

# NGO/CSW FORUM AT CSW 56



**EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN**

# NGO/CSW FORUM 2012 H A N D B O O K

## UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, CSW 56

27 February – 9 March  
2012

NGO/CSW/NY  
CONSULTATION

## EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN

26 FEBRUARY 2012

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# THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR CSW FORUM 56

We acknowledge and thank the following for all their work:

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Soon-Young Yoon, Victoria Edmonds, Mary Ann Tarantula

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Co-Chairs: Soon-Young Yoon, Bani Dugal, supported by Charlotte Bunch, Jackie Shapiro, Leslie Wright

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# CHAIR'S WELCOME TO NGO/CSW FORUM 2012

At this year's CSW, we should celebrate the determination of the international women's movement. You dare to hope when there are few signs of encouragement. The global financial crisis has shrunk public funds at a time when poor women need government assistance the most. Landlessness for rural women is on the rise as corporations speculate and engage in land grabs. And yet, here you are bringing your urgent messages to the United Nations.

I was inspired by over 290 applications for NGO parallel events - an historic record. The UN and civil society events will deal with a wide range of topics from sustainable development and human rights, to health and the trafficking of girls and women. Many sessions will focus on the CSW priority theme of Rural Women as well as the review theme of Financing for Gender Equality.

Why are we focusing on rural women this year? You will hear a lot in the next two weeks about how women produce between 60 to 80% of food consumed but own only a small fraction of the land on which it is produced. You will also learn that women receive less than 10% of all loans and 5% of technical assistance resources. But let us not be disheartened by such statistics. What these data show is the potential as well as the problem. As the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has pointed out, "If women's access to productive resources were the same as men's, women's contribution could reduce the total number of hungry people by 12 to 17%".

The energy that you bring, the issues you raise will help to shape the UN's response to these issues. Our job is to give you the time and place to speak. The NGO/CSW/NY is a voluntary organization of ECOSOC accredited NGOs with sister committees in Geneva and Vienna. We work together under our umbrella organization, the Conference of NGOs.

The NGO/CSW Forum has introduced innovations at each of the CSW conferences. At this NGO/CSW Forum for the first time, you will have a chance to meet in "Conversation Circles".

These will be organized around themes such as human rights, peace and security, violence against women, ageing, migration, health and intergenerational dialogue. They are your chance to network, build trust, and work together on common interests. You will also find a wider variety of event formats including training sessions in communications and social media and climate change.

On March 9, the CSW 56 will come to a close. But let us stay in touch as a community in the next year. As a friend of mine once said to me, “Women can heal the world”. We indeed have that ability.

**Soon-Young Yoon**  
Chair, NGO/CSW/NY

# INTRODUCTION: NGO/CSW FORUM 2012

This year CSW56 will consider the priority theme “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges”. This theme is one that is particularly important in light of the many challenges facing rural women, including the current combined effects of worldwide economic instability and climate change, both of which exacerbate the poverty that most rural women already experience.

In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that policies to improve the circumstances of women in rural areas need to be formulated and, most important, that they must be implemented. The areas of special interest at the time included rural women’s access to resources such as land, credit, technology and decent employment. The need for rural women to be part of decision-making processes was stressed, as was access to education and health services.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) specifically calls for States to guarantee the protection of the human rights of rural women and determines that they must have equal access with men to land, markets, health care facilities, training, education and decent living conditions. General recommendation #21 (13th Session, 1984) states,

“When a woman cannot enter into a contract at all, or have access to financial credit, or can do so only with her husband’s or a male relative’s concurrence or guarantee, she is denied legal autonomy. Any such restriction prevents her from holding property as the sole owner and precludes her from the legal management of her own business or from entering into any other form of contract. Such restrictions seriously limit the woman’s ability to provide for herself and her dependents”.

The empowerment of rural women can only be achieved through the full realization of her human rights.

Women play critical roles in rural areas, although, as the CEDAW Committee has noted several times, the statistical proof is difficult to find because of a lack of disaggregated information. Rural women take part in the farming chores while maintaining and caring for their families. Much of their work is overlooked, because it is considered housework when it is actually fundamental to agricultural production.

Although the theme of CSW56 does not specifically mention violence against women, it cannot be ignored that it exists and that inequality between the sexes is one of the causes. Also, it has been established that poverty and inadequate living conditions do much to heighten the problem of violence against women.

