



# International Alliance of Women Alliance Internationale des Femmes

## President's Newsletter

June 2016

### Evaluation of CSW 60

#### Discussion in the CSW 60

Both the general debate and the plenary round tables of the first ministerial segment of CSW focused on the implementation areas outlined in the Secretary General's report but also highlighted the emphasis member states put on different themes and the SDG's.

#### Ministerial Round tables:

- **Ministerial Round table A:** *Enhancing national institutional arrangements for gender equality and women's empowerment.*

Many speakers said that institutional arrangements are key to ensuring gender equality, including legislation, policy measures and funding. Having a Minister responsible for gender equality was another critical component.

- **Ministerial Round table B:** *Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment.*

Many speakers said that the 2030 Agenda cannot be realized unless it is fully feminized. Discriminatory legal barriers persist across sectors. Legislation is not enough. States must remove cultural barriers, fight stereotypes and support national structures for gender equality and women's empowerment. Men and boys as well as young people must also play a role.

- **Ministerial Round table C:** *Financing for gender equality and women's empowerment.*

The questions to be answered were how resources could be enhanced within the context of sustainable development and what measures could be taken to encourage governments to invest more in women.

Governments reported an array of financing strategies ranging from the establishment of national trust funds for gender issues to the reallocation of taxes and ODA.

Others underscored the need for alternative sources of funding such as philanthropic sources, public-private partnerships and funds raised for combating illicit financial flows.

- **Ministerial Round table D:** *Fostering gender-responsive data, design, collection and analysis and building the knowledge base.*

Despite the fact that the UN Statistical Commission has established 230 indicators to monitor the progress in achieving the SDG's, speakers raised key areas where figures disaggregated by gender were lacking. Those included unpaid care work, access to energy, water, sanitation. Several speakers stressed that gender responsive data are one of the core elements of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

- **Review Theme:** *The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*

Speakers condemned gender based violence including rape as a weapon of war or tactic of terrorism and stressed that women have the right to live free of fear. However, such violations were not limited to war zones. Domestic violence, forced marriages and FGM occurred around the world. Other speakers urged for a focus on the root causes of violence calling for a more effective prosecution of perpetrators while persistence of traditional stereotypes of masculinity are a serious obstacle to ending gender based violence. Other speakers stressed that investing in the prevention of violence in schools was also needed in order to change attitudes associated with destructive masculinity. Other speakers stressed that violence against older women went undetected and called for the creation of an international instrument for the protection of older person's rights.

- **High level Interactive dialogue among Ministers:** *Building alliances for gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

Speakers discussed how governments and national mechanisms could support and empower women's organizations so they could contribute to national implementation and monitoring of 2030 Agenda.

Speakers said that institutional mechanisms on gender equality must be open to all relevant stakeholders. Efforts must be made to ensure that the private sector is socially responsible. Steps must be taken to promote accountability and protect the human rights of women. The feminist movement has been of critical importance for changing societies around the world.

- **Interactive expert panel:** *Key strategies for gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

The questions to be asked were how countries were aligning existing national strategies and policies with the 2030 Agenda and how they were ensuring gender mainstreaming in that process. Moreover advancing gender equality to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030 required the rethinking of macroeconomics and how they could support the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Many governments reported that they had set up mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the 2030 Agenda but due to budget constrains they faced obstacles. The analysis of more then 230 indicators would be a struggle for most countries.

Among the specific tools put forward were gender audits in government ministries and agencies, periodic national assessments, reviews of legislation and censuses to collect data.

- **Interactive expert panel:** *Participation and partnerships for gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

The panel explored the roles of five key stakeholder groups in supporting the gender dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. City government, local authorities, parliamentarians, multilateral development banks, women's civil society organizations and the UN system.

Speakers said that multi-stakeholder partnerships for gender equality had to begin with a participatory approach and that women's civil society organizations and networks had a major role to play in that respect.

Municipal governments were ideally placed to play a facilitative role in empowering women.

Multilateral development banks were uniquely positioned to ensure that sex disaggregated data were collected so as to meaningfully inform policy dialogue on gender issues, establish public- private partnerships for development and obtain private sector client's commitment to promote gender equality in their business.

