



Women's

Federation for World Peace International

United Nations Office Newsletter

Spring 2010

**Sharing of Good Practices to Achieve MDG# 3:
Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**
Parallel Workshop at UN 54th Session on the Status of Women, Beijing + 15
Cosponsored by WFWPI and WFWP Europe
March 2, 2010 - United Nations Church Center, New York



By *Motoko Sugiyama*

The panelists presented good practices from grassroots efforts and experiences to achieve MDG #3. These diverse speakers shared their experiences in the areas of education, training, income generating activities to fight poverty and a successful women's dignity campaign.



Moderator, Ms. **Motoko Sugiyama**, VP and Director of UN Office of WFWP

International opened the meeting before a standing room only crowd. She welcomed and introduced WFWP International President Prof. Lan Young Moon Park and delegations from Japan, Europe, Asia, Africa and USA and gave brief biographies of the four speakers.



Dr. Nessim Ndivi-Hill, Professor of Essex County College in New Jersey and President/ Founder of Gender and Development Inter-Action Global Organization (GADIAGO) examined the status of women in higher

education in her home country of Cameroon. She stressed that investing in women via higher education and training yields large social and economic returns and breaks intergenerational cycles of poverty with long term benefits for poverty reduction. However there are barriers to women achieving higher education including socio-cultural factors, high tuition costs and other fees and constraints to access and enrollment. She recommended that policies and program reforms and intervention must influence higher education in a cost effective manner and include internal government policies and the grassroots level. Universities should build partnerships with businesses in order to help fund education for women and provide them decent employment. Women's organizations should conduct workshops to train women in micro-credit schemes and financially sponsor higher education for women. She concluded that the lack of women in higher education is a global concern and catastrophe and it needs immediate intervention in order to promote gender equality, empower women and save humanity.

Ms. **Keiko Nozaki**, Vice Project Director of WFWP Japan for Senegal gave a power point presentation on the JAMOO Project, Social Self- Support Assistance Center in

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Senegal. She introduced the present economic situation of Senegal. GNI per capita: \$820 USD, Unemployment rate: 48%, 17% of the people live on less than 1 dollar a day; and the adult literacy Rate:

52 % (for males) and 33 % (for females) (Data 2006-2007). She explained how the project began. Ten WFWPI volunteers from Japan went to Senegal in 1994 to research and identify a project to help women in the country. The volunteers decided to open the Social Self-Support Assistance Center in November 1995, naming the center "JAMOO" which means Bringing Peace- in Wolof, a Senegal dialect. The curriculum for four courses: 1. Embroidery 2. Knitting 3. Sewing 4. Homemaking Education has been developed over the years. Students acquire all skills within four years. Women age 12-40 years old are eligible to apply. Students pay \$5 per month, part of the education material fee. Graduates receive official government certificates. Since opening the center in 1995, a total of one thousand students enrolled and were trained.

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Statement of Purpose

The Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) supports a network of National WFWPI Chapters worldwide.

WFWPI Chapters adhere to the principle that women, working together, taking initiative and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture and religion to create healthy families, are resolving the complex problems of our societies and world.

Ultimately "solutions" come as *true* partnerships between men and women are established in all levels of society. The beginning point is within society's most elemental level—the family.

Peace then expands into our communities, nation and world. Therefore, WFWPI works to provide women worldwide with:

the knowledge, tools and support needed to create peace at home, peace in our communities, our nations and our world.

WFWPI International is a non-profit, non-governmental international organization in General Consultative Status of ECOSOC and DPI Associates with the United Nations

Motoko Sugiyama

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At the UN in New York...

Reports of NGO Briefings

Global Action to Seal the Deal on a New Climate Change Agenda

November 12, 2009 - UN HQ, New York

By *Cynthia Shibuya*

Moderator Eric Falt, Director of Outreach Division, DPI opened with background information and an explanation of the meaning of "Seal the Deal". In April, 2009 Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon, launched the UN's International Climate change campaign under the title, "Seal the Deal". This is a campaign to mobilize political leaders, the business sector, NGO's, women's groups, youth organizations and the civil society around the issue of climate change to ensure that an effective climate agreement is reached when governments meet on this issue December 7-18, 2009 in Copenhagen.

H.E. Dessima Williams, Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN opened with thanks for gathering this briefing and also to Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon for his tireless efforts towards a new treaty on climate change. She then spoke with much passion from her first-hand experience. "We need significant public outreach. We need an explosion from the base. On December 18 we want to see a legally-binding outcome (with emphasis on legally-binding). Why legally-binding? Because the situation is urgent, requiring a high level of commitment." She spoke about the alarming climate change results in the Islands such as

floods, mudslides, hurricanes, drought, etc. and called for increased funding and technical capacity building.

The next speaker, Jean-Marc Mangin, Executive Director of the Global Campaign for Climate Action showed us his powerpoint about Tck tck tck – Global Campaign for Climate Action (GCCA), a website produced to create a global movement calling for a global involvement in Copenhagen. "Time is of the essence to take action. Heads of State need to step up." Mr. Mangin also called for a legally-binding treaty, reducing emissions and shared technology to support small nations. He urged everyone to join the campaign and to call on Heads of State using the GCCA website tools.

The next speaker, Michael Allegretti, Senior Advisor for US Policy at the Climate Group urged us to contact our Senators and Congressman regarding the new treaty in Copenhagen. He called for global funding, a cap on emissions and reduction on deforestation. "Now the economy is pushing climate change down the priority list. The public should put pressure on the government."

The fourth speaker, Molly Hellmuth, Director of the Climate and Society Publication

Climate Change *continued on pg. 12*

Healing Wounds, Reclaiming Lost Lives:

Consequences of Female Genital Mutilation
November 17, 2009 - UN HQ, New York City

By *Cynthia Shibuya*

Moderator, Maria-Luisa Chavez, Chief NGO Relations Cluster opened the session stating that violence against women is the most pervasive human rights violation. She then read the official description of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Traditionally FGM has been thought to be a problem mainly in Africa but the practice is happening globally including the Middle East, Asia, Europe and North America in ethnic communities.

Dr. Nafissatou Diop, UNFPA-UNICEF FGM/C Joint Programme Coordinator gave an eye-opening explanation that FGM is considered an important and beautiful tradition. The cultural belief is that FGM will create a high-quality woman of virtue. Families within this cultural belief truly believe that FGM creates a woman of chastity and beauty. FGM is a highly treasured tradition and a social norm. Eradication of this practice takes sensitivity and a very nonjudgmental approach. Traditionally, cutting is done between 4 and 8 years old. Immediate consequences can be complications, infection and possibly bleeding to death. Long-term consequences are adverse

Obstetric outcomes such as painful intercourse, life-threatening labor, C-sections, painful urination and/or incontinence and life-long trauma. Dr. Diop feels education is the best method to address the issue. Ending FGM will contribute to child survival, reduce mortality of women, reduce discrimination and increase women's empowerment. To eradicate FGM, strategies involving the medical community, politicians, schools, NGOs and religious leaders are needed. The practicing community should be approached in their own language with the utmost sensitivity. Partnership is key.

