



Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)



59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Monday 9 March - Friday 20 March 2015

Priority Theme - Reviewing progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

What is CSW?

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women.

Each year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) and CSW

Over the past few years, the SWC has sent a delegation to CSW to ensure that the issues raised by women in Scotland around the priority theme are taken to this international arena.

Throughout this time, the SWC has remained an integral member of the CSW NGO Liaison Group, includes other women's organisations representing the devolved nations, regional women's organisations in the UK and international groups. Meetings are held with UK Government officials in preparation for CSW. Communication between Group members continues through email, meetings and telephone conferences.

To ensure the voices of women in Scotland are included as part of the debate, the SWC produces a report every year. The report for 2015 explored the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). It looked at the 'strands' of the BPfA, including legislation adopted at a UK and Scottish level during the 20 year period. The organisation then reported, using the voices of women in Scotland, of the gaps and progresses made. The report was forwarded to Scottish and UK Government officials and key decision makers.

The report also informed the UK NGO report. This document was submitted to the UK Government and provided an overview of women's issues and concerns. It included input from the devolved nations.

It was also taken to CSW and given to delegates attending the various side events. A copy can be found on the SWC website.

Evelyn Fraser, SWC Development Manager, attended a number of 'side' events as well as meeting with other UK representatives at CSW. The organisation was also given accreditation, through its links with UK organisations, to access proceedings in the UN building.

Evelyn also attended morning and evening meetings held at the Baha'i Centre and UK mission. This gave the SWC an opportunity to engage with other UK women as well as be provided with updates of the other activities being undertaken at CSW.

On Tuesday 10 March delegates attended an evening reception at the UK Mission held by the UK Ambassador to the UN. This provided those attending CSW from the UK an opportunity to meet with the Ambassador and UK Government Representative Baroness Northover. Evelyn was able to present a copy of the SWC report.



CSW 2014

The main business of CSW took place in the UN Building from 9 March - 20 March. The theme was

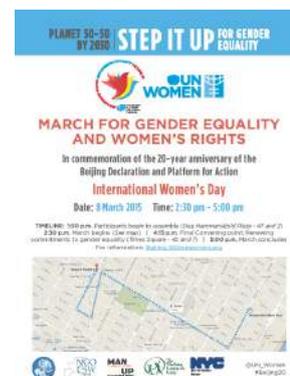
'Reviewing progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.'

Baroness Northover, UK Government Representative, as well as MPs supported by the IPU (Inter-Parliamentarian Union) - attended CSW during week 1. UK Government officials attended both weeks.

UK colleagues from NAWO and UN Women



CSW2015 started on Sunday 8 March (International Women's Day) with an Consultation Day for women's organisations - 'Celebrating the Feminist and Women's Movements from 1975 - 2015'. A celebration march organised by New York City, UN Women and civil society partners followed.



Women in Conflict: What have we learnt from the past 20 years and looking to the future

UN Women Director, Women, Peace and Security

Differences are often made when women are at the heart of negotiations. In the Philippines, a peace agreement was signed with gender content which gave women power at a local level. This enabled communities to grow and women to become leaders.

In Colombia, women were also consulted on the best way forward for the country, making up two-fifths of the negotiating team who produced a peace plan.

William Hague, a UK Government Minister at the time, held a Global Summit to end sexual violence in conflict in 2014. 80 International leaders signed an action plan to help women in conflict areas. Rape is not recognised as a crime and goes unpunished. Women are paying the price in many countries and have to seek support.

In Syria, Libya and South Sudan, to name a few, the UN are engaged in conflict resolution. However, women are not. Sexual violence against women is on the increase and is not linked to other forms of violence against women including domestic abuse.

The CSW Political Declaration does not mention conflict of UN Resolution 1325. There is no action at an international level to address the lack of women in power and leadership in conflict countries. There is no support for grassroots women's organisations, national or international assistance. Women have no voice in their communities. This has to be addressed.

Women have no access to bank accounts or funding. There is poor internet and WIFI connections to allow them to link up with others. There are no women in leadership roles to lead the way in conflict areas.

Women in conflict need support from others. We need to build up grassroots women to provide institutional structures, through the UN, to help them. There needs to be support for regional peace networks and women's organisations on the ground.

Nepal

Voices of victims are not truly addressed. Women disappear, unexplained, on a regular basis. The definition of rape and torture is not truly accepted by the Courts and women are routinely dismissed.

