

Report on IFUW participation, forum discussions and recommendations



IFUW UN Representative Professor Manjit Dosanjh presents civil society declaration on Beijing +20 to the UN ECE Regional Review Meeting, at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

The following report was compiled on 7 November 2014 by [Aoife Hegarty](#), IFUW Advocacy & Communications Officer, with content provided by IFUW United Nations representatives Helen Lom, Nina Joyce and IFUW intern Emily Kalis.

Introduction

On 3 – 5 November, [NGO CSW Geneva](#) organised a three-day forum held at the United Nations (UN) building in Geneva, to review the progress made and identify the persisting challenges since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995 ("Beijing +20"). Following the Forum, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) convened on 6 –7 November for the [regional review meeting](#) for Beijing + 20. The Forum boasted over 700 hundred participants, where IFUW was strongly represented throughout by staff and UN representatives. Several members of IFUW's national federations and associations (NFAs) travelled to Geneva to participate in the Forum, including members from Canada, Russia, Armenia, Great Britain and Bulgaria. IFUW hosted a briefing session for its members and UN representatives on the eve of the NGO Forum. This provided an opportunity for a meet-and-greet with the staff, where IFUW's Advocacy & Communications Officer Aoife Hegarty gave a briefing on the format of the event, including the interplay between the NGO Forum and the UN ECE inter-governmental meeting. NFA members and UN representatives also received copies of IFUW's manifestos, core messages and the two written statements that IFUW submitted to the NGO Forum.

NGO Forum

The first day of the event began with an overview of the sub-regional realities in terms of achieving gender equality. While it was recognised that progress had been made, advancement in the region was shown to remain uneven. Austerity measures introduced as a result of the global financial crisis were identified as having had a significant negative impact on women in particular, where cuts in social services and healthcare as well as increasing unemployment were causing more women to fall into poverty. Women's participation in the labour force within UN ECE countries was highlighted as standing at 63%, while the level for men was 76%. It was noted that Finland had the lowest gender gap of all UN ECE for labour participation, where only 4% more men than women were employed. Violence against women was also emphasized as a particularly concerning and remaining barrier for achieving gender equality, where rural and indigenous women and girls were particularly at risk. In Canada for example it was presented that aboriginal girls and women face three

times higher rates of violence than non-aboriginal women. Esteemed Philosopher Dr. Ervin Laszlo concluded the first day by emphasising: “the kind of world we have today we shouldn't leave to our children. We have to transform this world”. This sentiment was picked up by the panel, who maintained that “implementation” and “reaffirmation” of gender equality principles and initiatives were critical for the full realisation of the Forum’s theme, “act, advance and achieve women’s rights”.

Roundtables

Day two began with an opening speech from the presidents of NGO CSW for Geneva, New York and Vienna. IFUW UN Representative Ilona Graenitz made an opening address in her capacity as President of NGO CSW Vienna. Following the morning address, the day was split into different roundtables based on the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the BPfA. IFUW staff and UN representatives participated in roundtables on the following topics: Education and Training; Women and Poverty; Human Rights and Migrant Women; Human Rights and Women; Women and the Media; the Girl Child; Women and the Economy; Women and Health; Violence against Women; Women in Power and Decision-Making; Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women; Men & Boys for Gender Equality; and Science, Technology and Innovation for the Advancement of Women. IFUW’s Executive Director Danièle Castle moderated the session on Education and Training, while IFUW UN Representative Professor Manjit Dosanjh convened the roundtables on Women and Health, and Science, Technology and Innovation for the Advancement of Women. Professor Dosanjh was also an integral part of the editorial committee and in this capacity drafted and presented the outcome declaration and recommendations. Zoya Apevalova, an IFUW member from the Federation of University Women Russia, was a panel speaker at the roundtable on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Advancement of Women, where she shared the Russian perspective in terms of women’s participation in science and technology. A summary of each of the roundtables attended by IFUW representatives is annexed to this report.

