

## Celebrating International Women's Day in France and Belgium

Brigitte Wada  
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### Belgium

Many events were held to mark the International Women's Day. Members in Belgium could attend the presentation given by Caroline Handschin held at the European Parliament in Brussels. The conference on the topic of empowering women's freedom of Religion or Belief brought together distinguished representatives from various faith and faith-inspired organisations.

Vice President Handschin spoke of her personal journey of overcoming hurdles in becoming President of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women at the United Nations in Geneva. She concluded by saying that with religious-minded women, working together to solve problems is a powerful tool.

The Belgian Chapter of the organised a conference, Being a Woman in Nepal, and consisted of a presentation on the recent trip to Nepal by Mrs. Suzuki and Mrs. Polin. In the presence of a representative of the Nepal's Embassy in Brussels, they illustrated the difficulties women face in Nepal as regards accessing education, health care, and overcoming economic struggles and insecurity.

They presented the most recent projects and the solutions they have brought forward, in particular, a pupil sponsorship programme, building greenhouses, and a dormitory for girls living in rural areas too far away from their school. Participants also generously contributed in a fundraising effort for ongoing projects.

### France

To mark the International Women's Day, the meeting of Dialogue and Alliance shows the theme, the contribution of women to Interfaith Dialogue.

Ms. Marie Duran de Vaucresson, who served in a Vatican Reflection Group, asserts that women must have greater access to positions of responsibility.



Then representing Islam, Ms. Fuzia Ouccazi read and commented on four short surras from the Quran. The third reading provided a Unificationist perspective.

People from nearly 20 countries, followed by video conference. In the International Day of Women, Brigitte Wada from France, was invited to speak in an all-day event initiated by the International Association for Economic and Social Development, Africa, France, with the slogan Be Strong and Be Proud.

Fifteen new influential women give a very profound and authentic account of their professional journey. Brigitte Wada spoke about the three main global themes for this year, and she concluded on the importance of working together to realise peace.