

Activity Report : 2006-07

Diwali at the Mansion House, London 11th October 2006

Diwali at the Mansion House was co-hosted by the Rt Hon The Mayor of London, Alderman Brewer CMG, Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone and London First. It was attended by over 300 guests including Cherie Booth QC, HE The Rt Hon Donald McKinnon, The Rt Hon Lord Dholakia, The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett, The Rt Hon The Baroness Hayman, The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt, The Rt Hon Goldsmith, Attorney General and many other dignitaries.

It was the first time ever that Diwali was celebrated at the Mansion House in London, residence of the Lord Mayor, and the Foundation raised £170,000, which will be used for the education of widows children in India.

Diwali at the United Nations, New York 20th October 2006

For the first time ever in the history of the United Nations, Diwali was celebrated at this world landmark. A gala dinner was organised by the Loomba Foundation and was attended by over 350 guests. We were honoured that our President, Cherie Booth QC, Foundationees, The Rt Hon Lord Dholakia and Mrs Shamin Lalji, flew from London to attend the dinner.

Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury, Hon Minister for Women and Child Development, Government of India, Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Yoko Ono, widow of famous Beatle John Lennon were honoured at the dinner. We were delighted that Yoko Ono donated \$100,000 to the Loomba Foundation at the dinner.

On 19th October, our President, Cherie Booth QC rang the bell at the NYMEX exchange in the name of the Loomba Foundation.

Johannesburg, South Africa 23rd October 2006

We were honoured that Cherie Booth QC, President of the Loomba Foundation launched the Foundation in South Africa at a gala dinner in Johannesburg. His Excellency Paul Boateng, British High Commissioner to South Africa, Sir Richard Branson, Chairman of Virgin Group who is also Patron in Chief of the Loomba Foundation and Foundationees The Rt Hon Lord Dholakia and Mrs Shamin Lalji graced the occasion with their presence.

We were delighted that the Foundation received a donation of rands 5,000,000 (£300,000 approximately) from SETA (Services Sector Education and Training Authority). This generous donation will be used to support youths in South Africa who are affected by AIDS.

In addition, the Loomba Foundation launched a project, in association with Virgin Unite, to support 1,500 HIV/AIDS affected children in South Africa. The programme will be managed by Starfish Greathearts Foundation in 5 townships over a period of 18 months.

International Widows Day 23 June 2006 - Overview

International Widows Conference at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

A Major International Widows Conference was held in the Locarno Suite at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 23 June 2006. The purpose of the conference was to raise international awareness and provide individuals, corporations, governments and NGOs with a platform to address issues affecting widowhood, such as poverty and deprivation, social stigma, legal discrimination, and the impact of HIV / AIDS.

HRH The Prince of Wales was Patron in Chief of the Conference, which was Chaired by Loomba Foundation President, Cherie Booth QC. Alastair Stewart acted as Master of Ceremonies and speakers included: Yoko Ono; the Rt Hon Baroness Amos; Baroness Jay of Paddington; H.E. the Rt Hon Donald McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General; Rt Hon Lord Dholakia, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords; Mrs Renuka Chowdhury, Hon Minister for Women and Child Development, Government of India; a number of speakers from overseas organisations dedicated to alleviating the suffering of widows and orphans in the developing world.

The Loomba Foundation Bollywood Concert in Trafalgar Square

The conference was followed by a live open air Bollywood concert in Trafalgar Square, attended by 300 hundred VIP guests and thousands of members of the public.

Shekhar Suman, known as the Indian Jay Leno or 'Mr Television', hosted the afternoon's entertainment. The line-up included performances by 4x4 Bhangra Group, the renowned pioneers of Freestyle Bhangra dance; Kashmira Shah; Sophia, Sunidhi Chauhan and Bhangra icon Jazzy B, who sang tracks from his chart topping albums.

Video messages from Hillary Clinton and Sir Richard Branson were broadcast during the concert and, as the finale, Cherie Booth QC released balloons to mark International Widows Day.

Media coverage

Media coverage included an interview with Cherie Booth QC and Yoko Ono conducted by Kay Burley of Sky, which ran on Sky News throughout the afternoon of 23 June. An interview between Cherie Booth QC and Ronke Phillips of ITV was also broadcast on London Tonight that evening.

Other media that reported on International Widows Day included: BBC News, Channel Five, Press Association, The Sun, The Daily Express, The Mirror, The Evening Standard, Press Association, AFP, The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, Asian Voice, icBirmingham.co.uk, Community Newswire, PR inside, FemaleFirst.co.uk, Century 105 FM and The Pulse.

International Widows Day in India

On this day, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi, Shrimati Sheila Dikshit, released multi-coloured balloons at the India Gate in New Delhi to mark International Widows Day. The ceremony was attended by the Health Minister, Yoganand Shastri and 100 beneficiaries with their mothers.