Outcome declaration

The third and final day of the Forum culminated in the presentation of the outcome declaration. The declaration and recommendations were created and formulated on the basis of the discussions and conclusions from the roundtables as well as the written statements that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had submitted prior to the event. Professor Manjit Dosanjh presented the declaration, which saw the 12 original critical areas of concern from the BPfA re-worked into ten “cluster” issues, which included topics not previously addressed by the BPfA. The ten clusters are as follows:¹

1. Women’s Rights are Human Rights : Accountability and Resources (Human Rights of Women)
2. Violence Against Women and Conflict : Building a Culture of Peace (Women and Armed Conflict)
3. Poverty, Economics and Social Development: Money Matters (Women and the Economy, Women and Poverty)
4. Participation and Decision-Making, Shifting Power (Women in Power and Decision-Making, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women)
5. Environment and Climate Justice : People and Planet (Women and the Environment)
6. Human Rights and Migrant Women : Together in Solidarity (Women and Poverty)
7. Women and Health: Wellbeing for all (Women and Health)
8. Girls, Ageing and Intergenerational Justice : Building a Common Future (The Girl Child)
9. Education, Science, Technology and Innovation : Transformation for All (Education and Training of Women)
10. Media and Communications : Breaking Stereotypes (Women and the Media)

NGO CSW Geneva has since published the full recommendations online and can be read in full [here](#). IFUW’s recommendations permeated the official outcome document, including the express inclusion of the critical

¹ The theme in brackets represents the original critical area of concern from the BPfA from where the new “cluster issue” was derived.

role of providing migrant women with lifelong education and training. Jeanne Sarson and Linda McDonald from the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) achieved a remarkable result in having the recognition of non-state torture included in the recommendations. Jeanne and Linda have been advocating for the recognition and action to combat non-state torture for over 21 years.

The outcome document represents the collective civil society recommendations for the advancement of women in the UN ECE region. The official version of the outcome document, which is currently being edited and finalised, will be available in approximately four weeks.

UN ECE Regional Review Meeting

Directly following the Forum, the two-day intergovernmental event opened with the presentation of the civil society outcome document to the UNECE. President of NGO CSW Geneva Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda and IFUW UN representative Professor Manjit Dosanjh co-presented the recommendations to the UN ECE delegates. The declaration and recommendations were well received by Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UN ECE, who strongly praised the work of civil society for producing the comprehensive document. He emphasised that much of the information would be worked into the UN ECE regional report. Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women insisted that 2030 must be the absolute deadline for the achievement of gender equality, which would require “game-changing political will”.

Several side events were hosted in connection with the UN ECE meeting, including a highly anticipated session on violence against women facilitated by Denmark. HRH Crown Princess Mary of Denmark was the keynote speaker on the panel, who emphasised the need for women and girls to be able to realise their rights to reproductive and sexual health. The critical role of providing education as a means to combat violence was highlighted throughout the interactive discussion.

Powerful points were raised in the interventions from the floor on the topic of violence against women. During a similar parallel session on “Taking a Stand against Practices That Harm Women” the need to change the normative in terminology when discussing violence against women was emphasised by several speakers. It was recommended that the word “marriage” in child, early and forced marriage should be changed to reflect the defining coercive element. Similarly, another participant recommended that the term “honour killing” should be abandoned and it should be called out for what it really was – femicide. A recurring theme throughout many of the panels was the call for a stand-alone goal for the eradication of female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage in the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

UN ECE Conclusions

The finalised UNECE report will represent the regional position on gender equality to be presented at the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59) taking place in New York next March. The theme of CSW59 is Beijing + 20, whereby all the regional commissions of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will present reports on the progress and challenges in realising gender equality in member countries.