CSW56 will provide all those who attend an opportunity to come together over mutual concerns and hear about those good practices that NGOs from all over the world have put into action. They will also discuss ways to develop strategies to overcome the challenges that still face rural women.

# NGO/CSW FORUM 2012 CONSULTATION DAY PROGRAM

Sunday, 26 February 2012  
The Salvation Army (120 West 14th Street, New York, NY)

The program emcees are Mary Ann Tarantula, Chairman of the Zonta International United Nations Committee and Victoria Edmonds, United Nations representative for the Salvation Army

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 9:00–9:30 a.m.   | Opening National Dance Institute  |
| 9:30–9:45 a.m.   | Welcome by Soon-Young Yoon, Chair, NGO/CSW/NY   |
| 9:45–10:15 a.m.  | Message from UN Women – Michelle Bachelet Executive Director, UN Women  |
| 10:15–10:45 a.m. | Keynote address – Myrna Cunningham Kain Chair, UN Indigenous Peoples’ Forum, NGO/CSW/NY Woman of Distinction Awardee  |
| 10:45–11:15 a.m. | Buzz time   |
| 11:30–12:30 p.m. | Regional Perspectives Panel – Moderated by Ilona Graenitz, Chair, NGO/CSW/Vienna  |
| 12:30– 1:45 p.m. | Lunch   |
| 2:00–2:30 p.m.   | Special guest address – Binata Diop, Chair, Board of Directors, Femmes Africains Solidarité (invited)   |
| 2:30–3:30 p.m.   | Rural Women Panel – Moderated by Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, Chair, NGO/CSW/Geneva  |
| 3:30–5:00 p.m.   | Afternoon sessions<br>1. Orientation for new participants to the CSW - Railton Hall<br>2. Advocacy training - Main Auditorium<br>3. Training for Rural Women Leaders Speak-out - Mumford Hall |
| 5:00–5:15 p.m.   | Closing. Theme song – “Keep on Movin’ Forward”  |

# THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

## RURAL WOMEN'S SOLUTIONS MUST DRIVE THE AGENDA

The empowerment of rural women is critical for their families and communities, improving food security, strengthening agriculture, and bringing about sustainable rural development.

Rural women bear multiple burdens of caring for the household, family and community. They perform household tasks and care for family and community members. They grow and harvest crops, tend to livestock, secure food and generate income. Yet rural women carry out these multiple roles in the face of great challenges.

Rural women produce 60-80% of the food in developing countries yet lack control over land or agricultural resources, due to patriarchal traditions and practices. For example, they currently own 1% of the titled land in Africa.\* This negatively impacts opportunities for secure livelihoods.

As well, rural women face challenges in productivity, due to lack of agricultural extension services, machinery or irrigations—resources typically directed away from women small holders towards larger scale producers.\*\* Climate change, HIV/AIDS, and large-scale land grabs increase challenges for rural women to provide secure food and income for themselves and their families.

Rural women are truly the experts in knowing the issues and needs of their families and communities – and they are taking action to ensure these needs are met. Across the world, they have increasingly been organizing to seek and implement solutions to the challenges they face. They combine their collective determination and organizational skills with practical knowledge of natural resources and traditional agricultural methods, improving the availability of nutritious food, increasing small-scale agriculture, and generating income.

There are rural women's initiatives that could be up-scaled and used as guidance for bottom-up policies. Organizations, such as the Huairou Commission, have supported grassroots organization members in developing innovative strategies to address issues of food security, natural resources and livelihood.

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\* ActionAid, Fertile Ground: How governments and donors can halve hunger by supporting small farmers, 2010, [www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile\\_ground.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/fertile_ground.pdf)

\*\* If women farmers in Kenya had the same access to farm inputs and education as men, food yields could increase by 22% and the GDP growth rate would have doubled in 2004 from 4.3% to 8.3%. International Fund for Agricultural Development, Food and Agriculture Organization and World Bank, Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2009, p.522.

For example, rural women from Luna Creciente in Ecuador have utilized traditional agro-ecological methods to increase productivity and improve irrigation systems. In Nicaragua, the women of Union de Cooperativas Las Brumas, an association of women's farming cooperatives, provide credit to women farmers and advocate for agricultural policy to benefit women.

Women of MWEDO (Maasai Women's Development Organization) in Tanzania have gained certificates of land from local authorities through dialogue. In Ghana, Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation has, as a collective, negotiated with the local chief for a tract of land.

