion of their contribution and participation towards their development, the church and society came at the wake of Second Vatican Council’s reflections on the female condition which came at a time when the role of the woman in recognizing the existence of a feminine question, and to move from the mere recognition of the dignity of the woman to her involvement in civil and social life. By its programmes WAWATA enables women to meet the challenges of the World to which their contribution is essential.

2. The Programme

Cognizant of the above and as part of the Anniversary Celebrations WAWATA in their General assembly decided undertake an in-depth spiritual reflection to reorient and train its entire leadership and exchange experiences with selected key Christian leaders from the Region. Assisted by specialized consultants special leadership training programme and reflection were prepared with a view of celebrating the 40th anniversary occasion through many activities that aimed at bringing Dioceses in Tanzania and from Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi for a regional leadership training and conference and exhibition , sharing experiences. Programme and activities thereof enabled the women be able interpret the signs of our time, to fulfill their mission in society as baptized Christians and Witness Christ

“You will be my witnesses” (**Acts 1:8**) in adherence to the global Catholic Women’s Theme of “**love in Action.**”

The Celebration programme

1. Spiritual and Leadership Training

Two National training and reflection seminars were held (November 2011 and September 2012) for Spiritual and Leadership Training.

Outcome:

- (i) 74 Women participated in the spiritual deepening for leaders who will be catalysts for realization of organization’s objectives which among others is to have women and girls who can face today’s challenges in the light of the Gospel. This was done using the materials and documents developed for the purpose which contain a guiding reflection by the Bishop Chairman of the TEC laity Department Chairman and a specific soul searching analysis of WAWATA 40 year’s performance. The reflection was led by the then Laity Department Secretary Fr. Vitus Sichelwe. The TEC Secretary, Rev. Anthony Makunde also addressed the Women emphasizing the importance for the Catholic Women to understand the challenges facing the church and society today and the Social Teaching of the Church so that they can play their evangelizing roles as Catholic Women.
- (ii) 120 Attended the leadership skills that aimed to help the women leaders to broaden their skills to animate those that they lead be real Christ’s witnesses: Acts 1:8 in today’s world.
- (iii) 120 women were sensitized to become be catalysts for change through living their faith and make it possible for communities experience “**Love in Action**” (The motto adopted at World Union of Catholic Women General Assembly in 2010 in Israel) as a tool for evangelization. These women were privileged to be addressed by the Papal Nuncio to Tanzania; His Grace Archbishop Francesco M. Padilla on the theme of “Love in Action” after which Rev. Dr. Faustin Kamugisha facilitated the reflection and seminar.
- (iv) 26 Women paid their way for pilgrimage to Lourdes, the Vatican and Israel for Spiritual renewal while hundreds undertook local pilgrimages to designated local places.

2. Leadership peer learning and planning

Through peer learning and shared diocesan reports the participants spent some time to reflect on the success stories and challenges faced in the past 40 years and

came up with the 2013-2015 strategic plans to guide the organizational operations and activity focus.

3. WAWATA participating and contributing to the National Debate for the new constitution

A one day national workshop was organized to facilitate WAWATA effective participation to the ongoing Tanzania Nation Constitution Debate. 120 WAWATA from 32 Dioceses attended the workshop and came up with recommended changes which the National Office will submit to the Constitutional Commission which the Government has in place to collect citizen's views. The 120 women who participated in this national debate will now be the catalysts at diocese and parish level to ensure that many women participate in this National Debate which is expected to usher in a new Constitution for Tanzania.

4. Evangelization Exhibition

As planned; WAWATA organized a very high profile exhibition to commemorate 40th Anniversary where all the Dioceses of Tanzania including invitees from Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia participated. The exhibition centered on the theme of the Jubilee celebration. The women exhibited the works of their hands based on following categories which women individually and in groups are involved in:

1. Food and agro-processing
2. Handicrafts
3. Alternative herbal medicines
4. Church Community caring/compassionate work /actions
5. Spirituality

More than 1,000 people visited the Exhibition every day. WAWATA National Team selected 3 independent judges from different sectors to assess all exhibitors in order to find the winners who received the prizes based on various categories.

The table below shows the winners who received certificates of recognition together with trophies.

| No. | Category | Position | Diocese | Remarks |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Category 1: Overall winner | 1 st position | Dar es salaam | won two categories |
| 2 | Category 2 :Overall second winner | 2 nd position | Njombe | won two categories |
| 3 | Category 3: Overall third winner | 3 rd position | Mwanza | |
| 4 | Category 4: Overall 4 winner | 4 th position | Arusha | |
| 5 | Best food processing Booth | 5 th position | Dar es salaam | won two categories |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| 6 | Best handcrafts booth | 6 th position | Moshi | |
| 7 | Best caring /charitable work booth | 7 th position | Bunda | |
| 8 | Best spiritual aspect display booth | 8 th position | Njombe | won two categories |

The exhibition was a great opportunity for WAWATA and the invited countries to participate in the event and be able to have direct link with buyers and sensitize the public on activities undertaken by Catholic Women in the region to demonstrate love in action based on the Christian teachings.