It is often difficult for a woman to be accepted back into her community after being abused. Family and friends abandon her, her husband disowns her and she often loses her children.

In one example, a father committed suicide rather than live with the stigmatisation that his daughter had been raped by soldiers.

There are multiple issues associated with women in conflict. Not only do they suffer from torture or rape, it is often difficult to prove that anything actually happened to them. Medical examinations are not very conclusive, with women enduring intrusive questioning and inspection. They often rely on medication to help them survive not only the physical but also the mental scars they bear.

During peace processes, women need assistance with reintegration into the community. They are often not employed and are therefore not part of the formal economy. They have to look after their family and have little say over their lives.

Women are not encouraged to be part of the peace process but without them it is meaningless.



Libya

In 2011, the revolution started. The conflict lasted 10 months. Following that the people of Libya thought that there would be a new era and a better life. The Libyan National Council was established with representatives from throughout the country making decisions about Libya's future. However, the militia started to take power.

Demonstrations started again for a new National Council. The military wanted Libya to be in chaos again and were targeting the police. Although the war was started by men, women and children were the victims.

Libya is a big, rich country with a small population (6 million people). There is no support for women and children, no one recognises their voice. The Libyan culture does not support women.

The Hope Charity provides education to women in Libya. They attend English and computing classes, gain skills in cooking etc, attend human development lectures. The Charity supports women and empowers them, letting them know of their rights. It also assists with access to employment opportunities whether that be in an established workplace or setting up their own business.

Congo

Women look after the children and are not encouraged to get an education. Girls are taken and raped by soldiers. They have a child and the soldier returns to claim the child so that it can grow up in his community. The girl has no say over this and has to hand over her child. This increases the strength of a community and decreases the power of women.

One young woman, who was educated, was about to be raped. She challenged the soldier and he backed down.

If more young women know their rights, then rape in conflict might decrease.

A film portraying a mock trial on the effectiveness of UN Resolution 1325 was shown. It can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/121628382>.

UN Women and International Association of Women Police: Ending VAWG: Slavery & Trafficking: Transformative Practices for Policy Makers and Activists

\$159million is spent on prostitution and trafficking every year. This includes sexual and labour exploitation as well as domestic servitude. Women are forced to work by others. They are raped, beaten and forced into prostitution. These are the hidden statistics.

In 2013 there were, globally, 29.8 million people in forced slavery. Of the 21 million in domestic servitude, 11.4 million were women. 4.5 million migrant and indigenous people worldwide were forced into sexual exploitation with the majority being women.

In the UK in 2011, 1186 people were recorded through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) as being trafficked. There were 786 women and 371 children. These are the people, however, who were recorded. There could be 13,000 people who have been trafficked to the UK.

Sexual exploitation is most prominent in the UK, with women being forced into criminality.

Annually, on a global basis, 5.5 million children are trafficked. In the UK it is 10 per week (520 per year). Children who have been or are in care can become 'hidden'. They lack support and are 'groomed' by traffickers.

In England and Wales, the Slavery Bill aims to enhance support to victims; look at maritime legislation; have an Anti Slavery Commissioner; protect victims.

A woman police officer from Ghana explained that Ghana is the gateway to Africa. Human trafficking is an illegal trade to deny people their Human Rights. Ghana is a source, transit and destination country. Children within the country work in agriculture and fishing as well as being forced into street hawking.

An Anti Human Trafficking unit has been established. This unit, staffed by over 100 women police officers, is devoted to getting rid of human trafficking.

The unit works in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare Department, Financial Intelligence (who follow the traffickers' money); Passport Office (who check for name / age change on passports) as well as NGOs working on the ground.



The Unit works with all stakeholders for the protection of those being trafficked. Over 1,000 people have been rescued through this service. Funding, however, is a challenge as well as the court processes which both the trafficked and traffickers face.

In 2007, New York introduced an Anti Trafficking Law. In the past, people who were trafficked experienced a negative interaction with the judicial system. There were 7000 + domestic abuse cases linked to human trafficking. Many of these women were prostituted by their father, partner etc.

There is now a new structure in place. Social workers are employed to break down barriers. These workers are based within the Family Justice Centre and are therefore accessible and approachable.

The Starfish Project, based in Vietnam, looks after women who have travelled from the country to the city. These women have no education, are in low paid employment and send money home to their families.

"Poverty strips people of their dreams. Women want stability for their families."

The Starfish Project has set up a jewellery company. It is a safe environment where women can meet to learn literacy and numeracy skills as well as find out about other services available to them including healthcare. The women are then often reunited with their children.

