



**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN 62
THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK
March 12 to 23, 2018**

**Notes for the Week
Hally Siddons
Graduate Women International Delegate
March 10 to 17, 2018**

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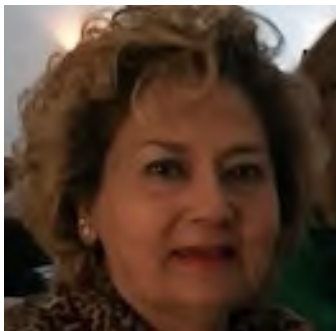
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Introduction

It was a privilege to once again join GWI members from around the world as a delegate from *Graduate Women International* to the United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62)* in New York. It was an inspiration to work with these women – women from Nigeria, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Zimbabwe, USA, Canada, and South Africa, and to learn more about their countries and how they were using their expertise to empower women and girls and to help meet the SDGs. We shared and promoted GWI's transparent and powerful vision, its commitment to girls' education.



Geeta Desai,
GWI President

Our GWI President, Geeta Desai, and GWI VP Marketing, Louise McLeod were outstanding leaders and contributed tirelessly not only during the week but well before and after.

Executive Director Stacy Dry Lara, also present in New York had played an invaluable role along with Hazel Bowen, VP Advocacy and Education, in preparing the delegation for the week.

And the key to GWI's UN CSW presence are our New York UN Reps – Dr. Sophie Zarensky, Dr. Maureen Byrne, Maryella Hannum and Mick Menard. They work tirelessly and at their own expense throughout the year preparing for the CSW and ensuring GWI's voice is heard.



Louise McLeod, GWI VP, Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director

“The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have gender equality and women’s empowerment at their core, and include a target to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women. Indeed rural women are critical to the success of almost all of the 17 SDGs”.

-Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary General, 2007-2016

Graduate Women International (GWI) clearly and strongly advocates that for women and girls in all settings, access to education is both an internationally recognized human right, as well as a fundamental enabler to achieve economic growth, human development, peace and stability in the world. The clarity of the GWI focus on girls’ education (the route to empower women) gives it a unique and valuable position among global NGOs.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is a commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and was established by Council resolution in 1946.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women’s rights, communicating the reality of women’s lives throughout the world, and in shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. It monitors and reviews progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and promotes gender perspective in UN activities.

Preparation for CSW is extensive and results in the compilation of official documents for the CSW sessions. GWI submitted beforehand a Written Statement with the support of six other organizations, and worked tirelessly throughout on the Draft Document Recommendations.

The ten-day session includes:

- Ministerial segments with round tables and other high level interactive dialogues
- A general discussion
- Interactive and expert panel discussions
- And many Parallel Events off the UN premise open to the public and organized by stakeholders to draw attention to critical aspects of the work on gender equality

In 2018 there were over 10,000 registered attendees with some 300 Side Events at the UN, open to registered delegates, and more than 450 Parallel Events off the UN site and open also to the public. These Parallel Events were organized by nongovernmental organizations that provide best practices and insight into techniques that work and lessons learned. Attendees gained perspective not only on the problems facing women everywhere but also on how to advance the women's agenda in achieving gender equality. The challenge to the week is that there is so much of tremendous interest offered that it is very difficult to decide what sessions to attend.

The principal outcome of the CSW is the Agreed Conclusions, which contains an analysis of the priority theme and a set of concrete recommendations for governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, to be implemented at the international, national, regional and local levels. In addition to the Agreed Conclusions, CSW adopts a number of resolutions on a range of issues. Our GWI delegation leaders did a superb job in keeping the GWI delegates and members informed regarding Ministerial Roundtable Reports and progress on the draft documents. They monitored changes and updates to ensure "education" was inserted wherever possible. These powerful documents are GWI's opportunity to convey its commitment to girls' education and to promote such wherever possible.

Themes For CSW 62

Priority Theme:

Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

Review Theme for CSW62:

Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women (Agreed to Conclusions of CSW 47).

The Commission will also consider and make a recommendation on how best to utilize the year 2020, the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in order to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Sunday, March 11, 2018

**CSW62 Forum Consultation Day
Sunday, March 11, 2018 9:00 to 3:20**

**“ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT
OF
RURAL WOMEN AND GIRLS”**

Tribeca Performing Arts Centre

The purpose of NGO CSW Forum Consultation Day is to set the stage for the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meetings, March 12 to 23, and to facilitate interactions between participants.

1. Cultural Melodies from the Himalayas: Mager Indigenous Youth Dancers from Nepal.

Lively melodies from the Himalayas provided the fascinating background for a performance of brightly costumed young dancers from Nepal.



Mager Indigenous Youth Dancers

2. Welcome Messages and Conversation:

Dr. Susan O'Malley, Chair NGO CSW/NY, and International Federation of Business and Professional Women chaired the day. She stressed that never have the voices and activism of women in civil society been more important than they are today in this unsettled world of conflict and increasing disparity between the rich and poor. And never before has the concept of “Leave no one Behind” been more

critical to the implementation of the SDGs and the Agenda 2030. Ten thousand people have registered in 450 Parallel Sessions and 300 side events over the next two weeks.



H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, Lara Setrakian, Phumzile Miambo-Ngcuka

Phumzile Miambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women, reminded us that the CSW provides a critical opportunity to advocate for greater investment in gender-responsive rural infrastructure and technology, the eradication of poverty, quality education, the achievement of universal health coverage, the elimination of harmful practices and fulfilment of women's rights to adequate nutrition and land. UN Women's partnership with civil society is essential to our success in achieving all of these ambitions, so that no one is left behind. As it stands now the people that get less of everything are the women that live in the rural areas. Labour laws are needed.

H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative Mission of Ireland and Bureau Chair, Commission on the Status of Women, reminded us of the significance of the Forum theme and how it is essential in understanding "let no one be left behind." Ambassador Nason said that the implementation of the SDGs is not as fast as we would like. How do we best intervene? Four hundred million women are farm workers. They have no social protection, no minimum wage, no protection against prostitution, and the infrastructure, especially regarding water, and sanitation, is atrocious. Seven year old girls carry large quantities of water every day while in some cases muscular men sit home drinking beer. We need to review and correct the trends that are going the wrong way. We must work together so that the issues are visible. Certain practices that have become normalized are not OK. What is missing is an extraordinary political will to make it happen. We need to build local know how and capacity while at the same time working together for visibility. We need to directly engage women who are visible platforms.

Women need resilience and strength to meet the many challenges. The speakers have all been given strength by the encouragement of others, those that have believed in them and tolerated their failures. As we move forward we must include the people whose issues are being discussed. Women need to participate in the decision. Diversity is divine.



Sizani Ngubane

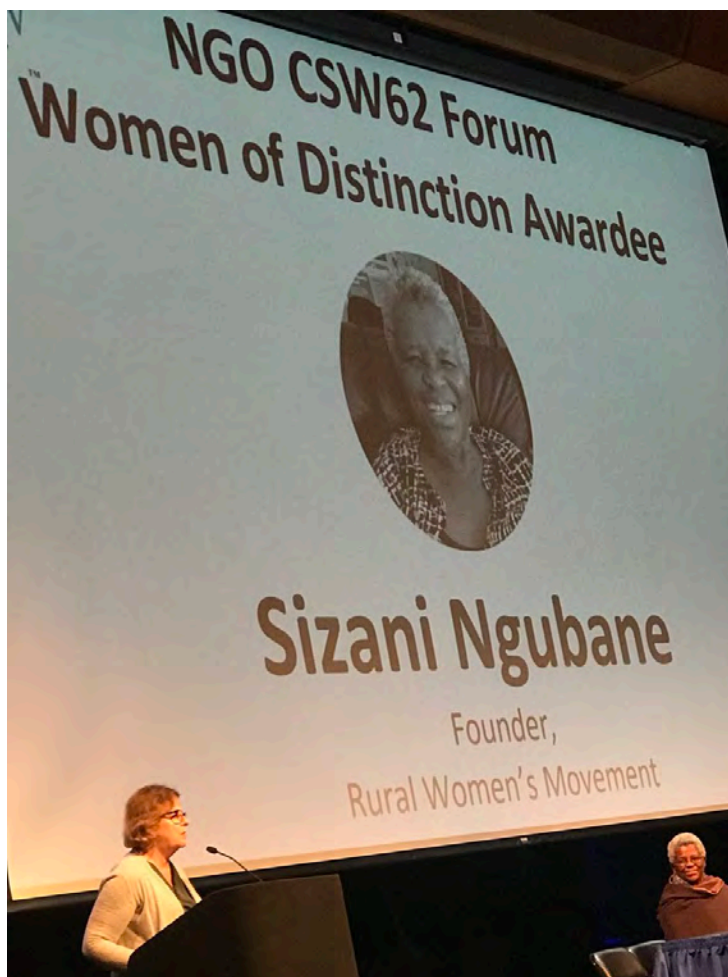
4. Keynote Address: Sizani Ngubane
Founder of Women's Movement, South Africa
Recipient of the Woman of Distinction Award

Sizani Ngubane is a South African activist who works for rural women's rights. Her coalition consists of 500 women's organizations of 50,000 members and

focuses on property and inheritance rights. She shared with us her remarkable story.

She is a Zulu woman who had no opportunity of getting a formal education. Instead she made it her responsibility to educate herself. Despite the difference, “I am you and you are me”. She believes in the inalienable right of rural women. They have been silenced and rejected. She herself has been crippled and her life threatened. Despite all she will continue to insist, persist and resist.

Sizani talked about young brides, many just 15. Young girls may be taken away and raped and then their fathers won’t take them back so they are forced to “marry” and stay with the man, always a lot older. Often another male family member assists in the process. She told the story of a young woman who had three children but such a horrible life she killed herself.



Her references were to rural girls. In South Africa women produce 85% of the food, yet own 2% of the land. Struggles have been heightened because of the recent drought. Young girls will get up at 1:00 am to walk to get water. They dig holes by the river and then wait for the dry holes to fill with water. This can often take 7 or 8 hours before returning home with 25 litres of water. She talked about her dreadful days as a six year old hiding under the bed to listen to the forbidden radio during Smith’s time in Rhodesia. As a child she remembers vividly the announcement that Smith was killing innocent people at 7:00 am.

Sizani told stories of her later trying to involve herself in local politics. The Communal Land Rights Act of 2010 was declared unconstitutional. In the beginning she was not allowed to sit with the men. She was “unclean” because of her monthly period and had to sit on a mat in the corner. But eventually the women were able to sit with the men and eventually a woman did become a leader of a traditional court.