The following is a summary of the key conclusions identified in the final session of the UNECE regional meeting (all documents for the UNECE regional meeting, including the forthcoming final regional report will be made available [here](#)):

- I. Long-term trends in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the ECE region**
 - a. Particular progress has been observed in putting in place relevant legal framework and setting up national gender mechanisms. There have been strong advances in the criminalisation of gender-based violence and public acceptance of violence against women and girls has declined;
 - b. Access to education has improved and in some countries women outnumber men in higher education. Progress has also been observed regarding a number of health indicators;

- c. Women's organisations have made an important contribution to positive change and increased awareness of inequalities and their implications;
- d. Nonetheless violence against women remains prevalent, despite the introduction of legal provisions;
- e. Funding continues to be a particular problem, as too often action plans, new institutions and other initiatives are not supported by appropriate resources;
- f. Although the representation of women in the labour market has increased, it remains low.

II. Women and the labour market

- a. Gender equality is not only a human right but it also makes sense from an economic perspective. Excluding women from full and equal access to all sectors of the labour market represents an economic loss for society. Increased women in the labour market and access to quality jobs are not only a foundation for women's economic independence and empowerment, but also a driver of national economic prosperity. Improved participation in decision-making structures would have positive implications for corporate governance;
- b. Implementation still remains a challenge;
- c. Recommendations include:
 - i. Strengthen social dialogue and create new platforms for inclusive policy decisions involving women workers including those in the informal sector;
 - ii. Introduce paternity leave schemes in order to decrease women's unpaid childcare burden and shape public opinion about family care as being both men and women's responsibilities.

III. Women's Representation in Policy and Decision-making

- a. Women are underrepresented in crucial decision-making spheres, such as economic policy-making, local governments, law enforcement, political leadership, trade unions, civil society organisations and communities

IV. Preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls

- a. Governments have made progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform, namely criminalisation of more forms of violence against women and increased comprehensiveness of national policies to prevent and combat violence against women;
- b. Recommendations
 - i. Measures to reinforce institutional capacity, including training of service providers;
 - ii. All states should create comprehensive strategies and policies to prevent violence against women and girls, to protect and support the victims and to punish the perpetrators;

V. Governance and Gender Justice

- a. Barriers to women's and girls' access to justice include lack of awareness about their rights and where to seek redress, court fees, fear of stigma, lack of support services for women seeking justice and social and cultural barriers that make it unacceptable

for women and girls to bring about a complaint against a family or community member;

- b. Some countries still do not have a national mechanism as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action. Progress toward gender budgeting has been slow; funding for gender equality policies has remained low and difficult to track.

VI. The way forward: gender equality for inclusive and sustainable societies

- a. Governments and all actors addressed in the Beijing document should be encouraged to finally implement the commitments undertaken in Beijing in 1995.
- b. Sexual and reproductive health rights remains an area where there is critical need to carry out more effective actions. Without guaranteeing these rights, including by expanding access to sexual and reproductive health information and health services, we will not be able to efficiently empower women, eliminate discrimination, achieve gender equality and improve quality of life for all.
- c. The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda should ensure a human rights-based approach. There should be a stand-alone goal for achieving equality and empowerment including gender-sensitive targets and indicators in other Sustainable Development Goals.

Further information including sound bites and pictures are available on IFUW's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

ANNEX: ROUNDTABLE REPORTS

Education and Training

Prepared by Aoife Hegarty

The roundtable, moderated by IFUW Executive Director Danièle Castle, was divided into three groups that looked at specific issues pertaining to the education and training of women and girls. The three themes examined were: literacy & access to education; training & continuation of education; and non-discrimination in education and training. Each group had to consider two questions within the parameters of the assigned themes: what measures are necessary to ensure the full of the aim; and what type of education and training is necessary in order to “advance the status of women”. Presenting the outcome recommendations to the rapporteur for group one, IFUW staff member Aoife Hegarty highlighted the necessity of providing all girls and women with access to lifelong, quality education. States should provide tailored, continuing education for particularly at-risk groups including disabled women and girls, and those from indigenous or rural background. These demographics of women and girls faced double counts of discrimination, which was clearly evidenced in particularly low literacy rates. Migrant women were often specifically disadvantaged in host countries and should therefore be provided with tailored training to help them access well-remunerated professions across all sectors with fair working conditions.