In Bangladesh, the women of Participatory Development Action Program have worked with national officials to gain recognition of their right to land and agriculture. In India, grassroots women of Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) learned traditional methods of seed processing, increasing the nutrition and income of their families.

Through the Huairou Commission's<sup>\*</sup> peer learning community, these and other grassroots organizations are linking together to share their strategies directly with one another, to strengthen and implement them on the ground and to share them with policy and decision makers for long-term solutions to food insecurities and rural development.

It is critical to empower and include rural women in decision-making processes at the local, national and global levels. As one grassroots leader has recommended:

Self-representation of poor women and recognition as experts – we don't need top-down designed programs or policies designed for us. We need resources to organize, for empowerment of ourselves and our peers, and to be respected and brought into all levels of decision-making, agenda-setting and program design and implementation as expert stakeholders. Godavari Dange, Secretary, Sakhi Federation Osmanabad, SSP, India

This year's CSW is an opportunity to listen to grassroots women's issues and strategies, to ensure that policies and programmes accelerate the empowerment of women in rural areas and work towards greater food security. As the Huairou Commission knows, rural grassroots women's lived realities must not only influence but actually drive the agenda, to ensure real and sustainable development. Let this CSW confirm rural women not as victims, but as the agents of change that they are.

\*The Huairou Commission is a global membership and partnership coalition that empowers grassroots women's organizations to enhance their community development practice and to exercise collective political power at the global level. [www.huairou.org](http://www.huairou.org)

# THEMES AND ISSUES FOR CSW 56

## **PRIORITY THEME 2012**

***The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication; development and current challenges.***

## **REVIEW THEME**

***Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.***

Agreed conclusions from the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. An interactive dialogue will evaluate the progress of implementation of these agreed conclusions.

## **EMERGING ISSUE**

***Engaging young women and men, girls and boys, to advance gender equality.***

## **FUTURE THEMES: 2013 - 2014**

2013 57TH SESSION

***Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls***

2014 58TH SESSION

***Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls***



During the first week of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission, Member States will negotiate agreed conclusions (new policy recommendations) to accelerate the implementation of existing commitments, including those listed by the Beijing Platform for Action.

There will be:

- **A round table for high-level participants** that will focus on experiences, lessons learned and good practices, including results with supporting data.
- **An interactive panel of technical experts** who will identify key policy initiatives and capacity-building on gender mainstreaming in order to accelerate the implementation of commitments related to the priority theme. The focus will be on empowerment of rural women, poverty, hunger eradication, development and current challenges.

There will also be:

- **Conversation Circles**, whose purpose is to spur “Conversations” among groups around mutual interests, to network to plan for future collaboration, and to work collectively to implement the UN frameworks and agreements that aim to achieve gender equality.

CSW56

# BACKGROUND

# NGO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, NY

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY (NGO/CSW/ NY), a 501(c)3 charitable corporation in the State of New York, was established in 1972 as a substantive committee of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO). The Committee supports the UN Commission on the Status of Women and works to promote women's rights and empowerment through the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the Millennium Development Goals.

Membership in the Committee includes almost 200 national and international non-governmental organizations and individuals who seek to promote the status of women internationally by working at both the national and international levels on those issues addressed by the United Nations. The Committee's mandate is to foster dialogue among NGOs about the current issues being debated at the United Nations and to help build consensus to promote sound government policies for women worldwide through advocacy and in partnership with governments. It does not promote the specific positions of any one organization. The Committee works in cooperation with the NGO Committees on the Status of Women in Geneva and Vienna.

In addition to the many events that surround the meetings of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Committee also facilitates a variety of activities, all of which are organized and managed by member volunteers. These include:

- Monthly meetings featuring UN and government speakers
- Thematic round tables leading up to the CSW
- Facilitation of NGO participation at the CSW
- Promotion of a gender perspective at the UN and other international meetings
- An annual "Women Who Make a Difference" awards event to honor women ambassadors at the UN
- Meetings and briefings during sessions of the CEDAW Committee
- Maintenance of a website, a global listserv and several e-mail listservs
- An intern program

This year (2012) NGO/CSW celebrates forty years of helping to promote women's rights and empowerment.