Dr. George Kam Kam, Fulbright Scholar at Lehigh University is working with the Ministry of Education in Ghana on FGM. The World Health Organization (WHO) began steps to eradicate FGM in the 1960s. Dr. Kam Kam reported that currently, although cutting is done for the sake of dignified marriages, because of the adverse consequences of FGM, many young girls are running away to southern Ghana. As a result, FGM is done "underground" and in a crude way. The cutting is also being done to

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Unite to End Violence Against Women

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon's Launch of Network of Men Leaders

November 24, 2009 - UNHQ, New York City

By Cynthia Shibuya

The purpose of the Network of Men Leaders is to include men as part of the solution to ending violence against women. "The Leaders in the expanding Network are current and former politicians, civil society and youth activists, religious and community leaders, cultural figures and other prominent individuals. They will work in their spheres of influence to undertake specific actions to end violence against women, from raising public awareness, to advocating for adequate laws, to meeting with young men and boys, to holding governments accountable," the Secretary General explained.

Pamela Falk of CBS News, Moderator, opened the session with welcoming remarks. After introducing and welcoming the speakers and guests, Ms. Falk introduced the session. "Violence against women and girls is pervasive and is discrimination against women and girls. A shocking 70% of women and girls worldwide will experience violence in their lifetime. Ban Ki Moon has been traveling extensively after beginning his initiative last year for the sake of this cause."

The following are some highlights: Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon: "Violence against women and girls in today's world should fill us with shame. I speak and act as a father, brother

and grandfather. Rape as a war tactic will not be tolerated. I asked governments to give forces to address all forms of violence against women. 70% of violence against women is performed by close relatives. Unless we change attitudes, violence will continue. We must continue to widen the circle of engagement. I'm launching today a Network of Men Leaders to add their voices to the growing cause and create partnerships with women. I call on men and boys both. If you see violence – act! Violence against women will not be eradicated unless we all take action. For my part, I commit everything in my power. Today I ask all of you to join in helping in your own unique ways."

H.E. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain. (Written statement read by:

Unite to End Violence, contd. on pg. 10

2010 NGO Global Forum for Women: Beijing +15

February 27-28, 2010 - The Salvation Army Greater NY HQ, New York

By Merly Barrete-Barlaan

Prior to the 54th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York (NGO/CSW NY) organized an NGO Global Women's Forum to review progress toward implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A thousand NGO women (and a few men) leaders from around the world participated in the forum. The purpose of the forum was to orient NGO representatives to the CSW and to give voice to women representatives from around the world in identifying obstacles to gender equality, advancement and empowerment of women and girls, as well as identifying strategic objectives and actions needed.

On Saturday, Ms. Vivian Pender, Chair NGO/CSW/New York warmly welcomed

participants. Keynote speaker, Dr. Sima Samar, Chair of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, remarked that the Beijing Agenda has progressed but there is much to do. Dr. Samar added that education is the tool to empowerment of women in her country. Afghanistan lacks access to good quality education and healthcare. The government does not intervene in forced marriages, trading of girls, and family disputes.

Panel 1: Advancing Women's Rights, 1975-2010: What The World Conferences On Women Accomplished was moderated by Ms. Jan Peterson, Chair-Secretariat of the Huairou Commission. According to Ms. Gertrude Mongela, President of Pan African Parliament, Tanzania, women in history have always been in crisis, so we must keep moving until we reach the goal. Ms. Mongela

also strongly urged correction of the trend of spending billions on war instead of education and health of women. Dr. Patricia Licuanan, President, Miriam College, Philippines stated that women have learned from their successes and failures in the past 15 years. Dr. Licuanan noted that collaborative process leading to the Beijing conference demystified the process of UN meetings. She emphasized that the world conferences on women helped establish the States obligations to protect and implement rights of women. Ms. Charlotte Bunch, Founding Director and Senior Scholar, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University, USA, stated that the world women's conferences transformed the women's movement by giving voice to issues women are raising around the world. She also expressed the need for UN gender architecture reform. She noted that the conferences on women have legitimized intervention of women with

Global Women Forum, continued on pg. 11

International Women's Day 2010

Watershed for Women's Human Rights and Empowerment - UN HQ, Geneva

By Carolyn Handschin

In her opening remarks, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay called on participants to be creative in proposing ideas to strengthen the Human Rights Council's work. The essential questions on this 100th anniversary commemoration of International Women's Day (35th since declared in 1975 at the UN) was how to improve coordination of existing UN mechanisms, assure effectiveness of emerging ones and integrate women's rights into the human rights system. WFWPI was a lead organizer with International Federation of University Women, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Zonta International of this annual event of CONGO's Committee on the Status of Women in Geneva (NGO-CSW). Carolyn Handschin, Deputy Director of WFWPI UN Office was conference coordinator.

The session was opened by President of the NGO CSW, Conchita Poncini. As the first panelist, the High Commissioner explained tremendous advances for women over the last century, such as the reporting process established by the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1994 Declaration on the "Elimination of Violence against Women". She also reminded us of recent Security Council Resolutions (SCRes) 1820, 1888 and 1889, which build on the groundbreaking SCRes 1325, assuring women's rights to participation and protection in post-conflict situations. Awareness about violence against women has been raised considerably due to establishment of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in 1994 and recently, by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Although most



Bineta Diop, Femmes Africa Solidarite; Stephanie Joubert, Cordaid; Annelise Ebbe, WILPF; Krishna Ahojapatel- VP, NGO CSW- Geneva; Natalie Fisher Spalton- World YWCA; Joanina Karugaba, UNHCR; C Handschin, WFWPI

countries have national mechanisms in line with those at the international level, obstacles to the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and achieving gender equality persist.

Ms. Pillay explained one area of least progress in realization of the MDGs has been Goal # 5, maternal health. Recent statistics show two thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women. Downward trends have deepened during the global economic crisis. "Stereotypical attitudes regarding gender roles remain deeply rooted." She applauded the Human

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Challenges to Gender Equality in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Leading up to Beijing +15 | October 30-31, 2009 - UN HQ, Geneva

By Conchita Poncini, President, Geneva NGO Committee on the Status of Women

The Geneva CONGO Committee on the Status of Women (NGO CSW) organized an NGO Interactive Roundtable on Challenges to Gender Equality in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Region in the Context of the Present Economic Crisis in conjunction with the ECE Region Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting to Beijing +15 on Review of Progress of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Several hundred women from throughout the region and North America gathered and negotiated recommendations on the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. Progress in policies and instruments in various agencies and programmes of the UN has occurred, but gender mainstreaming has not been systematically implemented. Direct and indirect discriminatory practices continue in all socio-economic sectors in the public, private, civil and domestic spheres. The concept of gender equality remains principally a welfare concept based on social justice for vulnerable population and groups. While these concepts are essential to human rights, they do not address the inequitable power relations which presently shape the workings of the economy.