5. **Woman Downstairs:** Anastasia Mikove

We learned of a film that has just been made on women. It appears to be very powerful and will be released in 2019. Watch for it! What does it mean for a woman to be heard?

There are so many who are not. The film shares the inner strength of women from around the world.

6. Several **prominent NGO leaders** talked from their own experiences about the concerns of rural women in their countries.

Panellists:

Gia Gaspard Taylor:
Network of Rural Women Producers
Trinidad and Tobago - climate

Maria Luisa Mendonca:
Network for Social Justice and Human Rights
Brazil- land and property rights

Lilly Be'Soer
Voice for Change, Jiwaka Province, **New Guinea**
Combating **violence against rural and indigenous women and girls**

Ruth Faircloth
Rural Migrant Ministry, **New York State, migrant farm workers**

Hon. Marilou McPhedran:
Senator (Canada), Committees: Human Rights,
Aboriginal Peoples, Security and Defense

Trinidad and Tobago:

Climate change and its impact on agriculture defines our present. Our response will define the future. Women are disproportionately affected in cases of erosion, flooding and drought.

Brazil:

Rural women have grave concerns for the right of food, housing and land. Land speculation is a huge concern in rural areas as is water pollution. Women need the choice of what they will produce and how, and special lines of credit. There needs to be legislation to protect natural resources. Women need to build solidarity within women's organizations. Violence against women is a big issue for rural women as is food production.

Rural New York State:

These women feel very isolated. Many are abused every day, always fighting their husbands, have many children, and are often obese. With so little self-esteem, many of the women just want to hide. Race continues to be an issue.

7. Lunch Break



Panellists below the Big Screen

8. Media: Women's Stories for Empowerment and Change.

a) Four women in four countries are working on 4 different media and to different age groups. Their stories speak directly to the experience of women in different regions of the world using the power of storytelling to transform rural women's lives.

- *Brenda Campas*, Country Director, Mexico. Brenda runs a Sesame Workshop in Mexico, an NGO to give poor children the same break in education as middle children have. They target the pre-school audience. They work on a wide variety of topics that effect childhood development. Girls need to be represented and see that they can be astronauts.
- *Carly Frguero*:
 - Now This Media www.her.nowthisnews.com
 - This programme is aimed at 14 to 30 year olds. Each tells a story but it is more than just the story. We need to talk not only about the story but how did a woman end up in that position. The story of **Rob Porter's wife** had to be told

but eventually his wife stopped going on TV. She was only known as Rob's wife. Sadly there was no focus on how she was able to recover and have the courage to get on with her life.

- This particular media takes the story forward. How can women learn from this story and feel empowered by it?
 - This young community cares and has over 90 million views in a month
 - Another story that was covered was about a woman fighting Iran's Hijab laws. Women are required to wear hijabs from age 7.
- Urvashi Gandhi, Deputy Director, Advocacy and Knowledge Management Breakthrough TV India
 - www.breakthrough.tv.in
 - This woman's movement tells personal stories in a way that inspires change.
 - Media shares the story with millions
 - Media has the power to share – what change do you want?
 - Media can bring non-converted audience into a dialogue – not a debate.
 - Media can help with conversations and will help create the narrative
 - It can help share stories on domestic violence, on sexual harassment at home and in the workplace, on early marriage and on gender by sex selection
 - Early marriage is a great issue in India where 50% of the girls are married below the age of 18.
 - Media can talk about the real issues of rural girls and women.
 - Without education they have no options. They cannot move out of different situations. An example of the valuable use of the media and how it can shape shows how a father can create a better world for his daughter by promising he will allow her to stay in school. This can be a powerful example for other viewers.
 - Meesha Brown, Director of Global Programs, PCI Media www.pcimedia.org

The concept here is that tell a story change the world! She chose to tell the story of a pregnant woman who survived Ebola in Liberia. Again the media is used to highlight issues that face rural women.

b) Seven Golden Rules for Storytelling:

- Know your audience
- Speak to the heart
- If control is the king, distribution is the Kingdom
- Create a "surround sound" experience – people need to hear things from different sources
- Work with trusted voices: pick the best spokesperson
- Conversation, not content
- Stories work: most people are not driven by facts but rather by powerful stories.

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2018

GWJ Breakfast Briefing #1
Monday, March 12, 2018 7:00 am
Le Pain Quotidien

Our lively session was attended by GWI delegates, GWI members from Canada, the US and Japan, our GWI UN Reps and GWI Executive Director, Stacy Dry Lara. GWI VP Louise McLeod welcomed us on behalf of GWI President Geeta Desai who unfortunately was ill, and then we each in turn introduced ourselves before Dr. Sophie Zaretsky Turner, one of four GWI UN Reps spoke to us. Sophie encouraged us to let people know about GWI and its agenda. CSW is the biggest annual function for women and an ideal venue for exchanging ideas. We need to be thinking seriously about how we are actually going to meet 2030. Everyone talks about poverty and rights but we talk about education, the key to all. That is the way. We focus on world development issues as they relate to education and when we talk about education we need to talk not only about enrolment but also showing up.



GWJ Executive Director, Stacy Dry Lara addressing our Briefing

Indeed this session was a fine opportunity to look further at our GWI UN Reps. Long time UN Rep Polly Woodward has retired and moved out of New York. We are most grateful for her extraordinary contribution over many years. We were introduced to our current ones – Sophie as mentioned, Dr. Maureen Byrne, Mick Minard, and our most recent rep, Maryella Hannum. We learned of the vital role they play to advance the status of women and girls. Their role is paramount to GWI's contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda. They participate as members of the CSW Planning Committee. It is a mammoth job and begins in September with three meetings per month. To constantly improve the annual CSW experience the committee analyzes comments and suggestions

from attendee submissions the previous year. It then works in subgroups *ie* Consultation Day, Handbook, Rally, Artisan Fair, Parallel Events, Logistics and the Zero Draft Documents to prepare for the following year.

Louise McLeod spoke briefly about the Zero Draft Document that GWI had worked on with NGOCSW. She encouraged us to use it as an advocacy document for GWI talking points since GWI was actively involved in its creation. It is important to influence the final outcome document produced by CSW62.

Stacy Dry Lara, the Executive Director spoke about GWI and its role at CSW, and about the delegate reporting procedures. Louise concluded the meeting with a reminder for us to network and to take all opportunities to do so.

Tackling Climate Change Through The Empowerment of Rural Women And Girls

Monday, March 12, 2018 11:30 – 12:45

Ex-Press Bar:

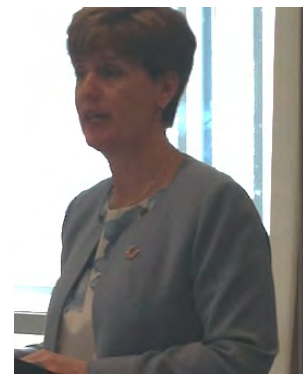


There is clear evidence that climate change is affecting the genders differently. In many cases it is increasing the constraints already placed on women, especially those reliant on agriculture, thus putting rural women at a great disadvantage.

While climate change can be very challenging for women in agriculture, it can also tap into women's vast potential if their important role in adaption is fully recognized and they are provided with equal access to productive assets, markets, climate information, technology and training.

Canada is working with the Kingdom of Tonga to help them develop this concept.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie for Canada spoke about the importance of empowering women and girls as a way to deal with climate change. They are on the front lines of this battle. Forty per cent of the women in developing countries work in agriculture, yet in most of these families the women have no control over the finances.



Hon. Marie Claude Bibeau

She said the world is at a turning point for women. We need to focus on rural women. They are powerful and have such potential for change. Women are in the front line for change and agriculture

must be climate smart. Increased profits through agriculture will lead to empowering a woman who will want to empower her daughters through education. They will not need to marry at a young age. When we empower women we strengthen the family and the community.

Providing dollars through development is important but so is leadership in the areas of peacekeeping, human rights and climate change.

The Head of the Division of Women's Affairs in Tonga said that dealing with the extreme aspects of climate change is the single biggest issue Tonga will have to deal with in the next decade. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is very important to Tonga's future. Rural poverty is a big issue. An aging rural population tries to deal with increasing extreme weather. It is important for Tonga to be self-reliant. It manages now through its farmers, fisheries, and handcrafts. These areas provide income for its population. But the economy developed by the handcrafts is still reliant on agriculture to produce its raw materials. And local agriculture is important to counter the import of less healthy food, which has already brought an increase in diabetes. Tonga looks forward to working with Canada to develop the resilience of women in agriculture.

The next speaker, the Director of the Social Development Programme for the Pacific Community spoke of her organization working closely in 5 locations in the South Pacific to integrate gender equality. Most islands and areas in the region have gender equality policies and climate change and resilience policies, but they all have a distance to go to deliver on these policies. Human and financial capacity restraints delay work on the national level.

To move forward, women need to be engaged in the discussion. How does climate change affect them and how can they deliver resilience? We need to listen to them and we need to strengthen the results at all levels – local, national and regional.

(I could not stay for the conclusion of this session, as I had to walk a distance to the next location.)

What Will It Take To Make The 2030 Agenda Work For Women And Girls?

Monday, March 12, 2018 1:00 to 3:00

Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations

Sponsored by: the Government of Germany, UN Women, and Women Exchange for a Common Future

In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. Comprised of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and 232 indicators, the 2030 Agenda tackles a broad range of global challenges, aiming to eradicate poverty, reduce multiple and related inequalities, address climate change, end conflict and sustain peace.

UN Women's flagship report "Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"



This afternoon's session focused on the recent UN Women's monitoring report, *Turning Promises Into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda*

With the relentless efforts of women's rights advocates from around the world, the commitment to gender equality is broad, prominent, and inter-related. Building on the commitments and understanding contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UNCEDAW), the 2030 Agenda is obvious. Progress will be sustainable only if its benefits apply equally to women and men. Women's rights will only become a reality if they are part of broader efforts to protect the earth and ensure that all people can live in dignity and respect.

The question at this point is how far have we come in turning this new development consensus into results for women and girls? What is needed to bridge the remaining gaps between rhetoric and reality?