Recommendations:

Countries should gather and publish gender-disaggregated data on literacy levels, enrolment and drop-out rates in all levels of education; regional groups should provide micro as well as macro data on levels of literacy so as to identify sub-regional disparities; financial literacy training should be provided in school curricula as well as taught through community programmes; countries should encourage teachers by providing competitive salaries and continuing training; teaching at levels should include language diversity to make education accessible to women and girls of all backgrounds; the gender equality text of proposed [goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals](#) should be adopted; governments must allocate sufficient resources to education and lifelong training programmes; accessible education must include safety measures including secure passages to, from and at school, as well as the provision of gender-segregated toilets.

Women and the Economy

Prepared by Aoife Hegarty

In the UN ECE region, a vast number of women are employed in the public sector. When countries introduced austerity measures in response to the financial crisis, cuts in the public sector, including in employment, meant that a vast number of women found themselves unemployed. Women face greater immediate risk of immediate poverty when made unemployed. In addition, panellists highlighted how reduction in social benefits affect women in particular – especially mothers and older women – especially their financial independence, which is critical to equality and empowerment. In terms of family dynamics, it was presented that studies have shown that mothers more than fathers put their careers on hold to raise and care for the family; this is referred to as the “motherhood penalty”. It was emphasised that motherhood should not be experienced as an obstacle to participation in the economy; rather, the labour market must adapt. Many mothers work double-shifts, both in formal employment and also as primary carers in the home. This leads to physical and mental exhaustion, which can result in negative health implications. If unpaid family work was assigned monetary value, it would account for 10 – 50% GDP. As such, policy makers must give value and recognition to the unpaid family care work. With regard to women employed in paid work, statistics show that the gender pay gap still exists throughout all countries. In terms of pensions, men on average receive 39% higher pensions than women within the EU. Including higher participation of women in the economy is not just important from an equality perspective; the “business case” justification also highlights the immediate economic benefits countries stand to benefit from when more women are employed.

Recommendations:

Employers should recognise skills acquired and developed in unpaid care work; governments need to re-structure revenue sources and expenditures to promote gender equality. This requires the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting; women must have equal access to professional opportunity, where

employers and policy makers must ensure lifelong education, training and sustainable career development; women in rural areas must be empowered through policies to participate in the economy; all women and men should receive equal pay for equal work.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

Prepared by Aoife Hegarty

Certain government machinery, including taxation policies and parliamentary composition, severely hinders the realisation of gender equality and empowerment of women. Since the global recession, government responses have been to cut expenditure – including on social benefits and healthcare – rather than raising taxes. Women are disproportionately affected by austerity measures. In the UK for example, the Women’s National Council established in 1969 at the recommendation of the UN, was abolished by the current UK government. Most governments in the UN ECE region are “rightist” – they introduce policies that are not particularly interested in social justice. This is particularly evident in taxation policies – since 1995 countries are taxing less and cutting resources for critical services such as education, healthcare and childcare benefits. In terms of participation of women in parliament, women account for only about 22% of all parliamentarians, and much less ministers and senior political positions. Yet there is an indisputable link between gender equality and democracy; one cannot exist without the other. Governments need to transform and reform parliaments to become gender sensitive so that they embody and deliver on gender equality.

Recommendations:

Lobby states to agree to a 5th World Conference on Women, in line with a proposed UN General Assembly resolution proposed by the UN Secretary General on the occasion of International Women’s Day (2012); ensure that all taxation policies are gender sensitive and do not disproportionately affect the welfare of women and children – “taxing for equality”; parliaments need to have more equal compositions – women should not only be part of gender committees but should be part of all ministries and also in positions of leadership; and legislation must include gender-mainstreaming to ensure gender equality in the application of the law.