The global convening role of UN greatly facilitated the setting of norms, raising awareness and influencing public opinion in favor of social change.

Among other issues panelists tackled the crucial role of female political leaders and the increase in restrictions of the freedom of civil society including women's groups.

- **Interactive expert panel:** *The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. Addressing data gaps and methodological issues.*

Many speakers said that despite progress in data collection, many countries still have little or no data on the prevalence of violence against women. Data make it possible to assess the magnitude of the problem, understand the various types of violence and identify high risk groups. They also provide a starting point for laws, policies and programs and enable countries to monitor effectiveness and change over times. Other speakers said that to ensure international comparability of data, a single internationally agreed methodology was needed.

## **Agreed Conclusions CSW 60**

### **Structure:**

The Agreed Conclusions (AC) are geared towards implementation with a strong normative framework and a structural priority theme which is broad but focused.

The operative part has five sections of policy recommendations based on the SG report for the theme: i) strengthen the normative, legal and policy frameworks ii) enhance national institutional arrangements iii) fostering enabling environments for financing gender equality and women's empowerment iv) strengthening women's leadership and supporting women's civil society organizations v) strengthening gender responsive data collection, follow up and review, monitoring and accountability processes.

### **Negotiations:**

It was not easy to agree on a road map and strategy to implement the gender equality compact in the 2030 Agenda. Till the last hours a consensus outcome was not assured. A small number of states and observers engaged in questioning of references to SRHR, child, early and forced marriages, unpaid care work, feminists and women's human rights defenders, youth, women's human rights and forms of the family amongst others. The negotiations were difficult. Recognizing rights of indigenous people, even just reference to supporting women civil society, feminists and trade unionists was difficult.

The paragraphs on financing for gender responsive implementation of the SDGs were difficult as it was necessary to have a strong commitment to ODA as well as domestic resources (also in the North). Then reference to the need to change current macro-economic systems to reduce inequalities between and within countries through progressive taxation, debt restructuring, closing tax havens etc was also difficult. There were also long negotiations to get specific commitments to fund women's rights and feminist organizations.

The CSW did not succeed to ensure the human rights of all women. The paragraph on sexual orientation and gender identity was very important but this opportunity was lost entirely. There was complete unwillingness to negotiate on the LGTB and SOGI issues. Clarification was made by a few on the definition of the term gender.

The language on health, sexual and reproductive health and rights was contested in particular from the Vatican/ Holy See and allies and in the end it was just possible to maintain 2 years old language. There were long negotiations on recognizing the need for comprehensive sexuality education. Russia and allies tried to bring in very regressive language on the family.

Some states including some developed ones wanted to highlight leadership and ownership and rights to decide how to implement this Agenda, keeping in mind their national circumstances and capacity and not have any prescription from the Commission. This approach was finally balanced by a reference to “while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments”.

### **Evaluation of Agreed Conclusions:**

We agree with UN Women that the AC established value added commitments to effectively implement and monitor the progress of the gender equality compact contained in the entire 2030 Agenda in conjunction with BDPfA. However, mainstreaming gender equality, women’s and girls’ human rights and the empowerment of women in the entire 2030 Agenda is not enough to achieve the transformative changes that the 2030 Agenda must ensure. We need to work towards the universal realization of all women’s and girls’ human rights as ends in themselves rather than just a means to further economic interests that perpetuate poverty and inequality. There is a need to reform structures that produce and compound gender inequality overtime and across generations. In other words we need strategies to tackle the root causes of women’s and girls’ human rights violations and gender inequality. The AC do not include any such commitments.

The most important commitments adopted by the Commission are the following:

#### ***Essentiality of Gender equality and women’s empowerment on SDGs and Beijing Platform for Action as foundational basis***

The AC recognize the essentiality of gender equality and women’s empowerment and progress on all SDGs and targets. The BDPfA and the outcome documents of its reviews and the outcomes of relevant major UN conferences have laid a solid foundation for SD.