Women go on to study other subjects including computer training. Others study subjects outwith the project including photography and accountancy. There is also a mentoring programme which supports women throughout their stay.

The women learn skills like business start-up which means that they can apply for management positions rather than low-skill, low-paid work. 'Advocates of Hope' is a programme which can be accessed through the Starfish Project website. It also has case studies of the women who have accessed the different projects supported by Starfish.

(Website - <http://site.starfish-project.com/>)

Transforming Gender Based Stereotypes in Women's Leadership and Violence against Women: a Cultural and Age Diversity Perspective

Australia Stereotypes can lead to violence against women and therefore affect women's ability to become leaders. Stereotypes need to be challenged, values changed and women accepted as equals. However, this is very hard to achieve.

From an early life, toys and games which children play with start the stereotypes which influence them in later life. Girls play with dolls, boys play with cars. Even children's clothing supports stereotypical views - pink / blue; dresses / trousers etc.

Honduras - Honduras is a very male driven society. Boys do not wash dishes or undertake any cleaning in the home. This is very much down to a culture where women do all the tasks in the home. In Western society it is not wrong for men to do women's work. In Scotland men can wear kilts. In Honduras this would not happen - men would not wear 'skirts'.

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| 1900 - 1930 | Women didn't work or if they did it tended to be in a factory. Men held management posts |
| 1930 - 1950 | Boys / men went to war. Girls / women did men's work.
<i>"Women did the jobs that men left behind"</i> |
| 1940 | 11 million women in work |
| 1960 - 1970 | There was a revolution |
| 1980 - Pres | Better but there is still a gap in employment of women. |

TV adverts show women cleaning, loving, and making themselves beautiful for men in a sexual manner. Men are portrayed as powerful, strong, will do anything and love women in a sexual way. This must be challenged to see change.



"A girl's confidence plummets during puberty"

New Zealand - the speaker came from an Indian community in New Zealand. Women are not allowed to speak out against their elders. She was classed as a 'bossy young woman'.

Men are viewed as powerful whereas women are viewed as bossy if they want to get their point across. Although New Zealand was the first country to give women the vote only 32% of parliamentarians are women.

Discussions around quotas have been hijacked by the media who view them as a 'man ban'.

It is engrained in society that women take on the roles at home. This must be challenged in order for society to change.

Far East - this young woman came from a Buddhist country where men are the rulers. Only a man can become a God. Women are taught to 'treat your husband as a God and your son as a Lord.'

'If you want your wife to love you more, beat her until her bones are broken.'

This practice happens in many homes. Women do not speak about the domestic violence they experience. They must keep it a secret within the family. If a man has an affair, it is the woman's fault as she is not treating him well. Women and girls are not allowed to travel alone, they must wear 'appropriate' clothes and they must not leave the house at night.



When girls marry, they must be a virgin. If they reject a man, he will rape her so that no other man will have her.

In a conflict area, one young woman was raped by a soldier. She had to marry him and was reminded of the attack every day. If a man rapes a girl he apologises to the family by offering a chicken or a pig and then agrees to marry her. A mother supports her husband and the rapist rather than her daughter.

Women are subjected to daily attacks of sexual violence on public transport. It is a very conservative culture. Women are treated as second class citizens with babies, young women and older women experiencing violence on a daily basis.

Scotland - Laurie Gayle, President of YWCA in Scotland spoke about the 'Great nation of Scotland'. Scotland has its first woman First Minister and a 50/50 gender balanced Cabinet. However women still experience inequalities in access to healthcare, 50/50 representation on Public Bodies and human trafficking. These are no BME women elected as Members of the Scottish Parliament.

There are discrepancies in how young people are treated. In Scotland, at the Scottish Independence Referendum, young people of 16 years of age were allowed to vote. However, this is currently not the case for other elections. Why should they have been allowed to vote in one election and not all elections.

The YWCA allows all young women to use their voices. The Scotland YWCA report on the status of young women is due to be published in May 2015.

Sex Sells - What Do You Reckon? Prostitution, Trafficking & Demand

Speakers from Bristol University gave presentations around the theme of the session.

Music, videos, TV and gaming all have an impact on young people's perceptions of women in the media. Violent acts and the brutalisation of women are acceptable in some forms of media. And people are buying into it. In music, lyrics by artists such as Robin Thicke, Chris Brown, Taylor Swift and Eminem (to name a few) all refer to women in a demeaning and sexist way. Young children often idolise these celebrities without understanding what they are saying and singing about. This distorts the way in which children think and further promotes violent and inappropriate behaviour.

