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I have been a member of the BPW International Health Standing Committee since 2005 and a Health Services Consultant with operational and strategic management experience in both hospital and community health care agencies for more than 30 years.

When I became self employed after 19 years in institutional nursing, I saw BPW as an avenue through which I could continue to contribute to my community, have some influence on decision makers who order our daily lives and develop relationships with colleagues outside of healthcare. I believe BPW derives its strength from a diverse, involved membership and from a primary focus on addressing issues that impact on the status of all women. When I became New Zealand President I was privileged to experience this in action.

Women with disabilities, be they obvious or unseen, mild or crippling, have a real battle to achieve their rights and maintain their well being. The theme of this Congress is "Making a Difference Through Leadership and Action". This is an area where we can work together with our sisters as they face the challenges of living in an able world. I believe that it is attitudes and commitment that need to change to ensure that everyone can live long and make a difference!

I look forward to sharing experiences and ideas with you all at Congress 2017