#### ***Women’s human rights affirmations and major role of civil society and feminist and youth led organizations:***

The AC strongly prioritize the human rights of women and girls in the achievement of GEWE and SD implementations of the 2030 Agenda. CEDAW and CRC provide an international legal framework and comprehensive set of measures for their realization.

The AC recognize the major contributions made by civil society including feminist groups, women’s, community based and youth led organizations.

#### ***Role of a socially responsible and accountable private sector:***

The AC call on a socially responsible and accountable private sector to support the full, effective and accelerated implementation of BDPfA and 2030 Agenda.

#### ***Men and boys as allies. Changing social norms and enyouthing of CSW and the women’s movement:***

Recognition of men and boys as allies in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women as well as in the full, effective and accelerated implementation of BDPfA and gender responsive implementation of 2030 Agenda. The change of social norms was emphasized. There was an effort of enyouthing of CSW and of

ensuring a gender just and youth accountable implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda. This was reflected in the references to girls throughout the text and by identifying youth led organizations as key actors and stakeholders for an open, inclusive and transparent engagement.

***The implementation road map of the gender compact in the SDGs:***

The AC set out a road map for the why, what and how of the implementation of all key SDGs for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The emphasis is that all SDGs have to be implemented in a gender responsive way. While there is no mention of SDG 5 significant commitments are made and actions outlined on all 6 SDG targets and 3 means of implementation.

***Elimination of violence against women and girls:***

The AC call upon all stakeholders to adopt, review and ensure the accelerated and effective implementation of laws that criminalize violence against women and girls as well as comprehensive, multidisciplinary and gender – sensitive, preventive, protective and prosecutorial measures and services.

***Valuing and recognizing unpaid care:***

The AC call upon MS and other relevant stakeholders to value, recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, by promoting shared responsibility by women and men and provision of essential services and social protection.

***Women's equal participation and leadership:***

The AC recognize the relevance of women's effective and meaningful participation and need for equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in public and private sectors and in all areas of sustainable development.

***Universal access to sexual and reproductive rights and health:***

A robust, comprehensive and progressive commitment was secured on universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights on the basis of the text of the Agreed Conclusions of CSW58.

***Holistic women's economic empowerment agenda:***

The AC recognize and set out a holistic approach that women's equal economic rights, economic empowerment and independence are essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

***Interconnectedness of gender equality and women's empowerment with other SD goals:***

The AC come out strongly in making the interconnectedness between gender equality, women's empowerment and poverty eradication, the right to education, water and sanitation, climate change, SCR1325, humanitarian and women's mobility, food security.

***The enabling environment:***

The AC gave a boost to national gender mechanisms for gender equality by committing to strengthening their authority, capacity and funding and promoting their visibility and support for them.

***Transformative financing of gender equality and sustainable development:***

The Commission committed to significantly increased investment to close the gender resource gap by mobilizing funds from all sources, domestic and international.

***Gender responsive data, indicators, monitoring, follow up and review:***

The Commission stressed the need for a gender responsive data collection approach in national follow up and review taking into account where applicable the agreed global indicators framework and strengthen national statistical capacity.

***Family and Gender Equality:***

The Commission stressed the need for elaborating and implementing family policies aimed at achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and at enhancing the full participation of women in society.

***Resolutions adopted:***

The Commission recommended four draft resolutions to the Economic Social Council.

- It approved without a vote a draft resolution on the Commission's multi-year program of work by which the Council would establish the themes for the Commission's 61<sup>st</sup>, 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> sessions.
- The Commission approved without a vote a draft resolution entitled "Women, the girl child and HIV/Aids". The text was introduced by Botswana speaking on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community. The document emphasized the need for urgent action to address the devastating and disproportionate impact of HIV/Aids on women and girls.
- Also approved without a vote was a draft resolution on the release of women and children taken hostage including those subsequently in prison during armed conflict.

The representative of Azerbaijan introduced the text and said it addressed the situation of women and children hostages who were victims of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, the impact of trafficking in persons during situations of armed conflict and the increased vulnerability of women and children to violence.

- The Commission adopted by a recorded vote of 20 in favor to 2 against (Israel and USA), with 11 abstentions a draft resolution entitled "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian Women"