Television is estimated to be responsible for motivating at least 10% of youth violence. Popular movies like '50 Shades of Grey' and television programmes like 'Game of Thrones' show women in positions of sexual and physical violence. This normalises the image that aggression will be tolerated by women and society.



Teenagers talk about being 2-3 times more sexually active when watching inappropriate television programmes. There are unrealistic pressures on young people to conform to the images they see - a badge of honour, something to boast about.

Watching and listening to unsuitable media can lead to increased sexualisation and in the long run an increase in human trafficking. By thinking it is acceptable to be violent towards women, making them subservient and inflicting abuse, men can consider that trafficking as the next step of undermining women.

Women are often trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation. There are push / pull factors which influence this including a lack of job opportunities, war and conflicts and poverty. Women are trafficked with the promise of a better life only to become prisoners at the hands of men.

Young women are not made aware of the dangers of human trafficking. *"It is not considered important."* Money is spent on awareness raising of the effects of drinking and drug taking. The consequences of human trafficking, however, should be top of the political agenda. It can happen in any country and is not just about bringing people into a country. It is, therefore, vital that Governments throughout the world do more to raise the profile of human trafficking - how it happens, the consequences, those who are targeted etc.

Educational films in school or spaces to talk about issues would be a start and might give young people the opportunity to talk about the pressures they are under.

Legislation against human trafficking has been passed in many countries throughout the world. One country which legalised the prostitution of women was Germany. 'Sex work' was legal and the women were given access to health insurance. Only 40 applied for this and the number of women in prostitution has doubled to 200,000.

A change in the law in one country allows perpetrators to move to another country. There needs to be a global stance on human trafficking in order to eradicate it.

Supporting Democracy Worldwide

In 2015, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), there will be a stand alone goal for gender equality. We all must monitor these goals and ensure that achievable targets are signed up to.

Latin America

In 2010 and 2014 there was 50/50 representation in political parties. However, in the same years women accounted for only 19% of those on public boards. Women still do not have equal access to political life. Role models, for example women Ministers, do not support women to come into the decision making process.

The challenges -

- partnership working is required between political parties, civil society and parliamentarians to ensure the inclusion of gender equality.
- Quotas for affirmative action need to be constantly evaluated. There needs to be alliances between parliamentarians to ensure that correct procedures are followed.

Quotas have been useful but not fully accessible for women.

Arab region - Tunisia

There is a need for focus groups (1) to look at the political parties and how they select their women commissioners; and (2) NGOs should be involved in electoral groups.

This work must be undertaken with the support of female politicians and male supporters.

- Political leaders are not accessible
- The importance of databases on disaggregated info should not be undervalued.
- Political parties need to reform and support women. They need to start advocating for women as leaders and include civil society .

34% of the representatives in the parliament are women. This is, in part, due to a successful selection within political parties with women being portrayed as credible leaders. Women work hard as negotiators however obstacles are often put in their way.

Women are often feared by men who see them taking their place. There are often gender blind approaches and seldom commitment and action to support women once they are selected. The main Government leaders do not see women as competent and subject them to verbal violence.

The media has a role to play in ensuring that women are portrayed in a positive way, not only during the campaign, but also after an election.

Kenya

Videos have been recorded to encourage women to stand in positions of power. They engage with communities and show men that women can lead.



There is positive legislation in Kenya to support women, however elected women only represent 4.57% of the National Assembly.

At a local level, in the County Assembly, 7.4% of elected members are women.

The way forward is for all citizens to work with political parties and promote women as leaders.

Widowhood: The Forgotten Issues in the BPfA

UN Women

If there is to be an end to gender inequality by 2030, policies and action need to be put in place. Governments need a concrete commitment to gender equality. BPfA does not include widows but times have moved on and policies and practice needs to change. There are more widows now because of conflict, age difference, HIV/Aids. They are the “invisible community.”

There is a lack of data which is needed to change policy on many areas of research. UN women holds an advocacy role and aims to erase the stigma of widowhood.

Entitlement laws to land and property, for example, make it difficult for women to hold on to their homes when widowed. Inheritance, land rights and access to finance are all key areas of inequality for women whose rights must be protected.

India

There are a number of different ‘categories’ of widowhood

- Half widows - women whose husbands are missing.
- Widows due to migration.