Women and Poverty

Prepared by Helen Lom

Although poverty was initially a priority issue, over the years it has taken less importance in the UN ECE region. More recently, however, given geopolitical events and the financial crisis, we are again witnessing not only a return of poverty but also its feminisation because of continuing, inherent gender inequalities in numerous cross-cutting areas, ranging from unequal access to labour markets, financing, education and land ownership to persistent gender salary gaps and social stereotypes that weaken and disempower women.

Recommendations:

We need to develop and improve targets, goals and implementation. This requires developing, improving and agreeing upon clear definitions (starting with a definition of poverty, especially one that is applicable in advanced economies), reliable indicators, gender desegregated data and comparable measurements.

We need to focus on the intersection of poverty and human rights, reinforce a gender based analysis of poverty, and eventually shift the emphasis from poverty to inequality.

We need to address concrete, cross-cutting issues related to, or correlated with, women’s poverty, such as the pervasive gender wage gap, child poverty, economic and fiscal austerity measures which disproportionately impact women, informal employment and limited access to social benefits by informal workers (more frequently women), recognition of women’s non-paid labour in the home or as family caregivers, restrictions on women’s access to land ownership, equitable access to entrepreneurship, finance, business training and labor markets, availability and affordability of early childhood education, improving access to continuing and non-traditional education, in particular, for women wanting or needing to return to the work force, and ensuring birth registration systems for all children.

IFUW UN representative Helen Lom submitted that women’s education is one of the most effective economic empowerment and anti-poverty tools. Therefore governments need to improve, expand and ensure

women's access to quality education, at all levels, as an integral part of any effective policy to combat poverty.

Violence against Women

Prepared by Helen Lom

Progress has been made by many countries, especially in adopting policies and legal frameworks, but much still needs to be done as concerns implementation and resourcing.

Women's human rights and the protection against discrimination have been consecrated by numerous international and regional legal instruments. Now we need to advocate for the recognition of gender based violence as a form of discrimination and of freedom from violence as an inherent human right, and campaign for accountability by all concerned (governments, non-State actors and private individuals).

Recommendations:

We need to develop new models, laws and strategies based on new values, using an integrated, crosscutting approach that encompasses the prevention, protection against and elimination of all forms of violence against women. Education is critical in combating violence against women. We must educate women about their rights and how to enforce them. We must educate men and boys (the so-called silent or passive majority) on how to change and combat the pervasive culture of violence against women. We must educate perpetrators on how to seek help and achieve change. We must also address related social problems which frequently lead to domestic and other forms of violence against women, such as alcohol and drug addiction. IFUW UN representative Helen Lom submitted the following points: we need to: (i) raise awareness about how gender based violence is an obstacle to women's access to education; (ii) ensure that schools and academic institutions are safe places for women and girls; (iii) ensure safe transportation and other means of physical access to schools and educational institutions; (iv) train and increase the number of counselors and other professionals at schools, who can help raise awareness about violence against women and how to prevent and combat such violence and who can help identify and counsel victims of violence (direct and indirect) and refer cases to the appropriate authorities when necessary.

Women and Health

Prepared by Helen Lom

Most of the discussions revolved around two sets of fundamental recommendations, namely, the need to adopt a comprehensive, life cycle approach to women's health (from infancy and reproductive years to old age) and to advocate for a human rights approach to women's health, encompassing (i) access to health; (ii) quality health; and (iii) gender specific health care.

We must ensure gender specific health care for women, at all stages of the health delivery process (research, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and awareness raising and education of women and health professionals). Many health issues manifest themselves differently in women and men and therefore need different consideration and treatment. Today we are aware of this issue, but much more needs to be studied and understood.

Recommendations:

More statistics and gender desegregated data must be collected and information disseminated among women and health professionals, and the knowledge gained should be applied in practice.