# PRESENT AND FORMER CHAIRS OF NGO/CSW/NY

**Esther Hymer**  
1972-1982

International Federation of Business  
and Professional Women (IFBPW)

**Kay Fraleigh**  
1982-1991

International Alliance of Women  
(IAW)

**Mary Power**  
1991-1995

Baha'i International Community

**Sudha Acharya**  
1995-1999

All India Women's Conference  
(AIWC)

**Eleanor Brown**  
1999 June-August

International Federation of Women  
Lawyers (IFWL)

**Leslie Wright**  
1999-2003

World Association of Girl Guides and  
Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)

**Bani Dugal**  
2003-2005

Baha'i International Community

**Jackie Shapiro**  
2005-2007

Zonta International

**Vivian Pender**  
2007-2011

International Psychoanalytical  
Association (IPA)

**Soon-Young Yoon**  
2011- present

International Alliance of Women (IAW)

# COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN BUREAU MEMBERSHIP

The Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women (Fifty-sixth session) comprises the members listed below. There are forty-five members, each elected for a four-year term. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons each serve for two years.

**H.E. Ms. Marjon V. Karmara (Liberia)**, Chair

**Ms. Anne Hernando (Philippines)**, Vice-Chair

**Ms. Irina Velichko (Belarus)**, Vice-Chair

**Mr. Carlos Enrique Garcia Gonzales (El Salvador)**, Vice-Chair

**H.E. Mr. Filippo Cinti (Italy)**, Vice-Chair

## **Term expires 2012**

China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Haiti, India, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, United States of America

## **Term expires 2013**

Belarus, Colombia, Germany, Guinea, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Rwanda

## **Term expires 2014**

Argentina, Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Comoros, El Salvador, Gambia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Swaziland, Uruguay

## **Term expires 2015**

Belgium, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic), Jamaica, Liberia, The Netherlands, Spain, Thailand, Zimbabwe

On 2 July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution A/RES/64/289, creating a new Gender Entity, UN Women. With this momentous move, which was part of the UN reform agenda, member states merged and advanced the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment: the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

On 14 September 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Ms. Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women. Having become fully operational on 1 January 2011, UN Women is doing more than the combined functions of the four former agencies and offices. It is building on their normative and operational functions to further progress toward gender equality and the advancement of women. The appointment of an Under-Secretary-General (USG) and two Assistant-Secretaries-General (ASGs) has given UN Women a seat at the highest decision-making levels and has provided the necessary high level leadership and authority required for discussion and resolution of issues pertaining to gender and the advancement of women.

For many years, the UN has faced serious challenges in its efforts to promote gender equality globally, including inadequate funding and the lack of a single recognized driver to direct UN activities on gender equality issues. UN Women was created to address such challenges. It is working to be a dynamic and strong champion for women and girls by providing them with a powerful voice at the global, regional and local levels.

The three primary roles of UN Women are to support intergovernmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), in their formulation of policies, global norms and standards; to help Member States to implement these standards, by developing suitable technical and financial support for those countries that request it, and forge effective partnerships with civil society; and to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

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\* <http://www.unwomen.org>

In addition to the USG, and ASGs, UN Women is governed by an Executive Board that oversees the organization's operational activities based on policy directions set by the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC and the CSW. The Board engages with the executive boards of other UN development agencies to coordinate work on gender equality across the UN system. The UN Women Executive Board is made up of representatives from 41 countries around the world, selected and serving on a rotating configuration. By region these are: 10 from Africa, 10 from Asia, 4 from Eastern Europe, 6 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 5 from Western Europe and 6 from contributing countries. The Bureau is composed of five representatives, one from each of the regional groups.

Current members of UN Women include: Angola, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria and Tanzania (AFRICA); Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea and Timor-Leste (ASIA); Estonia, Hungary, Russian Federation and Ukraine (EASTERN EUROPE); Argentina, Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada and Peru (LATIN AMERICA and the CARIBBEAN); Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden (WESTERN EUROPE); Mexico, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States (CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES).

The Executive Board met three times in 2011, in January, June and December. One of the first tasks before the Executive Board was to review and approve the UN Women's Strategic Plan for 2011-2013 and a budget to support the plan.

Member States have recognized that UN Women requires at least a \$500 million annual budget to achieve its goals, as well as to provide support to the UN, Member States and civil society in implementing policies and commitments. This budget has yet to be realized, as the contributions have not been as forthcoming as necessary.