The Panel Began to Unveil the Answers

An extraordinary panel included:

Elike Ferneer	Parliamentary State Secretary, Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Government of Germany
Aijzamal Bakaishova	ALGA Rural Women Organization, Kyrgyzstan
Rebecca Grynspar	Secretary General of the Ibero American Conference
Agnes Mirembe	Action for Rural Women's Empowerment, Uganda
Salma Nims	Secretary General, Commission for Women, Jordan
Shahra Razavi	Chief, Research and Data, UN Women
Rosemary Kalapurakal	Lead Advisor on the 2030 Agenda, UNDP

As mentioned in 2015 the global community made a firm commitment to global equality. But achieving it is extremely complex. Women's rights are essential to achieving 2030 and are related as sub goals to many of the SDGs. We have only 12 years to go. Change is mandatory now. Strategies need to be developed.

The CSW brings together much energy, passion and commitment. The challenge is to turn all into action. Good data is needed so we can access progress accurately yet it is really difficult to collect accurate data for some groups, ie migrant women.

Are we really able to achieve sustainable development in rural areas? In Africa and Asia, ¾ of the women who are economically active are in the agricultural sector. Yet what the women earn is not sufficient enough to pull them out of poverty. Many of these women are in the child bearing age and need health care and support. Politics and governance are going to be key ingredients to translate the promises still on paper into action. How can we be sure women now behind are not left further behind by developments in IT and media? Women still without electricity cannot participate.

Jordan has not yet achieved what it has committed to regarding women's rights. It sees the issue more as political, something that has to be negotiated. The shedding of mistrust is going to be very important.

So many of these problems transcend boundaries. Momentum is a special commodity. We must take advantage of this momentum now.

Yet we are in a period of push back in Latin America. At one time it had several female heads of state, now, no one. That is a step backwards. We are fighting not only to go forward, but now, not to go backwards.

The realities stood starkly in the Ugandan report:

- Women are more likely to report food insecurity than men
- Sub Saharan region has the highest prevalence of food insecurity.
- 50% of the female population is food insecure
- In Uganda, 65.8% of the women are food insecure
- Poor rural women depend on a common pool of natural resources and are gravely affected by their depletion
- Women have limited decision making in the household, community and nationally
- Women have less access training and advice, to financial services, education and information
- Yet they have full childhood responsibilities decreasing time and mobility
- Women need to deal with the distance from markets and roads

ARUWE, Action for Rural Women's Empowerment is an active organization in 8 districts with 3,000 women beneficiaries, 11 women trainers and 1 micro credit organization. It promotes and controls natural resources, especially for women. It offers access to financial services. It aims to empower women to engage in policy, advocacy and good governance to establish favourable economic policies for women and girls to thrive.

After extensive monitoring in Uganda, some recommendations were presented.

- Policy-makers should consider supporting more women into leadership positions, for example, land boards
- Make land policy to protect the tenants on the land

This was a superb session with much thought about the challenges of meeting the 2030 deadline.

**Case Studies of Economic Empowerment
of
Rural Women In New Zealand, Australia And Argentina
Monday March 12, 2018 3:00 to 4:14**

Conference Room 11 GA Building

Women's contribution to rural society and the economy has been greatly underestimated worldwide. In this session, a panel of experts from New Zealand, Australia and Argentina focused on successful case studies of women's entrepreneurship, their challenges, and how they overcame them to economically empower rural women.

The panellists were:

Ms Julie Anne Genter, Minister for Women, New Zealand
Ms Kate Jenkins, Sex Discrimination Commissioner Australian Human Rights Commission
Ms Adela Nores, Board member of Sociedad Rural Argentina and Agricultural Producer
Ms Fiona Gower, President Rura Women New Zealand
Ms Joanne Finer, General Manager, New Zealand Industry and Business
Ms Renee Graham, Chief Executive, Ministry of Women New Zealand



While New Zealand has a rural culture, 86% of the population lives in urban areas where the economy is milk, meat, wool, honey and wine. They have a population of less than 5 million to consume all. Many have underestimated the role women play in their economy. New Zealand needs to get more women into leadership roles in the rural sectors. Yet farming is a rapidly changing industry. Farmers earn a lot of money for New Zealand but the industry has environmental costs. As New Zealand struggles with these changes, women need to ensure that they are in the science fields so they can be included in the changes going forward.

In Australia, one third of the women live in remote areas. Domestic violence can be an issue.

An Argentinian lady described how she took over a 10,000 acre cattle ranch 10 years ago and how it has evolved despite the challenges of excessive rainfall one year and drought the next. She was an example of what women can do in rural Argentina but there is need for many more women to be involved. There are 100 universities in Argentina, but only 8 offer degrees in agriculture.

In New Zealand one of the issues for women is the lack of being connected electronically because of the high mountains. There can be a real social isolation for women. Education, health care, employment opportunities and childcare may be at a distance. There is a real connection to the land for rural people. Yet after WWII many New Zealanders moved into the city. What was then 83% of the population being rural, it is now 83% urban.

Farming has evolved and there are many dairy farm cooperatives. There is a move to technology and sustainability and women are more involved. Indeed there is an increasing opportunity for women but they need wider skill sets to include strategic planning and finance.

Rural life is a vicious circle. To stay there the locals need access to health, safe roads, education and housing. Some examples of initiatives by rural women to keep their rural communities were honey businesses, walking tours and tourism. Women need to look at what they have and think outside the square. There are creative opportunities that can provide both the family and community with income not otherwise available in these rural communities. Yet the economy is not the only challenge for women in these rural communities. In addition they can be faced with isolation, violence, and less options for escape. Sexism in farming and mining can be an issue and it is difficult to speak up in a small community. Inheritance can be an issue with properties still going to the sons.

There is now an association, Day Women's Network, to help women move towards an improved role in running the farm. Banks are playing a leading role to empower women.

What is needed in rural communities? Connectivity to Wi-Fi could bring school and college course on line. It is important to understand the value of unpaid work on farms and in the schools and communities. Without volunteers many things would not exist. In volunteering women learn transferable skills. These skills can help to empower rural women as their lives evolve. But self belief is crucial. "I am a mother, I have learned some incredible skills, I can do this job."

Global businesses do have a role to play. The dairy cooperative industry has expanded and is operating now in Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

The rural women of New Zealand are the backbone to keep rural New Zealand alive. We need to ensure the financial tools are there to preserve entrepreneurial ideas. Skills are needed to access funding. We can do it together. Leadership tools need to include self-belief. Networks are important in doing that. You are not alone. We need to work together. As we do so with climate change, an issue so important to the rural country, New Zealanders need to see climate change as the problem, not the "greeners" vs. the farmers. They need to work together

**Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations
Evening Reception For Canadian NGO Representatives
at the 62nd Sesseion of CSW
Monday, March 12 2018 7:00 to 8:00**



*Hon. Maryam Monsef, Minister of Status of Women, Canada,
and Supporter of UWHAW and our Garden Party and myself at the Reception*



TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018

**Parliamentary Meeting At The 62nd Session Of The
Commission On The Status Of Women: Parliaments Deliver For Rural
Women And Girls**

Tuesday March 13, 2018 10:00 to 6:00

Conference Building, Conference Room 3

Inter-Parliamentary Union

This session included many countries and examined existing strategies to bring parliament and rural communities closer together. The Panel tried to amplify the voice of women and girls. How do we do our best to be the tipping point for women and girls?



Hon. Maryam Monsef, Minister of the Status of Women, **Canada**, introduced **Hon. Jack Regan**, Speaker of the House of Commons, Canada.

Both shared with the audience the fact that in Canada an intersectional gender blend is part of all budget and legislative proposals. Diverse voices are welcome around the table. Their voices are morally and economically imperative. This concept of gender equality is also part of Canadian international assistance decisions. Canada

wants to share its philosophy of equality of men and women and its best practices regarding such with others around the world. It is not just the right thing to do but it is the smart thing to do. These steps will define our decade.

Uganda is looking for and using practical mechanisms for amplifying the voice of rural women.

Mauritania expressed the grave concerns it has with education for girls and with finances. Only 10% of the land is owned by women in the country. They have tried to appeal to the government to put forward a draft law on violence against women. The law did not get through parliament. The government is just “not on the same wavelength” but the speaker hopes the law will eventually see the light of day. However, the country has been able to make laws on women’s reproductive rights. What the women need is coordination among departments. There is a problem with the delivery of babies. It is not uncommon for a women to have to walk a few miles to do so. Women do not know their rights about gender equality. They do not understand the mechanisms they can use for political participation. Now only about 20% of the politicians are women.



Senator from France:

Women play a very important role in agriculture around the world but they own little of the land and have little access to travel. It is difficult for women to find internships. Women face real concerns about insecurity in their employment and many have to work in addition in jobs outside their field. Organizing their lives is more complicated in rural areas. They face additional problems with health care, care for young children, and care for women who are victims of violence. More networks are needed to help women who are victims of violence in the rural area. More and more women are getting involved in agriculture. For those there is a need for crop production protection and for maternity leave.

Speaker from the Girl Guides:

Girls need safe quality education in their community. They cannot reach a position of leadership without education. They need to meet Parliamentarians in their communities to work with youth parliaments and to hear their voices are being heard.

WG-USA Lunch
Tuesday March 13, 2018 12:30
Zaika Restaurant

WG-USA welcomed GWI members from all over the world. All who attended appreciated the warmth of WG-USA hospitality once again. I am just sorry I do not have any pictures to share!

Town hall Meeting With The Secretary-General and Civil Society
On The Margins Of CSW

Tuesday, March 13, 2018 1:15 to 2:30

ECOSOC Chamber Conference Building

This session was an opportunity for civil society to engage with the Office of the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and his senior leadership on topics pertaining to gender equality in the work of the UN.

The **Secretary-General** introduced the session by talking about power. We have a male dominated world and a male dominated culture. It is true in every area – government, family and country. Power is not usually given, it is taken. We need to reach as quickly as possible parity within the world.

The Secretary General then referred to three objectives of his work as Secretary-General of the UN:

1. To have full parity at the senior levels of the UN by 2030.

At the top level, the level of the Executive Office, we were 60% men and 40% women. We are now 56% women and 44% men.

The next level down, the Under-Secretary level, now has 23 women and 21 men.



Secretary General Guterres

The third level is the Country Level. Missions here were overwhelmingly dominated by men. Now 1/3 are women.

2. To eliminate sexual exploitation of the people we are there to protect. The power of those that do the selections is huge. Sexual exploitation is prevalent in such places.

3. To eliminate sexual harassment.

A common approach to sexual harassment within the UN is needed as a real priority. Most of the situations are not supported – last year there were only 15 cases reported. Some are afraid to report, others do not trust the system and that they will be dealt with appropriately. Now there is a help-line and victims can confidentially get advice. Zero tolerance must become a reality. It is not fiction.

The rest of the UN session was spent in questions to the SG from the floor. I share now some of the main points of discussion and comments.