Although much is already known about the problems and solutions regarding maternal and child health and about family planning and reproductive health, focus must now be placed on resourcing and implementation during women's entire life cycle. More understanding and awareness are needed about mental health and wellbeing and their relation to women's physical health. Further development and greater use of new digital technologies are needed in the health delivery process, in particular, (i) to improve access to health and medical information as well as communication both among health care providers and between patients and health care providers, (ii) to computerize medical records, and (iii) to enhance training of health professionals, always ensuring that appropriate security and privacy protection measures are put in place.

Integrated, comprehensive action plans for women's mental and physical health are important, and they should be subject to time lines and targets to better ensure implementation.

We must also look at the intersections of women's health, poverty, education and human rights. A crosscutting approach is needed as are public/private partnerships.

The Girls Child

Prepared by Helen Lom

Girls have become invisible/forgotten in gender discourse. We must return to using the term "women and girls" whenever appropriate and insist that both women and girls have human rights which must be recognized, respected and enforced. Priority areas identified for most urgent action in the ECE region: (i) need for more quality and affordable early childhood care and education; (ii) early and forced marriages; (iii) sex selected abortions; (iv) limited number of girls in the sciences; (v) violence against women and girls; (vi) human trafficking and sexual exploitation; (vii) cyber bullying; (viii) FGM, especially among migrant populations. So much follows from educating girls (and boys) in general and educating girls (and boys) as agents of change.

Recommendations:

We must develop and use non-formal and formal curriculums to educate and raise awareness among girls and boys about violence perpetrated upon children, of which girls are disproportionately victims. Children must be taught how to listen and how to speak out in order to break the silence and stop the cycle of violence against women and girls. We must also combat insidious causes of discrimination and inequality, such a gender stereotyping and gender oriented roles which are still significantly different for boys and girls and which socialize girls into more dependent, subservient or secondary roles. We must teach children to respect themselves and others and campaign against the sexualisation of girls and young women. Such awareness raising must use both top down and grass root approaches. Children, especially girls, should be encouraged to become engaged and participate in such campaigns. There is a need for comprehensive sex education, in the wider sense, not limited only to reproduction, which should be made available to both girls and boys. Such education should be legally mandatory, properly funded and implemented.

Regular health controls should be provided at schools in order to help identify not only physical and mental issues but also cases of violence and FGM. States should adopt legislation and enforce birth registration for all children. We must also empower mothers and educate families in order to combat FGM effectively.

Much more reliable, gender desegregated data are still needed. Legislation is not enough. It must be accompanied by implementation, accountability and resourcing in order to break the culture of violence, silence and impunity.

IFUW UN representative Helen Lom submitted that policy makers should also develop and make available appropriate formal and informal curriculums for parents and concerned professionals, such as teachers, health care givers, police, even judges, about the rights of the girl child and the various issues raised during the roundtable.

Women in Power and Decision Making

Prepared by Emily Kalis

The meeting started with the question: what is the difference between powerful women and women in power? This question remained a common theme throughout the discussion. Natalia Karowska mentioned that when women get decision-making positions, societies are more balanced. Recommendations from her included programs that help women balance work and family life, women lack money to run for office thus discouraging them from running in the first place, women need to create networks and support each other to encourage people to run, and communities need to start with reaching to young people. The topic of media came up as it pertains to women's faces in the media. If more female leaders or women in power are seen in the media, then it will turn into more of a social norm to have women as political leaders. These faces are also seen as role models to younger generations. Torlid Skard believes in the women's movement because it has contributed to the rise of many female leaders such as Margaret Thatcher in the UK. She also raised the idea of making the electoral system more women-friendly, which includes the implementation of quotas because although quality is more often than not better than quantity, quantity will eventually turn into quality. Staminira Hadjimitova also shed light onto the problems of the electoral system by stating that