Years of advocacy by the GEAR (Gender Equality Architecture Reform) Campaign\* and its network of over 300 women's, human rights, and social justice organizations, were instrumental in urging member states and the UN to establish UN Women. In light of the significant role the UN has played in the past decades to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, the GEAR Campaign strongly advocated for the strengthening of these processes by reforming UN gender equality architecture. This advocacy continues as the GEAR Campaign continues to advocate for a well-funded and effective UN Women.

The role of civil society has been and will continue to be substantial in the operational success of UN Women; civil society must have a strong voice and role in setting the priorities, policies and programmes of this new entity and continue to be involved at the national and regional levels. The GEAR Campaign has welcomed the UN Women Executive Director's commitment to creating an NGO Advisory Group and hopes that the group will be created soon. It is essential that women's voices be heard in all their diversities—especially those of grassroots and marginalized women—and this requires that UN Women devise both formal and informal methods of engagement with civil society in all areas of its thematic and country work. To find out more on how to engage actively, please visit the GEAR Campaign website.

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\* <http://www.gearcampaign.org>



# GENDER EQUALITY IN THE UNITED NATIONS

## Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council to prepare recommendations and reports for the Council on promoting women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. The Commission also makes recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights. Following the Beijing Conference, the General Assembly mandated the Commission to integrate into its programme a follow-up process to the Conference, regularly reviewing the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and developing its catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations activities.

The CSW consists of 45 members elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of four years. Members, who are appointed by governments, are elected on the following basis: 13 from African states, 11 from Asian states, 4 from Eastern European states, 9 from Latin American and Caribbean states, and 8 from Western European and other states. The commission meets annually for a period of 10 working days.

## The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and thirty articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures designed to end all forms of discrimination against women, including:

- Incorporating the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolishing all discriminatory laws and adopting appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- Establishing tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination.

Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. At present, the Convention, which entered into force on 3 September 1981, has 186 States parties.

### **Optional Protocol to the CEDAW Convention**

In 1999 the UN General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW Convention. By ratifying the Optional Protocol a state recognizes the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the body that monitors the compliance of states with the Convention, to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction. The CEDAW Optional Protocol was passed in December 2000 and currently has 100 States parties.

# WORLD CONFERENCES ON WOMEN

## 1975 Mexico City

The first UN World Conference on Women coincided with the International Women's Year and served to remind the international community that discrimination against women continued to be a persistent problem in much of the world. The following goals were established:

- Full gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination;
- The integration and full participation of women in development;
- An increased contribution by women in the strengthening of world peace.

A World Plan of Action was adopted at the Mexico City Conference. This document offered guidelines for governments and the international community to follow over the next ten years to accomplish the three key objectives set by the General Assembly. The Plan of Action set minimum targets, to be met by 1980, that focused on securing equal access for women to resources including education, employment opportunities, political participation, health services, housing, nutrition and family planning.

Whereas women were previously perceived as passive recipients of support and assistance, they were now viewed as full and equal partners with men, with equal rights to resources and opportunities. A similar transformation took place in the approach to development, with a shift from an earlier conception that development served to advance women, to a new consensus that development was not possible without the full participation of women.

## 1980 Copenhagen

At the second UN World Conference on Women, it was determined that there was a discrepancy between universal legal rights and women's ability to exercise these rights.

The barriers were:

- Lack of sufficient involvement of men in improving women's role in society;
- Insufficient political will;
- Lack of recognition of the value of women's contributions to society;
- Lack of attention to the particular needs of women in planning;
- Shortage of women in decision-making positions;
- Insufficient services such as co-operatives, day-care centers and credit facilities to support the role of women in national life;
- Overall lack of necessary financial resources;
- Lack of awareness among women about the opportunities available to them.

### **1985 Nairobi**

The Third UN World Conference on Women sought to assess the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. Although the Women's Movement had now become an international force unified under the banner of the "Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace", delegates were confronted with shocking reports. Data gathered by the United Nations revealed that improvements in the status of women and efforts to reduce discrimination had benefited only a small minority of women. Improvements in the situation of women in the developing world had been marginal at best.

The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies (NFLS) to the Year 2000 was a blueprint for improving the condition of women through the end of the century. It broke new ground as it declared all issues to be women's issues. Women's participation in decision making and the handling of all human affairs was recognized not only as their legitimate right but as a social and political necessity that would have to be incorporated in all institutions of society.