There were questions about:

- Help for widows. In many societies widows are considered to be a bad omen
- Help with protecting democracy in countries
- Real student input to resolve important issues
- Reproductive rights and safe abortions
- Women suffering in Mali and the need there for security and development
- Need to deal with US visa challenges for those trying to come to the CSW
- The rape and killing of women in Nigeria
- UN support for women's organizations that are not free or are in camps
- Terrorist organizations

The Secretary General said we needed to be clear about our values. The world needs tolerance with diversity. People are the centre of our society and their rights need to be protected. How can our work be better shared and co-ordinated by the governments?

**Empowering Rural Women and Girls
In Canada and Abroad
Tuesday, March 13, 2018 3:00 – 4:15**

The Government of Canada &
l'Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI)

Conference Building, Conference Room 1

Empowering women and girls is essential to achieving gender equality across the world.

The feminist approach includes the rights of workers to make decisions, the right to own land, the right to live without violence, the right to reproductive health, and sexual rights of women.



Hon. Maryam Monsef, Minister Status of Women, highlighted the diversity in Canada, and Canada's policy of gender equality being part of all proposed legislation and budgets. This vision needs to be applied with rigour, with good data, and with ongoing monitoring. Accelerated change is possible if we work together

The Quebec Minister of the Status of Women confirmed the need for solidarity with other countries.

The Panel focused on:

- Climate change
 - Economic empowerment of women
 - Women facing violence
- Water is a real issue and will become more so.

The panellist from Ghana spoke of the need for women to become more involved in the decision making of a country and then in being able to use the law as a tool. In her country there is a high incidence GBV (Gender based violence). Women are ignorant of the law. There are also cruel traditional practices. Patriarchy exists as well as poverty and illiteracy. Legal and law enforcement support are largely inaccessible to women.

Yet one must continue working for improvements. There are Girls Empowerment Clubs in Ghana and some boys are engaging in *He For She*.

Women Migration and The Refugee Crisis

Tuesday, March 13, 2018 4:45 to 6:00 pm

Turkey, and Minister of Family, Social Policies of Turkey

GA Building Conference Room 11



Panel including Fazia Koofi, (yellow scarf) and Asila EWardak, (red scarf)

Moderator: Dr. Halil Mutlu, physician and Co-Chair of Turkish American National Steering Committee

Opening Remarks: **Dr. Agshin Mehdiyev**, Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations In New York. Women and girls represent more that half the current migrants and refugees.

H.E. Dr. Betul Sayan Kaya, Minister of Family and Social Planning, Turkey:

There is now a worldwide sensitivity for the struggle of women and girls on the move. The number of people forced to flee from their homes across the world exceeded 65 million for the first time since World War II. 22.5 million of these people are refugees. More than half are under 18 years of age. The vast majority of people affected by the armed conflicts and other emergency situations are composed of women and children.

A coordinated response is more important that ever. 3.7 million refugees are in Turkey. They are mostly Syrians, Afghans and Somalis. Many are suffering from psychological and stress disorders. There are single women, sometimes pregnant, travelling alone or with children or elderly.

The Turkish government has been struggling to offer multiple services. The healthcare services play a vital role. It has programmes to deal with victims of violence and the trauma of war, and to rehabilitate women who have lost their relatives. There are information brochures prepared on many topics including violence against women, and on the age of marriage in Turkey.

Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration:

Women and girls may decide to leave home for many reasons. Women are moving as heads of the family and alone from men. This is a new phenomenon in the last decade. The challenges faced by the refugees do not come to an end following the escape from the area of conflict or other emergency situations. Refugee women and children are subjected to multiple forms of violence as well as violations of human rights during their departure, en route, or at their destination. As mentioned women suffer trauma and post trauma as they try to adapt to the new social norms and adjust to loss of family members in the conflict areas.

This feminization of migration has both risks and opportunities for women. Migration can be a source of political tension and human tragedy. We think of these women as victims in many ways but some situations can present opportunities. Yet women can have unusual access to the labour market and can acquire a new social independence. Migration, by connecting societies, enriches the workforce. It can improve economic growth and offer new sources of income.



Asila Wardak, member of Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission: (On a personal note, Asila participated in the Parallel Session I held at the UN in 2014. At that time she was a member of the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the UN. We keep in touch but she has since returned to Kabul and is working for the Afghan government.)

The violation of women's human rights in conflict situations also means the violation of internationally guaranteed human rights and the basic principles of humanitarian law. Fundamental responsibilities fall on the shoulders of the government, international organizations, and non-government organizations to prevent these violations and to empower women in all areas of their lives. United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325 underlines the role of women in conflict resolution and peace building and should be supported and strengthened.

In addition the international community has already acknowledged the need to protect women and children as groups at high risk.

- 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant workers and Members of Their Families
- CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- No. 26, Women Migrant Workers
- No. 33, Gender-Related Dimensions of Refugee Status, Asylum, Nationality and Statelessness of Women
- 2009 Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings
- The 2016 Joint Statement by CMW, CEDAW, the UN Entity for Gender Equality, UN Women and OHCHR
- The 2017 Joint Statement by CMW, CEDAW and UN Women

Currently under negotiation is the Global Compact for Migration. The UN Secretary General has recently urged world leaders to work together on it in order to maximize the benefits of legal, orderly and productive forms of migration while stamping out the abuses and prejudice that make life unbearable for some migrants. Much work needs to be done here.

Thus while the rights of migrant women and girls still need to be improved, an increasing number of them manage to fill labour demands in transiting countries. They are agents of development as they prepare and respond to crisis. We need to see some migrant women not as victims but instead as agents of development. We need to empower them to be a vibrant part of a change for action.

Grainne O'Hara, Deputy Director of UNHCR (High Commission for Refugees), NY Office:

Of the 66million people forcibly on the move today, 23 million are refugees and 43 million are internally displaced people. In both cases, the majority are women and children. Their needs are identified according to age, gender, diversity and focus.



Fawzia Koofi, Member of the Women Consultative Council, Member of Parliament, Afghanistan.

(On a personal note, I met Fawzia when she was in Ottawa a few years ago to talk about her book, *Letters to my Daughters*. She is a remarkable woman and human right's activist and superb speaker.)

Fawzia reminded us that this group of migrant and refugee women and girls need special care and attention. We cannot close the programme and so let us face the problem. What is the root cause of the problem? A refugee loses her country and her dignity. She is at risk of being unemployed and she may be physically affected. Many of the women do not have any money to feed themselves or their children should they have children. What legal status does the child have? Education, health service and food all become problems. Let us encourage our countries to not only support the refugees but to focus on the root causes through conflict prevention and resolution, development aid, and climate mitigation efforts at source countries. Let us sit and talk together, and face the problem.

Open Discussion at the Session:

Turkey has set up **Women for Democracy**. Women are learning Turkish in their centres. They are learning about their legal rights, about Turkish culture, and how it might differ from their own. Three hundred thousand Syrian babies have been born in Turkey. They have received the same services as Turkish mothers and in the schools the children receive a bilingual education. The Turkish women leaders want to show the world the positive image of Muslim women.

A Syrian refugee in the audience was most grateful to the Turks for his reception in their country but asked if the Turkish government would one day push them back?

In conclusion, we need a global approach to address this issue.

Some in the audience stressed that when they heard the Turks talking about the refugees in their country it was like them talking about the refugees in their countries. Ghana, for example, has 2 million refugees.

The **Organization of Islamic Cooperation** has a key role to play.

A significant percentage of international migration is taking place within countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa (most of them members of the OIC) either as a source, transit or destination.

NGO CSW Forum Reception
Tuesday, March 13, 2018 6:00

Rosenthal Pavilion, NYU Kimmel Center, Washington Square

The Reception was a great opportunity to meet and socialize with women from other NGOs around the world, to join in most interesting conversations, and to enjoy the beautiful national dress of many.



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2018

GWI Breakfast Briefing #2
Wednesday, March 14, 2018 7:00 am

Le Pain Quotidien

Our talk Monday on the role of our GWI Reps had been so interesting; we welcomed more on the topic Wednesday. Our GWI Reps champion GWI's mission by participating and reporting on a wide variety of on-mission and emerging topics that are being discussed at the UN by international policy makers. During the year our Reps' work includes representing GWI at the UN General Assembly, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the High-Level Political Forum, and CSW and the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York where GWI contributes to CSW planning.

Our second GWI briefing session included a most interesting talk by GWI New York UN Rep Maureen Byrne on recent UNICEF and UNESCO studies. Every child has a right to survive and thrive, to learn, to be protected from violence, and to live in a safe and clean environment. The world is making a shift in education. Access and attendance in school is not enough. We need to begin to focus more on adolescents and secondary education. Two hundred and sixty-three million children are not in school and there are millions of children in school and not learning. National budgets in education have fallen. We need to close the gender gap in schools for rich and poor, urban and rural. Economic and social rights are human rights.

Dr. Byrne shared with me some further documents and reports she has written. Kindly contact me if you would like copies.



GWI UN Reps Dr. Sophie Zaretsky Turner and Dr. Maureen Byrne
Photo courtesy of GWI

Coffee With Dr. Samar
Wednesday, March 14, 2018 10:00 to 11:00
Millennium Hilton Hotel



Dr. Samar offered to come to my hotel to meet with me before we both went over to the UN

Dr. Sima Samar, Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Right's Commission, founder of Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education for whom we raise funds for girls' scholarships, and our UWHAW mentor, was also in New York to attend CSW as well as meetings with other Human Rights Institutions. We managed to meet briefly for coffee and then walked across to the UN where she participated in a parallel event.

Dr. Samar continues to be so grateful for the work of UWHAW for girls' scholarships at her Gawharshad Institute for Higher Education in Kabul and once again brought a little gift for me to share. She has bought some extra land behind the university with a dream one day to expand! I mentioned that we were looking forward to a report soon from Gawharshad concerning our students and the next day I received it plus several other materials from Gawharshad – there is never any time wasted in requests to Dr. Samar and results! The school was just returning from its winter holidays, which it takes because there is no heating in the classrooms.

We also discussed how best to offer another scholarship to Gawharshad but this time perhaps a postgraduate scholarship for one of our graduates. Recent reports of our graduates showed it was difficult for some to get work without further education and yet few could afford to go on. UWHAW proposes a postgraduate scholarship named in memory of a former and very much respected member of *University Women Helping Afghan Women*, Canadian Federation of University Women-Ottawa, Fran Manning. Details are being worked out and plans will be confirmed in the near future.