Many root causes of discrimination and women's vulnerability lie outside the labour market and embedded in social perceptions and norms affecting economic outcomes for women in all spheres. Most economic policies are designed to protect the interests of those already with power and do not voice the adverse effects on women in the market and within households. For instance, women are expected to increase the country's gross domestic product

(GDP) while development policy actors largely ignore the fundamental gender inequalities associated with the unpaid work of household maintenance and community care on which markets depend for their functioning.

An outcome report including recommendations was delivered four days after the roundtable to the ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Geneva on November 3-4, 2009. While the NGO meeting followed agenda items of the ECE Prepcom, the free caucuses and regional debates also addressed issues such as migrant and minority women who are disproportionately affected by economic crises. The report also reflected upon those who suffer discrimination most, based on intersectionality of sex, ethnicity, and other cultural and traditional causes resulting in the feminisation of poverty and lack of empowerment and decision-making to get out of all forms of crises.

The NGO Interactive Roundtable included best practices and principal gaps in the way gender is mainstreamed to reach the goals spelled out in the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Main constraints and failures were discussed especially those noted because of the lack of a holistic approach when addressing developmental goals, empowerment, violence against women, inequalities and discrimination. An example is corporate globalisation which has negative impact on women's access to education. Public funding cuts in developing countries has crippled public education and has opened the way for private education, a commodity with a price not often affordable to the poor.

Thus, despite the fact that many women

enjoy the benefits of growing access to education on all levels including access to professional opportunities or business ownership, later marriage, fewer children, the main issue before women and girls today worldwide, and especially in poor European countries is that women bear the brunt of child care, and girls more than boys are withdrawn from school into domestic labour when money is short. Statistical data showing a rapid rise in women's employment rate does not necessarily illustrate evidence of access to quality employment and working conditions. The pattern of jobless growth has created massive unemployment for both women and men but the impact has been significantly greater for women, especially with regard to lack of access to high-paying jobs.

Finally, the importance of tackling gender mainstreaming through the twin principles of non-discrimination and gender equality in international human rights law and treaties such as the CEDAW, to redress structural and intersectional discrimination with temporary special measures was agreed upon. It was agreed that gender-disaggregated statistics and gender budgeting were indispensable in tracking and monitoring opportunities and outcomes in gender equality and women's empowerment in a sustainable manner and making the necessary correction on targeted benchmarks.

Readers are welcomed and encouraged to use the outcome recommendations (<http://ngocsw-geneva.ch>) from the roundtable in advocacy and capacity and model building activities but when so doing, please acknowledge the source.



Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women - CEDAW

UN HQ, Geneva

By Yvonne von Stedingk

With the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, and its ratification on 3 September 1981, an instrument was created which not only defines the meaning of discrimination against women but maybe even more importantly, establishes legal obligations for States to end such discrimination. Hence, States have pledged to make equality between men and women a reality by providing equal opportunities in all fields including political, civil, economic, social, cultural or in family life. Furthermore, signatories to the Convention also commit themselves to regular reporting to the implementing body of the Convention, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Composed of 23 independent experts, the Committee holds three sessions annually in order to examine States' reports. Each session lasts three weeks. Since 2008, each year, two sessions take place in Geneva and one in New York. The Secretariat of the Committee is managed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Previously, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in New York managed the Secretariat. States presenting their reports at CEDAW's most recent 45th meeting, held in Geneva from January 18 to February 5th, 2010 were Egypt, Malawi, the Netherlands, Panama, Uzbekistan, and United Arab Emirates. NGOs are well placed to work together with the CEDAW in many different ways. The Committee welcomes involvement from NGOs. This was clearly demonstrated

during the latest session with special briefings and luncheon meetings for and with NGOs, arranged by the Committee, and with a considerable number of NGOs contributing oral reports and country specific information on States under consideration. Separate rooms for briefings in advance of sessions were also provided.

There are several means of cooperation including information sharing, working together with Committee experts, working with other organizations and submitting country-specific information for the State reviews in the form of alternative reports (called shadow reports). The term shadow report is a somewhat misleading terminology because it makes civil society input into these discussions seem like a

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International Day Against Drug Abuse

By Lilly Gundacker

The Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC) commemorated International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking with a luncheon and the launch of the Strategic Plan 2009-2014 and the book, *Making a Difference*. Fifty people attended the luncheon, including six Ambassadors and representatives from a dozen Permanent Missions, staff of the United Nations Office on Drug Control (UNODC) and members of the VNGOC.

The Strategic Plan is based on a review of achievements since the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the global drug problem in 1998. The enthusiastic participation of over one million people representing 900 NGOs in 145 countries during the strategic planning process led up to the new strategic plan that would build on the achievements of the UNGASS outcome report entitled "Beyond 2008". The book, *Making a*

Difference, is a record of this process, and in particular, the involvement of NGOs in the UNGASS review.

Parallel to the NGO response, the UNODC commissioned an independent evaluation of "Beyond 2008" which was undertaken by Emily Benson of The Stakeholder Forum. This evaluation has been published and can be found on the VNGOC and UNODC websites. Overall the evaluation is very positive. It makes a number of recommendations directed at the VNGOC and at UNODC which are being examined. One recommendation is for better system wide coherence. Discussions continue as to how the VNGOC and UNODC can work together most effectively and support each other in implementation of the Beyond 2008 resolutions.

At the last meeting of the VNGOC, Gilberto Gerra of UNODC reported that; in the draft resolution of the High Level meeting of

ECOSOC in July 2009 in Geneva, concerning health issues, there was no reference to either alcohol or drug misuse. During the VNGOC meeting, the committee agreed that a statement expressing concern about the global burden on health arising from the use and misuse of alcohol, drugs and tobacco be prepared. The statement was circulated to members and delegations, requesting that they bring the issue to the attention of ECOSOC. Dhaka Ahsania Mission, a member of the VNGOC who was attending the CONGO briefing during the ECOSOC sessions, brought the statement to the attention of NGOs on behalf of the VNGOC.



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subversive activity rather than the anticipated and much appreciated compliment to State's reporting it actually is. Shadow reports can be submitted prior to or at the session concerned and should relate to the implementation of the Convention on the national level. NGOs are also welcome to participate in the pre-session working group, where five of the Committee's twenty three experts meet informally to develop a list of questions to direct and focus discussion during States' reviews.

NGOs active in the Human Rights field can also be of great value to the work of CEDAW. They can act as intermediaries between the Human Rights Council's mechanism, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and CEDAW by pushing for implementation of CEDAW's Concluding Observations of States Parties in the respective country's periodic review. Also, because many NGOs are directly involved in providing services to victims of human rights violations and have expertise and essential data, but lacking resources to participate directly in the work of the Committee, cooperation can be arranged that is beneficial to the NGO and the Committee.

