



# CSW63 GWI Delegate Report: Consultation Day CSW 63

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Chair Resolutions Committee Graduate Women International

The Paprika girls' drum band gave us a rousing start. (I sent a pic to GWI via email) saying among other things that "we won't be quiet, we will work it out." The MC told us we were the largest CSW ever with 6000 NGOs registered and 3000 delegates from government, 400 plus events and 5 regional caucuses. The theme this year is social protection systems which are essential for women's equality. We need free health care, and education, pensions and basic incomes put in place by national governments and solidarity of rich and poor, financed by taxes. Tax cuts lead to poor social services. The first 10 SDGs deal with social protection. Susan O'Malley was in the chair for the last time of her 4 year tenure.

Two speakers, the ED of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ireland's ambassador to the UN, spoke to us, together with a representative of the ILO.

Social protection will empower women. We created UN Women for this reason. Care is underrepresented. Goal 5 deals with unpaid care which oppresses most women.

Infrastructure of care is non-existent. It must be placed in in the context of macroeconomics. It is an obscure issue. The care of children and the elderly should become mainstream,

Government funded social infrastructure enables a safety net and is needed for women to take their rightful place in society. Social protection is a safety net that levels the playing field in the labour market otherwise female grads or male caretakers will drop out.

The ILO worked on this for a long time Women get the penalty and men the reward. Maternity benefits and child benefits legislated is one thing but implementation is another. Civil society makes a difference. Social protection is a big budget item The OECD spends 20% of its budget on it.

We are breaking new ground politically. We are in a different environment. Sovereignty and sex are divisive but we are looking for power over ourselves, not power over men. We want to free up women's time and headspace.



The Me Too movement and the ability to use tech to feel empowered is a channel to get there. The support of others is therapy and clears the space to tell our stories. Men come to UN Women for help about harassment policies. The workplace must be safe. Sexual harassment is a fire for women every day. It is important to realize that without ID or a birth certificate it is impossible to access social services. We must demand implementation. Many important anniversaries are coming up UN Women 10, Beijing plus 25 By 2030 we must achieve milestones. The Me Too movement woke up young women and raises the volume. The obstacles are interlinked. The UN agrees on nothing till everything is agreed on.

Culture is oppression as are climate change and migration. We need agreed outcomes but it is hard going so far. We must engage with our country's delegation and raise the volume to drown out the forces that will take us back. We have more access via technology. Bombard them!

**Women of Distinction Award** went to a 22-year-old Afghan woman, Gharsanay Ibnul Ameen, now special assistant to the president of Afghanistan. She told us she studied from 5am till 7pm to get into the American University in Kabul. 17 girls applied from her school but she got in. We need capacity building at the grassroots level, she said.. We want change She led a young women's leadership conference of 1000 .We need to increase girls' enrolment, discard old attitudes to menstruation. She leads 14-19 year olds and spoke without fear to Afghan leaders. She spoke of the larger number of women now enrolled. At least one third is being educated which will make them healthier and wealthier. She stressed that we need to work together and empowered women must stand with the rest of the world's women who are not so privileged. Connecting women's voices is important.

We were then treated to some **rap poetry**.

Some notable thoughts seized during its rapid fire delivery::

Creativity is the antidote to destruction

The game does not exist if we don't play by the rules

**Panel discussion** with 4 speakers ,chaired by Canada's senator and law professor, Marilou McPhedran

## 1. Definition

The ILO It is 100 years old. Peace needs social justice; therefore social protection which protects and empowers. The definition would be a set of guarantees for life. What kind of system do we need? A hand- out? No, a safety- net, which must be anchored in



law and not subject to politics. How to finance it? Overpromise is not sustainable over time. is the problem. We are in the midst of a global revolution. What took Europe 50 years, took South Asia 15 years. 40% of people receive family benefits. The second version of the agreed conclusions is very weak. Do not lower the bar. Commit the care economy to social protections

## 2 context

We live in a world of rising inequality. A new billionaire is created every 2 days, not as a result of hard work but mostly through inherited wealth. Women working in clothing companies make \$5,- a day. 100 Million people go bankrupt over health problems. Corporations get tax breaks of 450 Billion dollars annually. They are not paying enough tax but they have political purchasing rights. 26 people own as much as the bottom half of the world's population. Governments can change this with democratic decision making. Government can provide universal public services of health and education. It can have gender responsive budgets to help women obtain their rights. Unions push for minimum wage.

3. Chrystal from Kenya talked about **women's rights and macroeconomic policies**. A hospital was built in the capital with PPP. It took half the health budget so it came at the expense of rural health. Is that effective? It is driven by the private sector and if it is not profitable it is off the table. We need qualitative data not just quantitative. And evidence based models. We need a model which works for everyone.

4. **Case study** .Corina from **Argentina**. It has a high level of poverty and inequality and sexual division of labour. There has been a lot of progress in the last 30 years. There have been cash transfers to women for the first time ever, pension reform, extended coverage and a minimum basic income. Women in Latin America have very active feminist organizations.

She spoke of Resolution 1325 women peace and security and resolution 2250, youth, peace and security as instruments to achieve social security. We need a universal basic income. It is expensive but not as a way of giving up work, not a replacement for social protection. Workers must have rights, a living wage and bargaining power. Companies should be responsible to workers, not shareholders In a weak labour market, a guaranteed income is a roof not a floor. The impact of tax breaks has been bad. What does fair taxation look like? Tax avoidance is done through legal loopholes. It is considered smart We should identify and close those loopholes. At the domestic level, we should use a wealth tax not the VAT (GST in Canada) which taxes the destitute.



Taxes should be distributive. Progressive taxation collects and distributes. Civil society should use stories, not stats which are less effective. It is the multinationals that are bleeding Argentina dry; corruption only accounts for 5 per cent, the multinationals for 65%.

We must create a counter narrative. The private sector can create employment. We need data and a plan, a global alliance for tax justice..

Create events on tax issues. Stress the multiplier effect of tax rates. For each dollar invested we get 28\$ back.so social protection is not a cost but an investment which contributes to growth. We need justice from the World Bank, a Human Capital Agenda. Health and education are fundamentals of justice. Dignity before development!.

**Cities for CEDAW** Make the global local. Lopa Bannerjee from UN Women spoke to us about Beijing 1995, a mammoth event, with 30 000 NGO delegates and 17000 government representatives. It was a global commitment to equity

Now there is strife, strain and crisis, polarization There are 740 million women in the informal economy without any protection. Women do 2.6 x more unpaid work than men One third face violence. There are many countries without GBV programs. There are rollbacks on gains. Women need voice, choice and freedom from harassment. Multilateralism is under attack. 2020 will be a confluence of celebration so seize it to create momentum. We want no GBV, no restrictive laws. How to do it? Identify deficits, plug the gaps and address regression and demand ACCOUNTABILITY. Reviews of Beijing will take place in May 2019. CSW 64 and the Global Women's Forum must be led by young women.

## **Panel on taxes**

Taxes sustain and finance the welfare state which invests in service providers.

The plight of widows: There are 300 million.53% under 39 with young children and child widows. Without a death certificate there is no access to benefits. They lose access to land in Africa, often lose their kids. They are part of the estate and can be married off to a brother. They need access to a death certificate and income. A widow loses voice also.

Iceland, a sharp contrast. They have a new law as of Jan 2018. Employers must prove non discrimination.

Nepal's Dalits, formerly known as untouchables, suffer from poverty, child marriage, social norms, perceptions rather than facts.. Public media announcements and social media are the ways to communicate with their community.



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