

To the Readers

8 March 1991

Dear Friends,

As one of the founders of Isis, I would like to take this opportunity to say how pleased and happy I am to see the opening of the new Isis International office in the Philippines.

This is a dream come true for us!

We have been planning and working towards the transfer of the Isis International activities from our Rome office to Asia for several years. It is wonderful to see our plans and our work bear fruit.

When we began Isis International in 1974, we dreamt of a network of women and women's groups and organizations stretching around the world, South and North, East and West, sharing ideas, experiences, models for organization and action, and building links of support and solidarity.

We were only a few then, with very limited material resources but a great deal of enthusiasm — and with the support, participation and contributions from women and groups in so many parts of the world, Isis began to grow and to take shape.

The opening of the Isis International office in the Philippines marks a new phase in our work. Looking back, there have been several other important milestones over the years.

One of these was when, in 1983, the original Isis, based at that time in Rome and Geneva, transformed itself into two separate organizations: Isis International in Rome and Isis-Wicce

(Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange) in Geneva. Today, Isis International and Isis-Wicce cooperate and network together, but we remain two separate organizations.

Another was in 1984, when Isis International opened a new office in Santiago, Chile in addition to our office in Rome. This led to the flourishing of Isis International activities in Latin America and to growing communication between women and groups in Latin America and in other parts of the world.

It was soon after that we began to think of moving the rest of our activities from Rome to a region in the South closer to where much of the Isis International networking is going on — among groups in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. And communication between women and groups in North and South can also be continued from the South.

We also looked at the collection of materials in our Resource Center, by now grown very large — magazines, booklets, studies and all sorts of things — so much of it from groups and organizations in the South. So often such collections end up in the major capitals of the North. Would it not be a symbolic step to transfer all these materials to the South? Where to move to was the difficult question. Which region, which country? There were so many choices. In the end, we had to make our decision on the basis of very practical criteria: where there were good possibilities to carry out international communication and information exchange.

Once the decision to move to the Philippines was made, we could not have been more delighted with the response and the enthusiasm with which the new Isis International team in the Philippines has taken up the challenge and has gone forward with opening the new office.

We would like to thank you in our network for your patience this past year. The transfer from Rome has taken a lot of our energy and has meant that some of our publications, activities and responses to your letters and requests have been delayed in 1990.

Now that we are settled in our new home in the Philippines, we mean to more than make up for it! The incorporation papers for the Isis International office were signed on 9 January 1991 and already we have a house and a new team taking up the work. And this first issue of *Women in Action 1991* has been prepared and produced by the new Isis International team in the Philippines.

The Isis International office in the Philippines will continue not only the publication of *Woman in Action*, but our other international networking activities with Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Caribbean and the North, and together with the Isis International office in Santiago, Chile, with Latin America.

I would like to thank the new team in the Philippines for the wonderful spirit and energy they have shown in taking up the work, and I would also like to thank the Isis International team in Santiago and all our associates and

friends in so many places who helped make the dream of a new office in Asia possible.

As part of Isis International since its beginning, I have seen it grow and have had the good fortune to come to know many of you. I hope to keep my participation in Isis International and to keep in contact with you.

I will continue to work with Isis International and especially closely with the new office in the Philippines as one of its coordinators. Although our office in Rome is now closed I will continue to be based in Rome, at least for the time being, but I will be often in the Philippines, and I can be contacted through the Philippine office.

It is with a great sense of fulfillment and joy that I participate in the birth of this new phase of Isis International, and I am looking forward with optimism to what the future may bring.

Marilee Karl
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