women are elected because they either are famous or they have the financial means to contribute to their own campaign. The moderator, Claudia Zwart, stated “women don’t raise their hands.” This is a powerful quote meaning that women do not have the confidence to run for high political or corporate positions. The confidence, however, must start at a young age. A common trend among girls is that girls hold leadership positions in high school but do not maintain that drive and confidence as they enter their professional career. Women and girls must cross comfort lines to strive to improve their skills. This can be done by having career planning for girls as well as education. Girls need to be put in situations at a young age that allows them to grow in an open space, a space where they are able to make mistakes and be more confident as they enter the professional world. The focus in dialogue must change from the underrepresentation of women to the overrepresentation of men because the latter implies the power struggle between the two genders. Most people in the room agreed that it is less difficult to convince conservative men to vote for women as it is to convince women to vote for women. Therefore, it is important to have men in the conversation.

Recommendations:

More young leadership development programs; more effective strategies for women and men to vote for women; more women-friendly electoral systems; financial support for the women’s movement and for women to have the means for more women to run for office; continued pressure from feminist and women’s movements because there has been historical evidence that these movements have been effective in empowering women to have higher positions in government and in business; giving women more confidence to run for office by attracting and maintaining powerful female leaders.

Women and the Media

Prepared by Emily Kalis and Nina Joyce

Sustainable development can be realized when gender equality is realized with resources such as more opportunities, education, and more. There needs to be a fourth wave in the women’s movement, one in which men and women advocate for women’s rights in the media. The goal should be to engage men in gender equality, and one way to do that is through the media. Media was called a “secret weapon” because the media reaches out and touches all aspects of life and society. The media has been seen as a business, but now it can be seen as an opportunity for development. In addition, the media is missing from the Millennium Development Goals and should be part of the post-2015 agenda.

Women are underrepresented and misrepresented in the media in the UN ECE region and gender awareness must be given more attention by media. Need to move from media self-regulation to government regulation of public media (UNESCO). Media development and freedom of expression are absent from MDGs and they are directly linked to gender equality. Contrary to popular belief, men and women are more powerful than the media but they are unaware of how they can influence the media. Misrepresentation of women equals violence against women and plays a key role in maintaining gender inequality (Martini). It contributes to women’s disadvantaged position in the labour market and in their choice of studies and professions. It has a negative impact on self-esteem and aspirations of women and girls. France has started action in this area. Currently, European States monitor nothing and civil society has managed to awaken public awareness but not politicians’ attention. The sexualisation of girls and women in the media represents discrimination.

Recommendations:

More media competences for people in order to influence media and become discriminating media consumers; utilise ‘constructive journalism’; monitor the representation of women and girls in media and advertising; use community and campus radio to have women’s voices heard as a powerful alternative to media. Include more women on editorial and management boards of media; regulate advertisements in magazines, etc. so as not to elevate the cultural gender stereotypes; women should be more visible in media staffing as well as in the media as positive, influential role models for other women and girls; men and women have power over the media, and it is up to us to decide what to listen to and how to respond to it.

Science, Technology and Innovation for the Advancement of Women

Prepared by Emily Kalis

One of the main problems with women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Information Technology (IT) departments is that women are not promoted or encouraged to advance further than the position of Dean or Head of a scientific department in their career ladder. There needs to be more support and encouragement for women. One program that Zoya Apevalova – representative of the Federation of University Women Russia and IFUW member – mentioned is one in which young girls teach older women their skills with technology to help them realise their potential in the field. A key issue in Russia is that although there is a high number of scientists in Russia who are female, it does not mean that these women have influential or decision-making positions because the higher one goes up the leadership ladder in a company, the less women one sees. Stephan Monterde from [Cisco](#) recommended that there should be a larger commitment from the leadership and senior development departments within science and technology departments to have more women in the field and in higher leadership positions.