But life is still not easy in Afghanistan. Every day Sima has to vary her schedule and her whereabouts. Unfortunately the people in the Embassies now no longer travel outside their parameters because of security and so Sima needs to do more traveling herself. I sense she continues to need to be very careful in her comments as she walks a fine line. Afghan victims of war crimes want investigations and many apply to the ICC (International Criminal Court) of which Afghanistan is a member. But things are slow to move forward. There has been a delay but new judges have just been appointed.

Women, Peace And Security: Challenges And Achievements

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 11:30 to 12:45

Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations
& the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations in partnership with UN Women

UNHQ Conference Room A

This side event focused on Afghanistan's efforts to implement the first ever National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Links were made too to the Government's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment.



Panellists include Dr. Sima Samar, Dr. Milwa Kato, Ms Habiba Sarabi, H.E. Delbar Nazari and Ambassador Mahmoud Saika

There has been a great increase in women's involvement in all areas of Afghan society. Women are more involved in the High Peace Council, in Government, in Education, in the Health Sector, and in the Private Sector.

The Ambassador to the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations, H.E. Mahmoud Saikal introduced the key themes of today's session:

- Women in the peace process
- International support
- And the coordinating role of UN Women in NAP1325

The Ambassador reminded us that the challenges faced by women in Afghanistan today are higher than ever before because of violent extremism.

Yet despite all, women have secured gains in several areas in the last 17 years. However, women still feel discrimination. In addition terrorism directly impedes women's life and freedom and impedes for them access to a life of dignity. We need to address the root cause of insecurity worldwide to provide sustainability.

The Minister of Women's Affairs, H.E. Delbar Nazari, reminded us there was legislation on violence against women and anti-harassment legislation. In order to achieve real and lasting change for the lives of women and girls, there needs to be a greater commitment for the stakeholders of human rights. NAP1325 is an important tool. Women need to be empowered through leadership and participation in NAP 1325. Violence against women and girls must stop. Gender sensitivity policy and equal access to opportunities must become the norm.

The Deputy Director of the High Peace Council, Dr. Habibi Sarabi told us that Dr. Ghani had appointed 65 delegates to the High Peace Council. These were state and non-government stakeholders, and people from all walks of life across the country. Twelve of the 65 were women and they very strong women. They have a strategic plan with a clear mission and equally clear objectives:

- To decide on a peace plan
- To build wide national consensus
- To bring local stability and to
- Promote a culture of peace throughout the country.

The Council has representatives in all provinces. There are 6 committees with two women on each committee. Peace without women's meaningful participation is impossible. However, they still have a lot of challenges ahead including EAFVAW and NAP1325.

H.E. Anne Meskanen, Ambassador-at-large for Global Women Issues and Gender Equality at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the former Ambassador of Finland to Afghanistan spoke. While the NAP1325 was approved in 2015, she suggested its implementation has been relatively slow. The women's share in key government institutions working for peace is slow. The number of women in the High Peace Council and involved in it is relatively low. Finland emphasizes that women and girls should not be viewed as victims of conflict but rather active players in peace development. This is necessary for sustainability. The speaker urged all international donors that are funding the High Peace Council and NAP1325 to make all efforts to include skilled women in the High Peace Council talks. The international community continues to be committed to capacity building. Sexual violence and violence against women and girls must be stopped now. Victims have the right to counselling and assistance. It is essential the perpetrators are brought to justice. Violators against women must know it is not acceptable. We need to involve men and boys in the dialogue and action.

UN Women and NAP1325: thoughts from the Regional Director of UN Women for Asia and the Pacific:

Dr. Miwa Kato:

The Regional Director covers a territory of 42 countries. There is a potential for all to be robust in the implementation of NAP1325. Timeframes, budgets, and responsibilities need to be clear. Civil society should be actively included. NAP must be budgeted so it is sustainable. It must have a robust accountability plan. It has the potential to be a powerful delivery mechanism for women and girls in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan the women talk of peace and security. In other parts of the world women talk about women's empowerment. UN Women is a strong supporter of Afghanistan.



Despite significant progress Afghanistan still faces many barriers including the cut back of international community support, which has been significant.

Comments on Questions from the Floor:

Did women have a voice in the decision to include the Taliban in the peace talks?

What are the mechanisms for dealing with corruption at the government and NGO level?

Two weeks ago it was agreed to include Taliban in the peace process. Women are tired of 40 years of war and want peace.

Corruption and violence remain two huge problems. It is difficult to obtain sustainable results. Some international communities such as Finland support and have confidence in UN Woman and in addition have identified local NGOs they truly respect. A lot of time is spent by groups like UN Women in audits, evaluations, compliance and regulations. It too has a tremendous cost.

And finally from a member of the House of Lords raised the question about equal participation in the decision making of the peace process. Will women equally be at the table? After 40 years of war, peace is needed. Twelve women are on the Peace Council.

Turkey's Perspective on Empowerment of Women In Agricultural and Rural Areas

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 1:15 to 2:30

Turkey Ministry and Family and Social Policies

GA Building, Conference Room 12



This side event shared details of the activities carried out for women in rural areas by various Turkish ministries and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The process involved was a democratic process. Sub committees were established and involved women in rural areas and women with disabilities.

Women living in the rural areas have a significant role to play in Turkey's economy, environment and society. However, women living in rural areas have limited access to education, health services and financial credit. The rural areas are becoming increasingly affected by food shortages, economic crisis and climate change.

In Turkey nearly half of those employed in the agriculture sector are women. Indeed nearly one third of the women employed in Turkey are employed in the agriculture sector. Agriculture is the second largest women's employer in the country after the service sector. Women have in fact contributed immensely to Turkey's position now as the largest agricultural power in Europe.

Activities pertaining to rural women are based on

- CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)
- Conventions/recommendations with the EU, ILO,
- Provisions of the Beijing Declaration
- The National Action Plan on Empowerment of Rural Women (2012-2016)
- Other national legislation

Main policy and strategy papers include employment considerations of women in rural areas both in farm work and in the non-farm sectors. Targets have been set in such areas as poverty, education, health, social security, agriculture production, entrepreneurship, employment, marketing and conservation.

Closing the gender gap in agriculture around the world will improve productivity by 31% and therefore reduce the number of people living in poverty globally by 70%. Women are agents of change and have much potential to close this gap.

Sanem Oktar, President of the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey:

Women are a big untapped potential for economic development. At present the woman's role in agriculture is mostly as an unpaid family worker. However, with more entrepreneurship in this area for women there would be more economic empowerment of women and less migration to the cities. To date there have been few role models but a fascinating video outlined four female entrepreneurs and their accomplishments that led to positive changes in their rural areas.

- One brought farmers and technology together
- One empowered women in her area with honey production
- One brought in tourism by developing walks in the area
- One featured geese and opened restaurants involving others in her area

Such entrepreneurs can be role models and such entrepreneurial efforts can bring in others in the rural area thus expanding the effects in the community.

One of the biggest problems of farmers is finding new markets. Technology can help. Technology can also help with weather predictions.

Turkey started a programme, "Girls in Engineering". It goes to high schools to promote can offer financial incentives and can help with job placements.

Turkey also encourages family planning, has installed paid maternity leave for six months and unpaid but with job security for 2 years, and offers other incentives so every women has a choice about giving birth and her career is protected.

Girls' Education
Wednesday, March 14, 2018 3:00 to 4:15

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Conference Building, Conference Room 1

The Girls Education Challenge (GEC) is the largest global fund dedicated to girls' education. It was launched by the UK Department for International Development to help a million of the world's poorest girls improve their lives through education. It focuses on getting girls into school and learning. By now it has directly supported over a million marginalized girls with a quality education. It has 37 different projects in 18 countries in Africa and Asia. Many of these projects have operated in conflict and crisis areas.

Quality education will make lasting reductions in poverty, will lead to a more peaceful and safe society and will improve the economy.



Kiki James from **Nigeria** and Founder and CEO of ACE African Foundation:

Nigeria is the richest nation in Africa. The government cut the education budget to 5.7%, yet the United Nations recommends a budget of 20% for education. There are many barriers to girls education but there can be many creative solutions.

Picture to left:

Note the beautifully coloured hats of some of the African delegates

Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP, UK

Our project aims to reach the most marginalized girls in the world including in Ghana and in Kenya where teenaged moms are given a second chance to finish their schooling. Students need 12 free years of school, excellent teaching and the elimination of violence in schools. STEM subjects are also encouraged.

Omar Abdi, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director:

Education changes lives. It gives them the tools they need to earn a living and shape their future. 130 million girls around the world have never set their foot in a classroom or they have but have since dropped out. If they do go they are likely to drop out because of family work at home, they doing that so their brothers can go to school. Twelve million girls a year marry before their 18th birthday. We need to get girls into school and keep them there for 12 years. We need to break the barrier that values boys education over girls. Where there is an issue with travel distance, bring education closer to the girls.

Quality education is crucial. Deploy teachers to rural communities and pay them appropriately.

Asyia Kazmi, GEC:

Reminded us not only of the importance of the approaches to learning, but also of the learning outcomes. Evidence shows that even in the most challenging environments, learning outcomes can be both measured and improved significantly. Despite evidence of improved attendance and learning in most projects, we can go further still. The second phase of GEC will support teachers to use proven teaching strategies which will include assessment for learning, and catch-up classes to accelerate girls' learning further.

Ms Magdulena Lagu:

How can we reach out and bring in the hardest-to-reach girls? Disabled children are at a real disadvantage in many countries. The literacy rate for children with disabilities is 3% but for girls is 1%.

In rural South Sudan, almost all girls are marginalized. There are no local schools and there is no transportation to school. Disabled children are usually prevented from taking part in whatever education there is.

SECTION B: Panellists in Discussion:



Camfed works closely with communities and delivers to the most marginalized children.

CAMA: These are young women leading change in communities. We need to come together to make sure we are making progress in keeping girls safe.

Mr. Leland Devon Melvin, Astronaut and NFL

Ms Amanda Nguyen: Her mother was a boat person. She told of her grandfather who did not want her mother going on in school. He started to tear up her books and then some certificates of merit fell out and he realized that she was very bright. He let her continue but then Saigon fell and she had to leave. Here all these years later her daughter is a Harvard graduate and speaking at a podium at the UN.

There is still corporate punishment today in 73% of the countries around the world. Fearful children are not going to learn.

Ms Bordoloi: How do we keep children safe?