In addition to these examples, there are also possibilities for cooperation under the Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol is a human rights treaty which complements the Convention. It was adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 and entered into force in 2000. It is a mechanism for receiving individual complaints as well as an inquiry procedure. There are very strict guidelines for such communications. (Further information on the work of the Committee, can be obtained at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw-one.htm>)



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Rights Council (HRC) in taking up the issue of maternal mortality and maintaining a strong focus on violence against women. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) holds great potential to improve women's rights on the ground which could be amplified

through overlapping mechanisms such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), CEDAW and Special Rapporteurs. Much more can be done by the Council to "close the gap between rhetoric and action" regarding women's rights. She proposed several practical recommendations: holding special sessions to take up chronic violations of women's rights; considering whether more tools are needed to address these issues; and reflecting upon the ways the Council will interact with the emerging UN gender entity. In closing, she urged all international NGOs to contribute ideas to this process "for the achievement of human rights for all, the realization of sustainable human development, as well as the development of all societies".

The next panelist, Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada, referred to the 1994 resolution by the Human Rights Commission to create a mandate for a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women tabled by his nation. Although there have been significant developments in norms and standards, he noted gaps in accountability and implementation. As hosts of an upcoming G-8 summit, Canada plans to initiate a major initiative to improve the health of women and children in developing



C Handschin-WFWPI; Amb Marius Grinius-Canada; Nevi Pillay- High Commissioner for Human Rights; Conchita Poncini- IFUW, NGO CSW- Geneva; Muriel Berset – Head of Swiss Delegation; Patrice Robineau. UN ECE

countries. He asked for our assistance in assessing which institutional processes are working, where changes are needed and what prospects are for the new UN entity for women. He applauded civil society's contribution to the UPR process and recommended a check list prepared by NGOs to serve as a tool for states to integrate women's human rights into the review. A joint effort is needed to track UPR recommendations and to promote accountability to recommendations, such as integrating them into the work of the OHCHR and UN agencies in the field.

The Minister and Head of Office for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs for Switzerland, Ms. Muriel Berset stated that her country has not been in the forefront historically for women's rights. Although slow in starting, Switzerland has proven very serious. Currently, three women are in federal ministerial positions and many women are parliamentarians who are committed to adopting international commitments to women's rights at the national and cantonal level. Switzerland consults with civil society before, during and after these legalization processes. Ms. Berset explained that interaction with NGOs throughout UPR hearings and leading to second rounds is very

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Activities Around the World in 2009

WFWP, USA



17th WFWP Anniversary National Assembly, September 18-20, 2009 - New York City



Benefit for the Schools of Africa, WFWP Chapter in Washington DC



Rev. In Jin Moon addressing WFWP National Assembly



WFWP Sponsored School in Equatorial Guinea



Benefit for the Schools of Africa, Silent Auction in DC



Monthly Meetings of Chapters Nationwide, Seattle



Service Trip to Haiti - June 15-29, 2009



International Women's Day, Washington DC

Healing Wounds, contd from pg. 2

babies to save the elders from being reported to law enforcement agencies. Dr. Kam Kam also recommended education in the communities for youth (even through school curriculum by the Ministry of Health as part of basic health education), elders, religious leaders, law enforcers and NGOs about the hazards of FGM.

Marianne Sarkis, Director and Founder of the FGM/C (Female Genital Mutilation/ Cutting) Education and Networking Project and Visiting Professor at Clark University, has been working in ethnic communities in North America and Canada. She emphasized that FGM must be viewed as social and structural violence, not a one-time event. Ms. Sarkis has done extensive research in hospitals and health clinics. Through conversations with affected women, she heard many stories of pain, fear

and death. Through the resettlement process, FGM, originally their source of pride turned to a source of shame. The resettlement agencies were not sympathetic. When examined, the women were treated like savages. They felt their whole identity and culture being threatened. They began avoiding hospitals because they felt attacked and humiliated by medical professionals. Medical personnel often display FGM results during gynecological exams to other nurses and medical professionals. This treatment violates women's privacy and repeats the cycle of trauma. For these women, cutting establishes their identity as a woman. Education must include a replacement for establishing an identity as women and an understanding of the harm that FGM causes, because then it is easier to give up the tradition.

Mr. Gannon Gillespie, Director of the U.S. operations of Tostan, an NGO working to

empower African communities to bring about sustainable development, emphasized there is hope. He reported that in 1997, thirty women in Somalia stood together to abandon the FGM tradition. Twelve years later over 4000 communities have joined this effort. The social network is very strong in the communities. FGM is practiced because it is a social norm. Human rights education made it possible for community members to think differently about social norms. Seminars on human rights and responsibilities helped the community members to recognize good and bad traditions. Women within the communities initiated public discussions and visited families to push for change. It's important to remain respectful. It's because of love that FGM is performed and because of love the practice can be abandoned.



Activities Around the World in 2009

The Global Era and Women's Leadership

10th WFWP, International Leaders Symposium

October 23, 2009 - Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas

By Alexa Ward, President of WFWP USA,
Vice-President WFWP International

On Friday afternoon October 23, 2009 a symposium was held during the 10th WFWPI Leaders Workshop. The theme was The Global Era and Women's Leadership. This symposium featured a panel of four distinguished women leaders, and was attended by two hundred and fifty seven women leaders.

Dr. Park Keun Ryung opened the afternoon session with congratulatory remarks, "The 21st century is the global village era, in which people of the world know everything about one another, almost as if they were all living in a neighboring village, staying close and sharing joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness." She went on to say, "The reason the world is in desperate need of women's leadership is that it requires feminine sensitivity to be able to embrace

the world with the warm heart of the mother, serve our neighbors like they are our own family members, and show consideration for others."

Dr. Pouran Ameli, President of the American Iranian Friendship Association, followed with her remarks, praising the founders and members of WFWP for their work in contributing to lasting peace in the world.

Symposium Panelists

Hon. Ellen Sauerbrey served as Assistant US Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration from 2006 to 2007. A former teacher, she was served in the Maryland Legislature for sixteen years and was twice nominated by the Republican Party for Governor of Maryland. Mrs. Sauerbrey stated, "I strongly believe that the economic, political, and social empowerment of women is critical to the promotion of prosperity and peace in every land."

Mrs. Cheryl Wetzstein, journalist and columnist for The Washington Times, offered her perspective on the central importance of women in society, stating that "the family is the bedrock institution of any healthy society, and when the family is falling apart, everything else will also fall apart." She encouraged attendees to utilize their power as women in solving three big problem areas: the proliferation

remarks on the importance of religious freedom and the need to speak out against oppression of all kinds. Mrs. Park Keun Ryung, daughter of former President of South Korea, Hon. Park Chung Hee, was a special guest at the workshop along with her husband. Welcoming remarks were given by Professor Choi Yeon Ah, Vice President of WFWP, International.

Highlights of the workshop included national chapter activity reports by international vice presidents for the regions, a special visit with the founders of WFWP, a symposium with a panel of four distinguished women leaders; and a gala evening.



of pornography; widespread cohabitation among unmarried couples; and anti-family ideas, particularly the denigration of motherhood.

Ms. Donzaleigh Abernathy, daughter of civil rights legend Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, spoke about the courage, sacrifices, and victories of the non-violent warriors of the American Civil Rights movement, particularly her own father and his best friend, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She spoke of her father instilling in her, the importance of "dreaming big" and doing whatever it took to achieve those dreams. Ms. Abernathy is a successful actress, producer, writer and is involved with social causes such as environmentalism, AIDS prevention, and education.

Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, Deputy Director of the WFWP, International UN Office in Geneva, Switzerland described ways WFWPI is working with the United Nations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are designed to eliminate the most extreme forms of poverty and suffering in the world. She stated, "The talents, experience, leadership capacity and work ethic of women can make the dramatic difference between success or failure. It is in our hands to decide to 'Go Global' and to be the heart and conscience for a Culture of Peace."



10th WFWP International Leader's Workshop

The Tenth WFWP, International Leaders Workshop was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 21-25, 2009. The theme was The Global Era and Women's Leadership. Two hundred and twenty-two (222) participants from twenty-two (22) countries were in attendance.

Dr. Lan Young Moon Park, President of WFWP, International, gave the first keynote address on Thursday, October 22, entitled "Her Story." Rev. In Jin Moon, daughter of WFWPI founders, gave the second keynote address, entitled "Human Rights, Women's Rights, and Religious Freedom," during the Gala event on the evening of October 23. She focused her

54th Commission on the Status of Women Beijing Platform of Action 15 Year Review

March 1-12, 2010 - UN HQ NYC

By Bonnie Berry

(with thanks to Susan Bradbury for her contribution)

The 54th CSW opened on March 1st with the purpose to review progress, barriers and challenges toward the vision laid out in the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995 at the 4th World Women's Conference in Beijing. Logistics of the CSW were more challenging than usual as the UN Headquarters in NY is undergoing a long planned and much needed renovation. This significantly restricted meeting space and accessibility to official meetings and parallel events alike for the estimated four thousand NGO representatives from around the world. Prior to the opening of the Commission on the Status of Women, an approximately year long review process involving member states reviews, regional reviews, opportunities for grassroots input and NGO shadow reports from regions were compiled regarding the status of the twelve critical areas of concern listed in the Beijing Platform for Action. During the official meetings of the CSW, member states gave oral presentations on their country's progress and barriers with regard to the Beijing Platform of Action (Complete text of the Beijing Platform for Action at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/)

The panel of speakers at the opening session, held in Conference Room 1 included: HE Mr. Garen Nazarian, Chair of the CSW, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiros, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali, President of the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Ms. Ines Alberdi, Executive Director, UNIFEM and Ms. Naéla Gabr, Chairperson, CEDAW. Several main themes arose from each panelist's message, which were echoed continuously through out the official deliberations, high level panels, country and regional reports and parallel events. They were: significant progress has been made in achieving equal rights for women and girls, especially in access to education and more women in elected positions and leadership roles. More progress is needed in all areas, but particularly desperate areas continue to be in violence against women, whether involving sexual violence and rape in armed conflict, domestic violence, trafficking, the situation is still dire. In addition, maternal health has not improved in many regions. Finally, one of the most hopeful themes emerging is that of the new gender entity within the UN that will combine the four existing UN agencies dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment and advancement of women and girls. This entity is to be headed

by an Under-Secretary-General who will report directly to the Secretary General and be part of the Secretariat, thus elevating the stature of leadership to the highest realms within the UN. The General Assembly has approved the formation of this entity but funds to appoint an Under-Secretary-General and funds for operations have yet to be allocated.

One parallel event sponsored by the GEAR (Gender Equality Architecture Reform) campaign, the movement responsible for strong advocacy of the formation of one UN gender entity presented a more thorough update on progress and success of the effort. The Center for Women's Global Leadership, headed by well known activist and advocate for women's rights, Charlotte Bunch sponsored this parallel event. This new gender entity structure will include UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), Division of Advancement of Women, INSTRAW (UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) and OSAGI (Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women), and combine the policy making work of the secretariat with programmatic efforts of the operations side. Four aspects of implementation are considered crucial: funding, strong country level operational capacity, effective civil society participation and appointment of the Under-Secretary-General. Those involved in advocacy work for achievement of the new gender entity are asking for an annual

budget of \$1 billion. This represents five times the current annual budget of UNIFEM. With regard to country level structure, the gender entity will require the capacity to initiate and support programs and provide leadership on each UN country leadership team. NGO and civil society participation will be key to success because women's rights expertise is driven from the grassroots level so these advocates will need inclusion and official presence on the governing committee for the gender entity in order to leverage expertise. Finally, the appointment of leadership on the Under-Secretary-General level, gives gender issues a voice at the table on the highest policy decision making levels at the UN. It is crucial that this leader be given authority over financial and human resource matters to maximize effective country level functioning. There is commitment from the Secretary General and the General Assembly for this leadership but a resolution must still be put forth and passed for funds

to be spent on achieving this appointment. GEAR representatives emphasized that a transparent global search is needed that should include input from civil society. The successful candidate should have commitment to and experience in gender equality and women's issues that include connection with ground level implementation and civil society engagement. Some concerns that member states have regarding the plan are core funding challenges, eliminating duplication of staffing and programs, managing the transition phase at minimal cost, the lack of a regional office in Europe and North America and the need for monitoring in the global north, the importance that programs should create positive change in the lives of women and girls, rotation of leadership and systems of accountability to minimize bureaucratic entrenchment.

Another exciting progress report of United Nations organizational improvements was sponsored by UNIFEM. This parallel event presented best practices on UN agencies Delivering as One. Delivering as One refers to implementation of UN programs in countries as one streamlined organization, rather than the historical method of multiple agencies working independently within countries. Of particular note in the parallel event, was the story of Albania as one of eight pilot sites to



demonstrate the impact of all UN agencies on gender equality and women's empowerment. The UN Regional Coordinator from Albania and the Albanian Minister of Women's Affairs reported successes and challenges of the effort. The Albanian government had invited UNIFEM to work in Albania and had worked closely with UNIFEM and other UN agencies to develop joint programs for strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment. The results are promising as the organizational structure of one clear leading agency and clear division of labor resulted in one transparent budget and coordinated business practices. Results of the projects were an increase in women parliamentarians from 7% to 16%, stronger laws and legal frameworks protecting women from violence and strengthening women's rights and participation in decision making and clear gender budgeting. According to the Albanian Minister of Women's Affairs, UNIFEM supported the priorities of the

Albanian government and without UNIFEM's effort to lead and coordinate the work of the other UN agencies involved, guidance and technical assistance, the government efforts would not have been as successful. UNIFEM representative, Ms. S.K. Buhoff emphasized that this joint effort was able to focus strongly on joint programming on gender equality, CEDAW implementation, key gender specific outcomes as well as evaluation of results and strengthened accountability. A couple areas that were found in need of improvement: calculating specific dedicated resources and capacity; and involvement of nations in planning. Overall, this unified method of delivering services and programs from the UN shows significant promise for efficiencies and improved success of initiatives.