Culturally widows and single women are be grouped together. There is a link between poverty and marital status.

Governments need to invest in the most vulnerable households. Widows have weak bargaining power due to illiteracy and a lack of access to finance. There are few employment opportunities and where there are they tend to be in informal employment.

Widows are barred from buying seed and fertilizer to make a living from their land. They then have to sell it and are often offered informal working where they were once owners.

Nepal

There are over 9,000 widows in Nepal as a result of conflict. They have no entitlement to property or citizenship. Property remains with male family members only.

Social security is only 5 dollars a month for women aged 60+.

Data collected by civil society is used for lobbying decision makers to change legislation.

Nigeria

There are widowhood practices which a women must undertake following the death of her husband.

- Women must indicate that they know nothing about death.
- They have to go through certain rituals.
- They must drink the water used to wash their dead husband’s corpse.

Widows are denied inheritance rights; only a male child can inherit. If there is no male child then the widow is disinherited. Even although there are laws in place to support widows, a court will not overrule cultural practices.

Land ownership gives women a sense of worth. The speaker is a widow. She had land taken from her. It is not just poor women these rituals refer to.



Widowhood is a very big omission from BPfA, particularly for developing countries. It should be mainstreamed in post 2015 agenda.

Another speaker from Nigeria spoke of the maternal health issues experienced by widows due to early marriage and pregnancy. She works with a peace building project following the Boko Haram insurgency. The project works with local organisations to gather statistics on widows in specific areas.

“Widows are now a formidable force.”

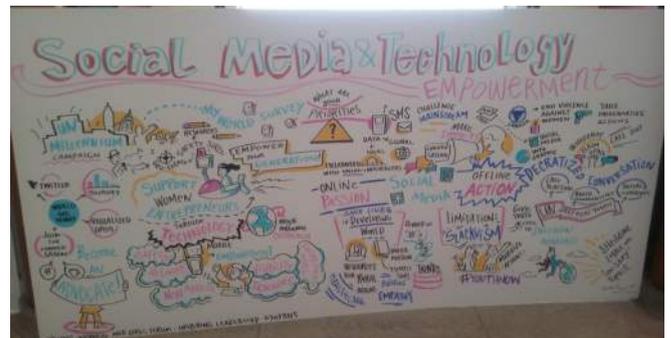
Ghana

Ghana has the same issues as Nigeria.

A national annual conference focuses on widowhood. Its main aim is to inform decision makers.

“Widows rights are human rights , human rights are women's rights. Widowhood is not a curse.”

Visual Records of Discussions of Young Women at CSW



Displayed in UN during CSW

Other information of interest -

- Ban Ki Moon, Secretary–General of the United Nations, addressed CSW on 10 March 2015. Listen to him speak at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGhHC45c46Q (at 45 minutes)
- Hillary Rodham Clinton addressed CSW on 10 March 2015. Listen to her speak at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGhHC45c46Q (at 55 minutes)
- Women’s Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, 11 March 2015 (attended by SWC). Weblink includes video of the session www.empowerwomen.org/en/news/csw59-unlocking-domestic-capital-for-womens-economic-empowerment
- Dove - ‘Free Being Me’ Campaign, 13 March 2015 (attended by SWC) www.free-being-me.com/free-being-me-at-the-un-commission-on-the-status-of-women/
- Closing the Gaps on Women’s Political Participation and Representation and the Post 2015 Development Agenda (attended by SWC) Weblink includes video of the session webtv.un.org/topics-issues/global-issues/watch/closing-the-gaps-on-womens-political-participation-and-representation-in-the-post-2015-development-agenda-csw59-side-event/4109697694001



Agreed Conclusions

Due to the nature of CSW in 2015, no agreed conclusions were issued. A Political Declaration was signed on 8 March, prior to the start of CSW. Many civil society organisations protested that this document should not have been signed as there was no consultation between Governments and women’s representatives. A copy of this document can be found at www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2015/L.1

During week 2 of CSW, discussions took place around the Working Methods paper. Agreement was reached on 20 March. A copy of this document can be found at www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2015/L.5

“Over 8,500 women and organisations registered to attend CSW in 2015. It was a fantastic atmosphere and great experience. There is so much to learn from women. By coming together we can support and empower one another as well as work towards change.” Evelyn Fraser (SWC)

CSW 2016

The dates for CSW 2016 have not been indicated.

The priority theme will be around women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development. The review theme will be the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

www.scottishwomensconvention.org