Schools need strong governance and leadership. Within the school environment there needs to be codes of conduct. We need to support teachers doing their jobs. We need to create space for girls in school councils etc. We need to have protocols and training in place for protective systems such as sanitation and toilets. We need to engage parents in dialogue.

What is happening in the schools is a reflection on what is happening in the larger spectrum of society. In some societies girls come early to clean the classroom. Boys become the school prefect.

Nigeria is one country making significant progress in education of the girl child. There are mentorship programmes. In the past girls used to stay out of school to sell handicrafts so their brothers could attend but now there are some cash programmes for the girls so they too can indeed attend school. There are some school food programmes so children won't be hungry. Girls can go to school rather than work to provide food for her siblings.

Canadian Federation Of University Women Dinner
Wednesday, March 14, 2018 7:00 to 10:00 pm
Patsy's Pizzeria,



Hally Siddons, CFUW-Ottawa; Sizani Ngubane, Woman of Distinction, South Africa;
Marianne Singh-Warraich, CFUW Burlington

Members of CFUW with other delegations and friends enjoyed the camaraderie of the
CFUW Pizza Dinner.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15 2018

The Road To End Child Marriage In Africa
Thursday March 15, 2018 10:00 to 11:15

Governments of Malawi, Zambia, and Iceland in collaboration with UN Women and UNU-GEST

GA Building, Conference Room 11

The governments of **Malawi and Zambia** have been lead champions at the continental and global levels in efforts to eradicate child marriage with demonstrable progress at the national and community levels, with traditional leaders playing a lead role within communities. Both countries have developed national strategies and launched campaigns to end child marriage (ECM) signalling political will at the highest level, which is critical for the promotion of women and girls and the achievement of the SDGs.

Dr. Esmie Kainja, Principal Secretary, **Ministry of Gender Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Malawi:**



The Malawi government believes early child marriage cannot end if we do not work in partnership. The government is working with a great variety of groups including rural farmers, HIV, He for She etc.

Early Child Marriage is a scourge in Southern Africa. We are here to wipe it out completely. A campaign started in Malawi in 2014.

Minister of Gender, Hon. Jean Kalilni, MP, Malawi:

Education and health make a big difference in a society. In Malawi there is a passion to wipe out child marriage. In 2015, over 50% of girls between 20 and 24 were married before the age of 18 and one in 10 by 15. In 2017, the percentage dropped to 42. In 2017 the minimum age for marriage was engrained in the Constitution as 18. There is an increase in the opportunity for vocational training for older girls. Girls who dropped out of school can now go back, once not allowed because of the stigma attached for pregnancy before marriage. The message trying to be spread by the government is education first, marriage later. Community leaders are condemning child marriage. It is happening now. Hostels are being constructed at secondary schools so girls can avoid long and unsafe travel to school. The government is making sure every primary school girl has a desk. It is difficult for girls to get up from sitting on the floor when they have their periods. They are always worried about any soiling and so it is easier in that situation to just not come to school. There is a need for financial support for girls withdrawing from child marriage to go back to school.

Hon. Victoria Kalima, MP and Minister of Gender and Social Services, Zambia:

Child marriage exposes young girls to many health risks before their bodies are physically and psychologically ready for childbirth. Eighty per cent of the population of Zambia is between 0 and 35.

The government gives cash transfers to keep girls in school. It is difficult for many families to put bread on their tables if they have several children. Thus there has been the temptation and tradition to marry off the daughters, which results in one less mouth to feed.

H.R.Highness attended the session as proof national leaders support the efforts. Child marriage is still rampant in rural areas where some just do not know anything differently. They do not understand HIV or even how it is transferred.

Zambia too has a national strategy on early child marriage. In the speaker's area the rate of ECM is still high but the girls are allowed to return to school after they have had their child and cash transfers are available to help them. She feels poverty elimination is the key to ending early child marriage.

Melawi and Zambia are always learning from each other. They work closely with the World Bank who facilitates the cash transfers.

Ambassador Kristin Arnadottir, Special Envoy for Gender Equality, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iceland:

Child marriage is a grave violation of human rights. Despite legislation it remains widespread in many countries. Rural girls are more likely to get married than their urban counterparts. Iceland partners with Melawi to end child marriage. It recognizes the authority of the native leaders. Iceland encourages knowledge sharing and capacity building. It concludes thoughts with the idea it is most important to accelerate and sustain the current efforts and to continue to break down barriers.

Director of UN Women for East and South Africa:

UN Women is a key player in this area. The entire UN system has come together on this issue. All partners are working together. Ending child marriage is not just a rights issue but it is the right thing to do. Several laws and policies to end child marriage are already on the books beginning in 1948 and since then includes the UN Charter of Human Rights and CIDAW. By 2016 20 African countries have taken action to address the problem.

But despite all there is still a rising incidence of Child Marriage in many African countries. But Ethiopia and Niger are also showing great effort. They are linking high political will with national and local culture and traditional authorities. How do we make this happen everywhere? How do you hold the government accountable and review laws and practices? To marry off or have sexual relations at the age of 10 is not acceptable! We need to do much more to protect the future generations of Africa because they are the future of Africa.



Chief Kachindamato & Stacy Dry Lara, GWI ED

Senior Chief Kachindamato:

Chief Kachindamato has worked tirelessly in her community with families and girls so marriages could be annulled and girls could return to school. A brief but powerful video was then shown to highlight stories and activities that have taken place in her community. One story was of a disabled 12-year old girl whose locked hut was broken into and she was raped. She was not at school because there were no facilities for her. In the end after the birth of her child, the local policy encouraged her to go back to school and she was connected with a teacher who was empathetic and was able to help the student so

she was able to complete her studies and move on. We learned of other girls who had been forced to marry and some have children but who then had their marriages annulled and they were able with cash transfers to return to school. However, more funds are needed to help with this initiative.

Senior Chief Kachindamato mentioned the tradition of “hyena” in parts of Malawi. When a girl has her first period she may be kept out of school a week and her head is shaved. She may then receive a night time visit from a “hyena”, an older man who has sex with her to “clean out the dust” of childhood and prepare them for marriage.

But girls face several challenges in going to school including the cost of school uniforms and the long distance to travel to go to school and not always safe.

Ms Pumulo Mundale, Director, Gender Rights Protection, Ministry of Gender, Zambia:

Zambia has legislation and policies to deal including a National Action Plan to end child marriage. Re-entry to school is another policy. The chiefs are doing a commendable job. Child marriage is a developmental barrier. Zambia and Malawi will continue to work together with a goal of a reduction to 40% by 2021.

Malawi has amended its constitution so the minimum age of marriage is 18, and it continues to review loopholes. They may have won this battle but the war rages on. Laws will need to be harmonized to deal with these loopholes.

A comment from the audience suggested child marriage was not child marriage but gender based violence. But the advocates for child marriage prefer that name. as it conjures a special image and one that has a focus after much work. There is no tolerance for child marriage. We cannot attain the SDGs as long as we have child marriage.

Empowering Rural Women and Promoting Gender Justice in

The Muslim World

Thursday, March 15, 2018 11:30 to 12:45

Conference Building, Conference Room D

Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Islamic Relief Worldwide

Gender justice, understood as gender equality, is a basic human right and one that is enshrined in Islam. It was also enshrined in 1990 in the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights by member states of the *Organization of Islamic Cooperation*. Yet gender injustices are widespread in Muslim societies, through economic inequalities, social and financial exclusion, and barriers to education. From the lack of opportunity for women and girls to harmful practices such as gender-based violence, the injustice against women and girls is a pressing issue that public, private and civil society stakeholders can no longer ignore at any level.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Women Council Member for the Arab Group:

Many countries of the Arab world such as Iraq, Syria, and Palestine are facing terrorist attacks and have dreadful political issues. The situation puts women and social issues in second place.

To solve the problem, a powerful political will is needed and is very important. Religious leadership is important. The media is needed to change the text. The role of women is important, as is the implementation of laws. So too are the roles of the judiciary, civil society, and grass root organizations. Indeed all need to share best practices and knowhow and work together.



Moderator: Dr. Fadila Grine, Saudi Arabia, Director of Family and Social Affairs Department, OIC General Secretariat.

The panel was moderated by Dr. Grine and consisted of OIC Women's Council members from the Arab, Arica and Asia Groups and a Senior Policy Advisor from the Islamic Relief Worldwide.

The Moderator is one of 8 girls in her family and all 8 girls have PhDs!

There may be laws and provisions in place, but policies may not be there to make things happen. Rural societies should be treated the same as urban. The largest sector is the agriculture sector but there is no social protection for them. Tribal laws often negate women's rights. In the Arab region only 4% of the women own land. How can we ensure women in rural space have access to justice?

OIC Plan of Action for Advancement of Women:

This is the work of 65 countries and it is intended to advance women's economic empowerment. It needs to fight poverty, and to increase women's skill and capacity in financial planning and access to funds. A woman may take her husband to the bank to get her money but he may take the money and indeed marry again! But when women do manage to borrow money they are more apt to have a return on the borrowed money.

So far some progress has been made and many OIC Member States have committed to CEDAW. However, media reports the violation of women's rights in the Muslim world more often than acknowledging ongoing progress towards gender equality. Yet, much more action, cooperation and commitment are needed to ensure that social obligations are fulfilled and no woman and no girl is left behind in the Muslim world. These efforts are also needed to promote healthy families.

Conflict, the refugee crisis and humanitarian emergencies create new global challenges. To respond effectively one has to first address the root causes of these problems. All have to be included and protected by meeting gender specific needs.

Islamic Relief:

Empowering Women and Promoting Gender Justice:

Islamic Relief works in 40 countries including Afghanistan. They have an integrated approach and try to increase market tools. They also like to recognize the role of faith.

Africa:

In Africa many injustices result from oppressive cultures especially in the rural areas where there is a high rate of illiteracy. Eighty per cent of the people live in rural areas. Governments have come up with some policies.

Uganda has included gender equality in its constitution. The government provides free education for all. The government has opened up Voice for Women and encourages equity in its cabinet – it now has 45%. In every law a gender lens must be considered. Uganda is an agricultural country and access to credit is important. This can be a challenge for women as is the inheritance of land. Uganda recognizes the importance of dealing with violence against women. Early marriage is still a problem. Only 45% of Ugandans complete primary education. OIC is a very good instrument to deal with these issues. Uganda has 2 million refugees.

A final comment by an attendee was that CIDAW will be the best instrument to deal with the issues.