The first African Women's Caucus of the CSW was more celebration than caucus. This celebration marked the formal publication and release of the Africa Women's Regional Shadow Report on Beijing + 15: A Regional Analysis on the Status of Women 15 Years after the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, compiled by FEMNET (The African Women's Development and Communication Network). Speakers at the caucus emphasized the collaborative nature of the process to gather and compile reflections and information for the report, in spite of lack of resources. FEMNET worked to facilitate teleconferencing and popularizing the Beijing +15 review process through out the network of NGOs in Africa. Bisi Adeleye Fayemi, Executive Director of the African Women's Development Fund emphasized this moment calls for celebration because of shared achievements, despair because of continued poverty, struggle

and instability that threatens progress, urgency for the need for stronger accountability and hope in the belief for what the African women's movement can accomplish. Gertrude Mangella, Member of parliament in Tanzania and long time leader in the African and global women's movement reminded everyone of the active role that African women played in the foundations of the Beijing Platform for Action stating, "We are not victims, we are the solutions to the problems". She did note that it was a mistake not to include timeframes and sanctions in the BPforA. Finally she noted that her advancing age is making it harder for her and other older activists to have the energy and capacity to push for fulfillment of the BPforA. She said that before it is time for Beijing + 20, the torch needs to pass to younger people with mentorship from elders to continue with activism and advocacy.

The CSW has identified gender impacts of climate change as an issue requiring attention. In addition, a number of NGOs partnered with national delegations to present parallel events regarding climate change and its impact on women. The long term rise in the average temperature of the earth's surface is one of the most serious issues confronting humanity. Women are likely to be disproportionately impacted because of their historic disadvantages and high involvement in and dependence on sectors that are expected to experience the most intense climate change impacts, water and agriculture. The global community is taking steps to address climate change, from adaptation, (making social and infrastructural changes) in order to cope with the effects of climate change, to mitigation (a lowering of greenhouse gas emissions, in order to temper the severity of climate change). Collateral

effects of climate change can be seen in spikes in food shortages and increased occurrence of diseases like dysentery and malaria. No one solution or approach will work for everyone. In all countries facing the impacts of climate change, the key is to build resilience at the community level. Communities must be able to respond and adapt to the shifting and frequently unexpected conditions that climate change brings. There was a call at the CSW, for NGO representatives and civil society to remain informed, to attend COP16 in Mexico in November, and other high level meetings to keep the voice of women at the table. Women have the potential to contribute positively to climate change activities, internationally.

The official UN Commemoration of Women's Day was held in Conference Room 1 of UNHQ on the morning of March 3rd. The highlight of the commemoration was the brief speech by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Speaking as a son, husband, father and grandfather, he reminded us of his fundamental responsibility to protect the inalienable rights of women and girls. He admitted that until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice achievement of our goals are in jeopardy. He also spoke strongly in favor of the formation of the new UN women's entity, encouraging the General Assembly to waste no time in implementation. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon submitted a written Beijing +15 review to CSW which bridged the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform of Action to the Millennium Development Goals. (The full text of the report is available at:

<http://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/637/20/pdf/N0963720.pdf?OpenElement>



The Role of NGOs to Achieve MDG#3: Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women WFWP Dinner Meeting

March 2, 2010 - Delegate Dining Room 6, UN HQ NYC

By Bonnie Berry

WFWPI hosted a Dinner Meeting in celebration of a very successful parallel event (see Parallel event report on page 1). Fifty members of the WFWPI delegation and distinguished guests attended. Bonnie Berry, WFWPI UN Representative presided as Mistress of Ceremonies. WFWP International President, Professor Lan Young Moon Park welcomed everyone warmly, reminding all in attendance of the advancements of women to leadership roles around the world and reflected on challenges past, present and future. She encouraged those present to continue to serve and love with a heart of a parent with the aim of creating one global family. Mrs. Alexa Ward, President of WFWP USA and Vice President of WFWPI proposed a toast to open dialog over dinner.

Keynote speaker, **Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra**, UN Under-Secretary-General,



Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States spoke on the topic, "The work of OHRLS in relation to the MDG#3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women". He emphasized the important role that women have in fulfilling the MDGs. He also stressed that gender parity is crucial to fulfillment of MDGs. Mr. Diarra informed us about initiatives his office is undertaking to assist in educating promising young professionals from the most vulnerable nations to be leaders in implementing achievement of the MDGs. During questions and answers following his talk, Mr. Diarra committed to partnering with



WFWPI to leverage the successes of WFWPI's volunteer projects for the benefit of the most vulnerable nations and peoples around the globe. (Complete text of Mr. Diarra's speech is available at www.wfwpi.org)

During the course of the the CSW the official delegations approved a declaration recommitting to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that will be submitted to ECOSOC and to the General Assembly and seven resolutions about some of the most dire challenges facing women and girls. (Full text of Declaration and Resolutions at <http://>

WFWP Dinner Meeting, contd. on pg. 10

End Violence, contd from pg. 3

H.E. Juan Antonio Yanez-Barnuevo, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations)

Prime Minister Zapatero's government has prioritized women's issues, introducing laws to promote gender equality and to prevent domestic violence and has agreed to achieve and protect human rights.

"It has become a challenge and a threat to coexistence. Violence against women is a direct attack on human dignity. Behind actions of violence lie unacceptable relations. A culture of domination, of embedded inequality has continued by passiveness on the side of governments. Today this cannot be justified. South American governments are working on and promoting an integrated law against violence against women. It took multiple initiatives. It takes good legal instruments and steadfast implementation. This battle goes beyond borders. Global violence needs global solutions. We are pleased to see the proposal by the Secretary-General. This initiative is a new landmark. It is to increase social awareness and stress the responsibility of men. The fight is a global challenge. Of those plagues which plague us all, women suffer most and violence against women finds breeding grounds in them. Some progress has been made but there is a long way to go. When we talk about violence against women, time is measured not in days but in lives. The United Nations is sharing the urgency today. On behalf of the Government of Spain, we are honored to be fully committed to this cause."

Minister of Justice and the Police of Norway, Mr. Storberget has made ending violence against women a top priority for the Norwegian government. In June, 2009 he hosted a Council of Europe conference on the topic, Breaking the Silence – United Against Domestic Violence. "I have immense gratitude for this initiative. We are gathered here because we agree violence against women must be fought as a crime. It affects all. It is not a women's issue but a human issue. Violence in the home is worse than in the streets. Many cases lead to loss of lives, therefore, we are impatient. We believe in mobilization of men to take action. We have insured cases of violence against women be given priority. Penal codes underline the seriousness of violence. We need to move forward and have new ideas. The existing laws are not adequate. We need additional support to help women. Women's shelters, etc. are very important measures. We support the ideas of treatment of perpetrators as an alternative to incarceration. Next year we will organize a conference. (To Secretary-General) We are ready to work!"

After Mr. Storberget's message, a video message was shown from Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu. Archbishop Tutu has received many awards and prizes, including the Nobel Peace Prize for his extraordinary work for racial conciliation in South Africa. He is currently chairman of The Elders, an

independent group of influential people chosen for their outstanding integrity, courage and proven ability to tackle some of the world's toughest problems. "Today the world sees so much violence against women – trafficking, domestic violence, etc. This cannot be tolerated by any leaders – government, civil, or religious. You are a weak man if you attack women. A society that harms women is an immoral one. I invite you all to join me in ending this scourge. Let us all commit to collaborate to end violence against women and girls. The 2010 World Cup games will be in South Africa and I want to take pride in the steps we have taken to eradicate violence against women. I shall stand against violence against women side by side with you until victory is won. I will fight until the end of days to fight violence against women. I call on all leaders to protect women and girls. It benefits families, countries and all humanity."