Recommendations:

We need to attract and develop the skills, interests and potential of women. It is not only attracting and harnessing the talent of women, however. It is also maintaining them and encouraging them to seek higher positions if they have the potential and qualifications equal to that of men. More continuity in women's training early in their careers will encourage them to develop their skills. Recommendations from the crowd include changing the perspective of technology from a career path and a mean for development to a life-saving resource. Attracting women and keeping them in this field of study is about creating an environment that gives them the confidence to strive for higher positions that can help them to develop their skills. In addition, it is also about keeping women in the work force after they have kids. More child care and day care facilities should be made available in offices. Finally, statistics show that girls who have parents in the IT field are more likely to become an engineer than a girl who has no parents in the field. Parents and families should be a main source of encouragement for girls to develop their skills and interest at a young age so that they can pursue an education. Career fairs at schools are not sustainable enough to spark a girl's or woman's interest in the field of science; it takes a supportive family as well.

Men and Boys – In Solidarity for Gender Equality

Prepared by Emily Kalis

There are some conservatives that believe that violence is negotiable, but it is in fact non-negotiable. Ending violence against women should be made a high priority because many aspects of society can benefit from less violence against women including a healthier family life. Boys and men, however, need to contribute to the conversation. We need to promote solidarity because solidarity will promote the well-being of the country as a whole. No society is immune and violence harms human rights. Boys must learn that there is a complimentary sex, not an opposite sex. This emphasises the importance of wording and how parents should raise children with this type of wording. The idea that men need to conquer women is primitive, and this biological impulse still remains in most parts of the world. We now live in a higher culture in which women and men are equal and are considered partners in society.

Recommendations:

It is necessary to investigate what is shaping the attitudes of boys (media, family values, religious aspects of the community, etc.) and change them. We cannot solve societal problems on neither masculine values nor feminine values, but a combination to make a partnership of values. Men and boy are integral agents of change; they must be included in the dialogue on the necessity of gender equality.

Human Rights and Migrant women

Prepared by Nina Joyce

Migrants comprise 10 - 15% of the labour force in the UN ECE region. Roughly half of migrants are women and migrant women in Europe are an economically active and vulnerable group. Most have knowledge and experience to contribute to their host countries. States' migration policies lack a gender-sensitive approach. Migrants' foreign credentials are not always recognised and 'deskilling' is a real challenge. Women migrants find inferior work to their capabilities and with lower pay and poorer working conditions than male migrants. Women migrants often cluster in domestic work, health care, agriculture and sweat shops. Civil

society is largely responsible for the protection of the most vulnerable migrants (female, minority, displaced by conflict).

Recommendations: Include empowerment of women strategies in all State migration policies. Extend legal protection to all migrants regardless of status. In the US, 80% of female deportees leave behind American born children. End the separation of families due to immigration deportation.

Human rights of Women

Prepared by Nina Joyce

Multiple developments at the UN through special rapporteurs, funding, resolutions and human rights mechanisms do not automatically translate to change in women's lives. However, they are important as they establish a normative framework. A panelist speaker from Poland, Ana Paradowska, cited religion and its representatives as holding back women's reproductive and sexual rights and freedom. Health practitioners can refuse treatment on the grounds of a conflict with personal beliefs. Women seek the emergency contraceptive pill from veterinarians when they cannot obtain treatment from medical practitioners. Infanticide due to unwanted pregnancy has increased. She also cited a "reluctance in anti-violence legislation" by politicians. On human trafficking, there has been much progress on legislation and institutional mechanisms, however little change for victims who suffer violence, fear, deep distress and the most humiliating is the loss of control. Trafficking victims are regarded as criminals rather than victims of serious crime. Their trauma reduces their inability to recount and recall rendering victims uncooperative and untruthful in the eyes of law enforcement. Poverty is the principle cause of trafficking.

Recommendations:

Provide guidance and best practices to all actors *e.g.* parliamentarians, human rights institutions, civil society *etc.*; there needs to be more awareness and information about trafficking; we must empower women to make informed choices; there must be a multi-pronged approach which includes efforts in poverty reduction, development, education, human rights and labour protection, corruption and legal reform.