Agenda 2030 For All: Gender, Learning And Teaching In Rural Contexts

Thursday, March 15, 2018 1:15 to 2:30

Norway, United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI),
ANCEFA, Education International

GA Building, Conference Room 12

Across the world girls and young women are making strides to access and complete their education, Yet for most girls growing up in poor rural areas the vision of quality education remains out of reach. Too many are behind their male peers in completing 12 years of education. Long distances to school, fewer teachers, and fewer facilities are common challenges. In many parts of the world, schools are not safe and supportive teaching and learning environments and the high prevalence of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is a major issue.

Women teachers in rural areas also face significant barriers due to poor living and working conditions, and threats to personal and professional wellbeing. For both male and female teachers, issues of exclusion and isolation can be critical.

Nora Fyles, Director, United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI):

Many factors may affect a girl's education – poverty, school costs, long distances to travel, hunger, gender based violence, poor quality of teaching because of poor living and working conditions, low pay, and the challenge of travelling the long distance that may be involved. Yet there are many examples of innovative programmes.

Taily, Youth Commission, Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas:

Taily talked about the experience of indigenous girls in Brazil. There is not a lot of difference between schools for boys and schools for girls in Indigenous communities in Brazil. In indigenous communities little children do not know how to speak Portuguese. The teacher will move on and not stay the whole year so there is always a turnover. Students need to go out of the community for secondary level. They may be dealing with migration too. Girls sometimes just give up and go back home. But, the number of students going to university is increasing and now women have more university spots than men.

Linda Hofstad Helleland, Minister of Children and Equality, Norway:

How do we respond to the challenge and what reforms and resources are needed?

Education is a key priority for the Norwegian government and includes girls in rural areas. Yet one quarter of women in developing countries do not have primary education. Girls must be our priority or their right to education is not being fulfilled. UNICEF is a key partner to ensure girls get an education of a good quality. Good teachers are important as role models too. Innovative technologies open up new opportunities to empower girls in rural areas. They are a ready resource in 100 languages.



Deputy Secretary Haldis Holst speaks on the panel

Haldis Holst, Deputy Secretary General, Education International:

Haldis talked about rural women teachers. Isolation may be a problem for them. They may not be from a rural area themselves and therefore have to adapt. There may be more male than female teachers and she may need to live alone. She could be scared of the reality of living alone and fears the possibility of violence. She may face poor living conditions and she may have little professional support.

At the same time her work teaching in a rural environment may offer an opportunity. She may need to take on more responsibility and through this can develop herself. This may be a good economic deal. She may be able to give someone a sense she is making a difference. We need policies from the government to address these needs.

Solange Akpo, Capacity Building Manager & Head of Lomé Programme, African network Campaign on Education For All, **West Africa**:

How can a regional body make a difference?

The programme is present in 37 countries. They work with the communities. They have a programme where girls can come back to school after their pregnancy. The cost of community housing may be a challenge yet the role of teachers as role models and leaders cannot be overemphasized.

A child with a disability is often not able to go to school. This is an additional challenge for some girls. 130 children are still not in school.

Urvashi Ghandi, Deputy Director, Breakthrough **TV India**:

Girls in India face many barriers. They have to be saved for early marriage. If a girl wants to go to school it is usually to a government school. Her brother will go to a private school. There is no conversation for most students about their education. Parents do not talk to their children. Girls do not talk to their parents. Girls can't argue against their parents as this is a sign of disrespect. Girls do not talk to their teachers. The discipline is strict and girls must obey. Girls and boys don't talk. Many factors combine to really challenge a girl's ability to go to school – culture, household chores, health, abuse, violence, sexual harassment, and no toilets in the school.

Dr. Rita Bissoonauth, Coordinator, International Centre for the Education of Women in Africa, African Union

In Burkina Faso 78% of the rural women cannot read and write properly.

What is the one critical intervention that will make a difference?

There is a need to end gender inequality. Good quality teachers are needed and they will provide the girls with role models. The schools must be kept safe. **“Flip the system”**. Ask the girls what they need and commit to follow up. Ask the teachers what they need and commit to follow up.

How do you make girls aspire? Beyond education and beyond marriage, what do they want? In India beyond marriage there is not much girls can look ahead to. Collaborate among stakeholders so we can learn from the best practices. We need to invest in higher education and in teacher resources.

India and Africa have the same numbers and the same issues.

Beware: “you cannot script a curriculum from another country and send it electronically”

Joanna Roper, Special Envoy for Gender Equality, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office:
Joanna was also part of the panel and contributed throughout.

**Afghan Government Indicatives and Measures
For The Improvement Of The Rural Women's Situation
Thursday, March 15, 2018 4:45 to 6:00**

H.E. Mahmood Saikal
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Minister of Women's Affairs of Afghanistan

GA Building, Conference Room 12

H.E. Mahmoud Saikal, Ambassador to the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations, introduced the panel and outlined progress made in the rural regions in the areas of economics (handicrafts), education, and health. Despite progress there remain many obstacles, especially for women. There is continuing migration to the cities for work and vocational training.

The event focused on the achievements and challenges of women and girls in Afghanistan with regards to:

- Education
- Political Participation
- Economic self-sufficiency

The discussion revolved around 4 main areas of Government work:

- Refugees and internally displaced people
- Women's contribution to agriculture and economy
- Women's access to education and
- Women's access to health care services

A brief video was presented to bring a message from the **First Lady**.



She said women are present now in most public space – hospitals, schools, public space and private enterprises. They walk with self-confidence and purpose. A new generation of women is on the rise. They are free of political factors. The women need hope as they face the challenges ahead, especially the women in the countryside.

The November 2017 Human Rights Watch Report revealed that the number of girls in school had not really increased. Most farmers are anxious to send their daughters to school but there are not many rural schools. They do want their daughters to attend. Medical service for women is now more accessible, e.g. some 7000 midwives. Now most medical services around the country are within two hours of population. There is growing recourse for sexual violence with an increase in the number of female judges. There are Family Response units now at the local police level.

There is an Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce now with 5 branches. They assist and train women who want to start their own business. Women participate in the High Peace Council and Council of Provincial Women has recently formed.



Panelists include Nasrine Nawa, H.E. Dellar Narari, H.E. Mahmoud Saikal and H. E. Ine Eriksen Soreide

Nasrine Nawa, Chief Executive Officer of Afghanistan's 1st Women's TV Channel: *(far left)*

Nasrine spoke of Zan TV. It is the first television station in Afghanistan to be made for and run entirely by women. The channel employs 50 women to create its daily mix of news, politics and lifestyle shows. "We want women to have an active role in politics and society". The number of female journalists had been declining again in recent years. Zan hopes to change that by giving women more visibility on camera but also more power to investigate and report on important issues facing women. With insecurity and the threat of violence always present she hopes Van will inspire young women to follow their dreams. She hopes the content will inspire the behaviour of men as well. Many women's issues are openly featured and discussed. Television is a safe way to reach women in the rural areas.

H.E. Dellar Nazari, Minister of Women's Affairs:

The National Unity Government has commitments to maintain several policies to empower women. Since 2001 women have paid high prices to ensure hard-won gains are preserved and built upon.

There are 12 women now on the High Peace Council of 65. Women are heard and their rights are given. The High Peace Council works with village groups as well.

There is a wish to empower women socially. The government is working on a policy to help women access financial resources. They are also working on land rights as not many women inherit land. The government recognizes the role of embroidery in Afghanistan and would like to preserve its heritage.

She stressed the need for quality education. The government looks forward to continuing its work with partners and stakeholders. She appreciates the international community for its genuine support.

H. E. Ine Eriksen Soreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway:

We were reminded that a girl in the village has exactly the same rights as a girl in Kabul. We need to secure rights to education. Corruption must be addressed. We need to encourage more girls in school and more teachers. We need to support attendance through community based schooling in rural areas. The overall funding for schooling seems to be declining. Getting girls into higher education seems to relate for having a safe place for them to stay. Norway has extended its strategic partnership with Norway until the end of 2020. The ongoing absence of peace jeopardizes the gains that Afghanistan has made. Afghan women and girls suffer disproportionately. Women must have an important place around the table in the peace Talks and hold high positions in the police force. The female police units need crisis response facilities. No society can afford not to use the full potential of its society.

Ms Saji Behgam, Senior Advisor to the Chief Executive of Afghanistan on Women and Youth Affairs:

There are 627,000 some IDPs, and 655, 966 returning refugees, and over half are women and children. They are living in rural areas and lack access to basic rights. They are faced with domestic violence and poverty. We need to ensure re-integration for these women and develop an action plan for the short, medium and long terms. There must be a form of land distribution for returnees.

Ms. Najiba Nooristani, Head of the Gender Unit at the Ministry of Education, Afghanistan:

77% of students go to school. There has been a 27% increase in primary schooling in 34 provinces. There are 580 projects for the construction of classrooms and increased access to literacy courses. The country is becoming familiar with modern teaching methods.

Dr. Zelaikhwa Anwari, Director of Reproductive Health at the Ministry of Public Health, Afghanistan:

There is an increase in Health Care Services and with Health Care sensitivity for girls.

During the period, 1980-90, the mother mortality rate was the highest in the world. There have been tremendous improvements in the last 15 years. Geographical characteristics of the country lead to challenges but in 2012 there were 500 midwives nation-wide and now there are 5000. But Afghanistan is still sadly plagued by disease, especially polio and tuberculosis. In addition there is drug addiction and there are mental health problems due to 4 decades of war. One third of the country still remains without fundamental services. Afghanistan faces significant challenges but it is confident it can build on its progress to date. It hopes the international community will continue with its contributions.



Dr. Sima Samar, Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Right Commission:

Gender rights is one of the priorities of the country. Access to education is a basic human right. Access to reproductive health will help reduce poverty. Women cannot be successful professionally if they have 12 children. Women need meaningful participation in the peace process – in the planning the negotiating and the implementation. Seventy per cent of the women live in rural areas. To ensure peace we have to focus on the safety of women in the rural areas. Afghanistan needs peace but for sustainability it needs a peace with justice and human rights for all.

In concluding there were questions about how the diaspora can help and how corruption can be dealt with. Corruption is a huge issue but it is not the only country battling such. The World Bank manages the funds for Norway and it does so with great care but there is never a guarantee.

GWI Dinner For GWI Members And Friends
Thursday March 15, 2018 7:30 pm

Il Postino Restaurant
337 East 49th Street

Graduate Women International invited GWI members in New York for CSW to join together for friendship and dinner. It was a lovely evening enjoyed by members from Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Zimbabwe, USA, Canada, South Africa, Finland, Nigeria, Japan, Senegal and Switzerland.