Todd Minerson, Executive Director of the White Ribbon Campaign, the world's largest effort of men and boys to end men's violence against women explained, "The White Ribbon Campaign was conceived at a kitchen table in 1991 and is now a worldwide organization. At its core – accountability, responsibility and awareness. It is about challenging social norms. It is about partnering with women's groups and modeling good behavior. It is about comprehensive solutions. A leadership network of men. Working for ending violence against women is good leadership, good politics, leads to stability, health, education, peace and a prosperous society. When men advocate for women to end violence against women, the results are an increase in prosperity for all. We need to shift the paradigm of a few good men to all men. Our notion of leadership should expand to the community, corporate and educational fields. Men need to take time to learn. We need to take steps today for more to join this campaign."

Ms. Maria Rashid, Executive Director, ROZAN, Pakistan, opened with an explanation about her work in Pakistan with the police and young male volunteers. "Honor killings continue until today. Boys and men are essential in addressing this issue and must be engaged. Many men are violent but many are not. These are powerful allies."

Unhealthy definitions of manhood play a central role in shaping men's identity. If we expect men to stop harming women they must be challenged. Understanding their mentality is central in discussions. I hope the Network of Men Leaders undertake meaningful and sustainable ways to further the cause of ending violence against women."

Additional speakers joined the panel for the second segment: Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations; Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand; Mr. Emmanuel Ochora, Co-founder Gulu Youth for Action, Uganda.

Women's Day 2010, contd from pg. 5

important. She also expressed expectations for good synergy between UPR and CEDAW.

The final speaker of the first panel was Mr. Patrice Robineau, Senior Advisor to the Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). He discussed the new gender architecture within the UN and its relationship with existing entities. How will it function? He pointed to three challenges. First, reform is never simple, the approach is very important. Second is the way of functioning. The third challenge is putting it into practice. The new entity is badly needed for the sake of visibility, coherent authority and efficiency. The four bodies being merged are the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI), UNIFEM, DAW and the research institute, INSTRAW. Mr. Robineau suggests a wholistic, integrated, multi-stakeholder approach to functions and interventions. He believes it is always important to conduct a human rights approach to policy work on poverty or in strengthening social protection schemes. He recommends references to CEDAW or the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) to assist the necessary harmonizing processes. A gender-sensitive analysis is needed to direct policy. Also greater attention needs to be given to capacity-building on the ground. Civil society participation and empowerment is the key to development and to the success of the new gender entity. In closing, Mr. Robineau expressed hope that the gender entity will be a catalyst to advance gender equality and achieve a balanced, stable and peaceful society.

The second session was on "Beijing + 15: Creating New Mechanisms to Accelerate the Implementation of the Platform for Action" and will consider the effectiveness of some of the emerging mechanisms and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as well as SCR 1820, 1888 and 1889. Speakers include a technical specialist from UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and international NGOs.



WFWP Dinner Meeting, contd from pg. 9

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/outcomes.html)

WFWPI was a cosigner on an NGO joint statement to the 54th CSW regarding the health and wellbeing of girls and woman. The full text of the statement is available at www.wfwp.org.



their governments. According to Ms. Martha Buenavides, 23rd Century Movement, El Salvador, the Beijing + 15 review has been very difficult and important to women in Latin America. The UN is an instrument for people of the world to get together. Lets make the UN an instrument of common good to take care of the planet.

Panel 2: The State of the World's Women: Patriarchy, Violence Against Women and Girls, Women's Health, & Climate Change was moderated by Afaf Mahfouz, Chair, UN International Psychoanalytical Association, Egypt.

Ms. Nyarradza Gombubsvanda, General Secretary, YWCA, Zimbabwe spoke about patriarchy, which has been how power is accessed, enjoyed, negotiated and manipulated by giving different standards to men and women on the same issues. She also added that power determines the dynamics of accessing public office. Ms. Mahnaz Afkani, Executive Director, Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace of Iran, spoke on the issue of violence against women and the rights of women in Iran, ruled by patriarchal traditions. She concluded that the dream of women in Iran is a world that is peaceful and just, with security for women and hope for the future. Ms. Violet Shivustse, Community Health Worker for Shibuye, Kenya explained that HIV/AIDS challenges caregivers and burdens women. Finding partners who can support income-generating projects are very important coping strategies. She also emphasized the importance of grassroots women's participation in the decision-making process.

On Sunday, Panel 3: Voices From Around the World: Regional Priorities and Action was moderated by Simone Ovar, Vice-Chair, NGO CSW/Geneva. Reports from each global region were heard.

Asia and the Pacific: Cai Yi Ping, Executive Director of Isis International, China reported that women struggle everyday against marginalization and ignorance of their rights. The history of the Beijing Platform for Action is a story of self-empowerment. Crises that threaten progress and create insecurity for women and girls continue. She stressed the importance of lobbying to government delegates at CSW.

Europe: Brigitte Triems, President, European Women's Lobby, Germany explained that Europe has observed progress in women's rights but significant gaps in health, rights of the girlchild, media, women and environment, and pay still exist. She stressed the priority of EU to fully exploit possibilities of gender mainstreaming and address women's economic status, unequal sharing of unpaid work, and gaps in relation to paid employment and pensions.

Middle East and Arab Region: Lina Abou Habib, Executive Director of Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action, Lebanon explained that the UN has not been accountable to women in the Middle Eastern

countries when policies are not implemented. Reform of discriminatory laws in the Middle East has not occurred. In a global context of political bargaining, mechanisms for holding states accountable for the rights of women are needed. She pointed out four initiatives in the region: Claiming equal citizenship campaign by reforming nationality roles – (in most Arab countries women cannot pass on their nationalities), Equality without reservation campaign-(demands States lift reservations to CEDAW), and the Campaign to reform family laws. The focus is on forcing States to be responsible towards women. She concluded that the women's movement is a remaining stronghold of the social justice movement in the region.

North America: June Zeitlin, Executive Director Women's Environment and Development Organization, USA stated that Pres. Obama is very supportive of CEDAW ratification but more support is needed from republican legislators. Many women still earn 77 cent for every dollar paid to American men. For minority women, the gap is greater. The US has a high incidence of domestic violence in every community at every socioeconomic level. Progress with government implementation includes: Pres. Obama formed a White House Counsel on women and girls, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, created a new position in the state department; Global Ambassador at Large for women's issues. The number one priority for U.S. women is CEDAW ratification. The U.S. is one of seven countries who have not ratified CEDAW.