The NFLS established the following categories as measures for achieving equality at national levels:

- Constitutional and legal steps;
- Equality in social participation;
- Equality in political participation and decision-making.

It was now recognized that women's equality, far from being an isolated issue, encompassed every sphere of human activity. Therefore, a women's perspective, including active involvement in all issues, not only women's issues, was essential if the goals and objectives of the Decade for Women were to be attained.

### **1995 Beijing**

A fundamental transformation took place in at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women. This was the recognition, based on the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, that women's rights are human rights. There must be a shift of focus from "women" to the concept of "gender", recognizing that the entire structure of society and all relations between men and women within it had to be re-evaluated.

The Beijing Conference unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) which were, in essence, an agenda for women's empowerment. These stand as milestones for the advancement of women in the twenty-first century. The Beijing Platform for Action specified twelve critical areas of concern, the solutions of which were considered to be necessary to women's advancement:

- Women and poverty;
- Education and training of women;
- Women and health;
- Violence against women;
- Women in armed conflict;
- Women and the economy;
- Women in power and decision-making;
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women;

- Human rights of women;
- Women and the media;
- Women and the environment;
- The girl child.

### **2000 Beijing plus Five (B+5)**

The Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (23rd SSGA) produced an outcome document which listed the achievements in the advancement of women during the previous five years. It identified obstacles and current challenges to the process and strengthened the Beijing Platform for Action by focusing action and addressing new issues.

### **2005 Beijing plus Ten (B+10)**

CSW 49 was a celebratory review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform and the outcome document of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly. It also looked at the current challenges and forward-looking strategies since the SSGA.

### **2010 Beijing plus Fifteen (B+15)**

CSW 54 presented a fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly. Emphasis was placed on the sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

On 2 March 2010 the Commission on the Status of Women adopted a Declaration reaffirming the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly, calling for their full and effective implementation, and emphasizing that such implementation is essential to the achievement of the MDGs.

# GLOBAL EVENTS 2012

## **Committee on the Rights of the Child, 59th Session**

**Geneva**, 16 January - 3 February 2012

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/>

## **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 51st Session**

**Geneva**, 13th February – 2 March 2012

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws48.htm>

## **Commission for Social Development, 49th Session**

Priority Theme: Poverty Eradication

**New York**, 1-10 February 2012

<http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2012.aspx>

## **Commission on the Status of Women, 56th Session**

Priority Theme: The empowerment of rural women and their role in hunger and poverty eradication, development and current challenges

**New York**, 27 February - 9 March 2012

<http://www.ngocsw.org/>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/56sess.htm>

## **Human Rights Council, 16th Session**

**Geneva**, 27 February - 23 March 2012

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/ngo.htm>

## **International Women's Day**

Theme: Connecting Girls, Inspiring Futures

**New York and Worldwide**, 8 March 2012

<http://www.internationalwomensday.com/contact.asp>

## **Human Rights Committee, 104th Session**

**New York**, 12 – 30 March 2012

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/sessions.htm>

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division,  
45th Session**

Theme: Fertility, Reproductive Health and Development

**New York, 23 – 27 April 2012**

<http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2011/cpd44.htm>

**UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20)**

**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 – 22 June 2012**

<http://www.earthsummit2012.org/>

**Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,  
48th Session**

**Geneva, 30 April – 18 May 2012**

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cesrs48.htm>

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 11th Session**

**New York, 7 – 18 May 2012**

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/>

**International Day of Rural Women**

**New York, 15 October 2012**

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/idrw/index.html>

**International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

**Worldwide, 25 November 2012**

[http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/elimination\\_vaw/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/elimination_vaw/en/index.html)

**16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence**

**Worldwide, 25 November – 10 December 2012**

<http://www.16dayscwg1.rutgers.edu/about-16-days/the-annual-theme>

**United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 18)**

**Qatar, 26 November – 7 December 2012**

<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>



# PREPARATORY MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES FOR CSW 56

- A preparatory expert panel was held during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on Thursday, 24 February 2011.
- In collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), UN Women convened an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Enabling rural women’s economic empowerment: institutions, opportunities and participation” from 20-23 September 2011 in Accra, Ghana.
- Background papers written for the EGM may be found on the UN Women website at [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm.htm).