Photo courtesy of Maryella Hannum

Grace Hollett, President, CFUW; Carolyn Cowgill, WG-USA, Dr. Maureen Bryne, GWI UN Rep, Geeta Desai, GWI President, Kathleen Laurila, WG-USA



Judith Saror, Nigeria; Lynne Kent, Canada, Jeannette Mergens, Canada; Chizukp Suzuki
Yumiko Makishima Japan; Neka Chiedoie-Udeh, Nigeria



ilkie McKen, Canada, Gloria Ramirez Hernandez, Mexico; her daughter;
Prof. Jaya Dantas, Australia; Beverley Turner, New Zealand;
Marlene Adam, Canada; Devashree Naidoo, South Africa.



Dr. Ann Denis, Canada; Ruth Mellor, Canada; Nayyar Javed, Canada,
Susan Morrison, Canada; Marianne Singh-Warraich, Canada



Gail Neff , Roberta Balmer, Canada; Leena-Maija Laurén, Finland;
Louise McLeod, GWI VP Marketing and Past President , WG-USA;
Dr. Sophie Zarensky, GWI UN Rep; Cathy Horvat WG-USA



Rokhaya Daba Fall, Senegal; Sarah Murdock, WG-USA; Fay Weber, President WG-USA;
Dr. Shirley Gillett, New Zealand; Shingie Mugaviri, Zimbabwe; Hally Siddons, Canada

The photos from our dinner were shared by Maryella Hannum. Thank you, Maryella. I am just sorry we do not have to include of Maryella.

#Metoo – Now What? Women In The Media: From Outcry To Action

Friday March 16, 2018 11:30 to 12:45

ECOSOC Chamber



Recent events have revealed the scale of gender discrimination and sexual exploitation of women in the media industry. The magnitude of the scale of sexual harassment cases that have surfaced in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein case demonstrates the culture of discrimination against women and girls that permeates every aspect of society.

While women represent half of the world's population, less than one third of all speaking characters in films are women. Only one fourth of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news are female.

Norway, UN Women, and The Guardian joined forces to put on this superb parallel event. What is happening is a revolutionary change. How do we keep the momentum going? How do we ensure it does not fall back?



The first speaker was British actress and activist, **Sienna Miller**. As a young actress she continually fought harassment but a few years ago began to stand up. She told a powerful story about being offered an exciting role in a Broadway play as 1 of two actors. She discovered though that she was being offered half the wages offered to her male counterpart. It was a very hard decision as she really wanted the role and the acting opportunity, but in the end she rejected the role on matter of principal. Sexual harassment can happen to anyone. Being treated unfairly cannot be an expected and accepted role for women. Women have the power to speak up.

A superb four-member panel then discussed the topic.

The panel included:

- Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director
- Pamela Sittoni, Managing Editor of East Africa, Nation Media Group
- Fatemah Farag, Founder of Welad el Belad, Director of Women in News in MENA region
- Matthew Winkler, Co-Founder & Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of Bloomberg News

For the first time we are really seeing men become accountable. We understand their behaviour is not acceptable. It is important that we all use the platform to speak up. The Egyptian journalist is delighted with the momentum here. The #MeToo movement has momentum for woman around the world. To come forward can be very dangerous but it can empower you and others for the future. The #Me Too movement is shocking for the women in Africa. They did not imagine it was happening on the scale it was. The time to move this conversation to Africa is now

Matthew Winkler said the #MeToo event was the most profound event he has ever observed. Every aspect of every community will be affected. It really is equal opportunity.

In management roles in East Africa women are outnumbered 10 to 1.



Phumzile observed that when women have power they do exert it. More men need to be paying attention to this issue. Too often we are just preaching to the converted. Phumzile is a remarkable woman, having lived and survived so much including her struggle to end apartheid in her home country of South Africa. It is always a privilege to hear her speak. She does so tirelessly and is making a difference.

Fatemah confirmed it was difficult to be a journalist in Egypt. It is difficult for a woman to be promoted and to have influence in any field, let alone in journalism. Yet women continue to strive to reach the glass ceiling. They are on the outside. There is a network that makes decisions in all areas, be it journalism, restaurant and coffee shop business etc. Fatemah is treated like a man. She can go to events and never see a woman.

Winkler said he and his paper welcomed #METOO as it was something well underway for some time.

Phumzile urged us to stay with the story. This is key! We must not lose the momentum. We need to bring in men and stop dealing with this as if men were a separate topic.

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI's) Advancing Gender Equality and The Rights of Rural Women and Girls

Friday, March 16, 2018

Rights Institutions at the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN



The National Human Rights Institution is an independent institution bestowed with the responsibility to broadly protect and promote human rights in a country. The growth of such bodies has been encouraged by the Office of UN High Commission for Human Rights. There are over 100 such institutions, each of whom must comply with the principles set out in the Paris Principles. The NHRI is the principle instrument for all those working on human rights.

Chair Ms Florence Simbiri-Jaoko, reminded us the NHRI objective was human rights for everyone. This year with the CSW the focus is on human rights for women and girls and especially in the rural areas.

Several countries joined together to present this side event – Afghanistan, Australia, Chile, Costa Rico, Germany and Norway.

Chile announced that for the first time Chile has committed to a National Plan for Human Rights. It is a four-year plan, has 600 actions and focuses in 16 areas. One of the areas is rural women. It will be enforcing the empowerment of women allowing them to do much including improving their skills.

In Costa Rico there is strong support for the Human Rights agenda both nationally and internationally. As everywhere, women and girls are more vulnerable to the violations of human rights.

Two women, Kate Jenkins and Dr. June Oscar reported for Australia, one on gender equality and the second on the Aboriginals and Islanders. In Australia there is a real focus now on sexual harassment in the workplace. It can be harder to escape from this in the rural areas because there are no shelters and few to help. The women could live in poverty, be older, be younger with little children, or be abused. A new project, **Women's Voices** written in the local language is a new project that focuses on the rights of women and girls in the rural areas.

The Australian government is urged to implement the policies to bring change to and for generations to come. It is vital these women's voices are heard so that we can develop policies to help them achieve their aspirations. The network in place will help make voices heard and contribute to a rich and vibrant nation.

Dr. Sima Samar, Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and Chair of the Asia Pacific Network. The objective of the Commission is to promote, protect and monitor human rights. Vulnerable groups of people suffer more.

Dr. Samar mentioned the success and visibility gained from the International Women's Day March in Kabul.

She then referred to her recent report, *Situation of Human Rights of Rural Women and Girls in Afghanistan*, March 2018. In Afghanistan 70% of the women live in the rural area. Women are often left alone in the rural areas while their husbands go off to urban areas to find work.

One of the reasons the violence continues is that the country is poverty. Quality education is the key. Eight Million children go to school but the quality of education is not as good as people desire. The quality and access to health care is improving but still everyone does not have access to health care.

Access to contraception is also very important. A woman should have the right to choose how many children she wants. Education and contraception affect children. With contraception a couple can control the number of children they have. Fewer children can reduce poverty. With not as many children to feed parents will not have as much pressure to marry off their eldest daughter(s) to cut down on the expense of living. They will have more money to buy food and to let not only a boy go to school but hopefully a girl. The law in Afghanistan says a girl must be 16 to marry. There is a law to prevent violence against women but it still has to be passed the parliament. The elimination of polio throughout the country would be an indication of the improvement of health services in rural society. There are now 3500 women in the police force but most are not in the rural areas. Those that serve in

the police force are still not at the decision making level yet they might be requested to make tea for the other officers. Women are participating in the Peace Process. Yet they must be part of the planning, negotiations and implementation process. Dr. Samar closed by thanking the international community for its help thus far. She hopes it will stay with Afghanistan and help it bring justice to the perpetrators.

Germany commented that it hopes the NHRI resolution will get the support it requires.

The Afghan government acknowledges the kind of problems the women in Afghanistan have. This is largely due to the fact that Dr. Samar persistently visited the government frequently to ensure they understood. The issue of women is important. There is no place for complacency any longer as the scope of the problem is so big. The women kept the total fabric of Afghanistan together during 40 years of war.

Having such a strong International Human Rights Commission in Afghanistan has provided the organization with good data. As a result all are making progress. Yet there still is resistance in Afghanistan. The UN is the guardian of Human Rights. We need to stand united and strong. Fight for us. We did not give. It is our right to have human rights.

Education is key. When families are larger, there is more poverty. The family may end up having to sell a child for money for the others.

Religion can still be a conflict. NIHR tries to educate religious leaders. Through education we will all be able to change. Some are talking to us and accepting what we have to say. Still others are hanging out.

Concluding Thoughts

I was delighted to once again attend a CSW. It is a powerful, inspiring, and thought-provoking experience and I am grateful to GWI for providing me with the opportunity. It is a privilege to work with GWI and in its professional and welcoming environment.

The CSW week whizzes by at a frenetic pace. My notes help keep me focused and ensure at the end of the week all is not just a blur! They provide a useful reference in the weeks ahead and in the meantime I am happy to share them with anyone interested.

The CSW62 theme, *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls* permeated all events. For some time we have been focusing on empowering women and girls through education which fits so beautifully with GWI's mission, but this CSW added a powerful further dimension – *rural* women and girls. The week was indeed a shocking and sobering reminder for me of the staggering extent and depth of poverty in our world and of the lot of so many women.

We know education changes lives. It gives tools to earn a living and shape a future. Yet 130 million girls have never set foot in a classroom or if they have, have not stayed. Poverty is a huge issue, especially in rural areas. Migration and climate change are two other issues that effect women disproportionately to men and especially rural women.

Girls are likely to drop out of school to do family work at home. With large families they must work to provide food for the rest of the family. When the younger children in the family can do the work, the older girls are married off so there are fewer mouths to feed. Twelve million girls a year marry before their 18th birthday. Poverty plays a huge role in these circumstances and this is especially true in rural areas where there can be extreme poverty and no opportunity for additional revenue.

Forty per cent of the women in developing countries work in agriculture, yet in most of these families the women have no control over the finances and do not own the land. They are fortunate if there is any kind of family planning or health care available but for the most part they have no social benefits, minimum wage, no protection against family violence or prostitution, and the infrastructure, especially regarding water, and sanitation, is atrocious. How can education reach these women giving them the opportunity to finally break through and eventually empower themselves and their daughters?

Yet there is hope and many of the NGOs at CSW are the movers and shakers in their countries back home. They have incredible courage, vision, drive and resilience. They learn from each other and are grateful to the United Nations for bringing them together. The Agreed Too Conclusions will keep them going while we advocate our governments to work as we can and keep their stories alive.