Africa: Virginia Ntombi Setshwaelo, Activist and Lecturer, Botswana remarked that Africa, a region comprised of 53 member states, is large but African women have many things in common. Over the last 15 years, significant improvement has occurred in gender equality and women's empowerment. She noted that education and training of women has improved the most. Challenges remain in the domain of health due to poorly coordinated and sluggish responses to HIV/AIDS and high maternal mortality, barriers to accessing free medication, inadequate family planning services and chronic drug shortages. She also stressed that violence against women and girls continues to be tolerated, however African government is recognizing violence against women and the girl child as a crime.


Latin America: Blanca Fernanses Montenegro, Flora Tristan, Peru listed priorities for realization of women's rights and equality in Latin America: Raising voices in these countries where sexual and reproductive rights have suffered, establishment of a mechanism for demanding states fulfill the rights of women, ask the UN to promote strategies for monitoring international agreements.

Panel 4: Fulfilling the Promise of Gender Equality, Peace, and Development: Women, Peace and Security, Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms, World Economic Crisis, Building Women's Leadership, and the MDGs was moderated by Marlene Parenzan, Chair, NGO

CSW/Vienna. Ms. Lia Broekhoven, Policy Advisor for Cordaid, Netherlands emphasized that sexual violence is a security issue. Ms. Alexandra Garita of the International Women's Health and Coalition, Mexico stated that the major stumbling block for fulfillment of gender equality is lack of coordination within the government. Ms. Radika Balakrishnan, Executive Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University remarked that human rights are an ethical lens to assess macro-economic policies. She also expressed disappointment in governments for not protecting people from predatory lending. Mr. Sering Falu Njie, MDGs Expert, believes that MDGs and gender equality are achievable if there is political will. Progress needs to accelerate, women's participation in decision-making and gender budgeting is crucial.

Call to Action

The Beijing +15 NGO Global Forum has noted progress made and discussed gaps and challenges remaining to full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. The Global Forum offers the following call to action to countries of the world, members of the UN community and advocates for rights for women and girls everywhere. (Call to Action at www.wfwp.org)

Rachel Mayanja, UN Assistant Secretary General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women affirmed the suggestion to create a global fund for gender equality by every woman in the world contributing one dollar and committing one additional dollar on behalf of women who cannot afford to give. She acknowledged the major role NGOs play in implementing the Beijing Agenda. The NGO community has also proven central to the MDG agenda. It is time for consultations between government, NGOs and the UN. The UN is looking for innovative ways to strengthen and improve gender equality work. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. Let us work together to finish the Beijing Agenda. THORAYA OBAID, Executive Director of UNFPA encouraged the younger women to take the torch and move forward. According to H.E. Mr. Garen Nazarian, Chair of the 54th CSW, the Beijing conference was a culmination of several years of preparation from women on the local, regional and global level. All worked hard to distill their experiences of discrimination, injustice and inequality into 12 critical areas of concern. They shaped an agenda of action to overcome these challenges and achieve common goals. The platform has been called the blue print for gender equality and the empowerment of women. NGOs played key roles in ensuring governments and other stakeholders follow up their commitment from the Beijing conference with concrete, tangible action. NGOs lobbied, advocated and pressured government and other stake holders and contributed their own fair share along the way. He referred to the Call to Action issued by the forum as rightfully highlighting the inclusive quality of the Beijing process. 

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54th CSW Parallel Event, contd from pg. 1

In 2001, Salon de Couture JAMOO, a training shop was opened to empower the graduates toward complete self sufficiency. So far sixty women graduates have become independent business owners. Ms. Nozaki reflected on the great joy she experiences when students, their husbands and families show smiling, happy faces because of their success and peace of mind.



Ms. **Delia C. Javanasundara**, Vice President of WFWPI for Asia Region and Coordinator of International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF) of Vietnam shared her experience and efforts in tackling

achievement of MDG #3 in Asia. Her power point presentation focused on three themes:

1. WFWP support to eliminate gender disparity in education through the Foster Parents scholarship project. Last year, over 65% of the more than 500 recipients were girls. In addition, non-formal education projects provided learning opportunities to adult women in Bangladesh, India and Taiwan.

2. Training women for jobs in the non-agricultural sector through vocational schools in Nepal and India and empowering women through microfinance projects in Bangladesh and Vietnam.

3. Seminars on gender awareness and other women's issues including women and climate change for women in national parliament.



The final speaker, Ms. **Ingrid D. Lindemann**, Director of Education of WFWP Europe and Co-Founder of the European Dignity Project introduced the launch of the Global Campaign to End Violence Against

Women on Feb. 25, 2008 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. At the time, Secretary General Ban stated, "I call on men around the world to lead by example: to make clear that violence against women is an act perpetrated by cowards, and that speaking up against it is a badge of honor." She stressed that violence towards women in Europe still continues. It is by far the most frequent violation of human rights despite the shift of women's right to vote, receive education, and gain full employment. Women face serious dangers of degradation through prostitution, pornography, advertisement, FGM, widow burning, honor killing and rape as part of the strategy in war. Nearly 500,000 Eastern European women are abducted each year and forced into prostitution in the European sex trade. Ms. Lindemann explained two aspects of the Dignity of Women project. They are: 1. Restore the image of womanhood in society. The campaign slogan is, "Let us awaken human awareness fully to the original value and the original beauty of women." 2. Inspire women to experience the beauty and value of true femininity, to discover and live their immanent God given dignity. WFWP Europe has featured the campaign since 2007 in countries throughout Europe. A call to action appeal was sent throughout the European countries. WFWP members held seminars, signature campaigns against rape in Bosnia and sex and violence on TV, used book tables, a website, networking with other NGOs and conferences including the WFWP Europe annual conference to conduct outreach and engage people in the Dignity of Women project.



Climate Change, contd from pg. 2

for the International Research Institute for Climate and Society spoke about work that is already being done mostly in Africa. "Our rule is to find and create solutions." In West Africa the organization is working with the Red Cross to prevent and reduce suffering caused by natural disasters. In East Africa there is a credit and loan program for farmers. In Ethiopia the farmers have access to insurance. "Solution-finding should be put on the table during the Copenhagen deliberations".

The final speaker, Janos Pasztor, Director of the Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team emphasized the importance of seizing the opportunity to speak out for action at Copenhagen. "The Copenhagen conference itself is the time for the greatest pressure. Climate is changing faster than estimated. Global emissions are increasing – a lot. Urgency of action is critical for a global agreement. We must have every country engaged. The level of financial support is inadequate. When governments gather in Copenhagen they have to feel pressure to answer to their people. Right now hundreds of NGOs are committed to go to Copenhagen."

Moderator Eric Falt concluded the sessions by urging everyone to take action to "Seal the Deal" in Copenhagen.



Upcoming Events

- ❖ April 10: 18th WFWP Anniversary
- ❖ May 15: International Day of Families
- ❖ July*: ECOSOC Substantive Session in New York
- ❖ Aug 12: International Youth Day
- ❖ Aug 30 - 63rd DPI/NGO Sep 1: Conference Melbourne, Australia
- ❖ Sep 14: Opening Day of 65th General Assembly Session
- ❖ Sept 21: International Day of Peace
- ❖ Oct.*: WFWP 11th International Leaders' Workshop

*tentative