CSW56

# REFERENCE

# KEY WEBSITES

## UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

UN Women

[www.womenwatch@un.org](mailto:www.womenwatch@un.org)

## CoNGO

Conference of NGOs at the United Nations, CoNGO

[www.ngocongo.org/](http://www.ngocongo.org/)

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY

[www.ngocsw.org/](http://www.ngocsw.org/)

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva

[www.ngocsw-geneva.ch](http://www.ngocsw-geneva.ch)

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Vienna

[www.ngocongo.org/ngosubs/stwomvie.htm](http://www.ngocongo.org/ngosubs/stwomvie.htm)

## OTHER UN ENTITIES AND RESOURCES

UN Population Fund

[www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

UN Children's Fund

[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

The United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS

[www.unaids.org/en/default.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp)

UN Development Programme

[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

UN Refugee Agency

[www.unhcr.org/](http://www.unhcr.org/)

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women  
[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/)

World Bank Gender and Development  
[www.worldbank.org/gender/](http://www.worldbank.org/gender/)

Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women  
[www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/)

## **UN REPORTS, PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES**

UN News Services  
[www.un.org/News/](http://www.un.org/News/)

UN Department of Public Information: NGO Section  
[www.un.org/dpi/ngosection](http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection)

Human Development Index  
[www.hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/](http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/)

UN Daily Journal  
[www.un.org/Docs/journal/En/lateste.pdf](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/En/lateste.pdf)

UN Member States  
[www.un.org/en/members](http://www.un.org/en/members)

UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service  
[www.un-ngls.org](http://www.un-ngls.org)

Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
[www.un.org/en/development/desa/](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/)

## **CIVIL SOCIETY**

Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign  
[www.gearcampaign.org](http://www.gearcampaign.org)

Center for Women's Global Leadership  
[www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/)

Association of Women's Rights in Development  
[www.awid.org/](http://www.awid.org/)

Women's United Nations Report Network (WUNRN)  
[www.wunrn.com](http://www.wunrn.com)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
[www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)

The Working Group on Girls  
[www.girlsrights.org](http://www.girlsrights.org)

The NGO Committee on UNICEF  
[www.ngocomunicef.org](http://www.ngocomunicef.org)

## **REGIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORKS**

Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW)  
[www.apww-slwingof.org](http://www.apww-slwingof.org)

African Women's Development and Communication Network  
(FEMNET)  
[www.femnet.or.ke/](http://www.femnet.or.ke/)

European Women's Lobby  
[www.womenlobby.org/](http://www.womenlobby.org/)

# USEFUL CONTACTS

## **Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CoNGO)**

777 UN Plaza, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10017

Tel: 212-986-8557; Fax: 212-986-0821

e-mail: [congony@ngocongo.org](mailto:congony@ngocongo.org)

Website: [www.ngocongo.org](http://www.ngocongo.org)

## **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

Tel: 212-326-7000; Fax: 212-887-7465

E-mail: [information@unicefusa.org](mailto:information@unicefusa.org)

Website: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

## **United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Services (NGLS)**

Room DC1 1106, UN Plaza

New York, NY 10017

Tel: 212-963-3125; Fax: 212-963-8712

E-mail: [ngls@un.org](mailto:ngls@un.org)

Website: [www.un-ngls.org](http://www.un-ngls.org)

## **United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI)**

United Nations DPI Resource Center

Room GA-37

New York, NY 10017

Tel: 212-963-7233; Fax: 212-963-2819

E-mail: [dpingo@un.org](mailto:dpingo@un.org)

Website: [www.un.org/dpi/ngosection](http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection)

## **UN Women**

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor

New York, NY 10017

Tel: 212-906-6400; Fax: 212-906-6705

Website: [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

**UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) NGO Section\***

One UN Plaza, Room DC 1 1480  
New York, NY 10017  
Tel: 212-963-8652; Fax: 212-963-9248  
E-mail: [ngobranch@un.org](mailto:ngobranch@un.org)  
Website: [www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/)

**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

605 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10158  
Tel: 212-297-5000; Fax: 212-370-0201  
E-mail: [hq@unfpa.org](mailto:hq@unfpa.org)  
Website: [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

**United Nations Special Rapporteur for Trafficking in Persons**

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
United Nations Office at Geneva  
8-14 Avenue de La Paix  
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
Fax: +41 22 917-9006  
E-mail: [SRtrafficking@ohchr.org](mailto:SRtrafficking@ohchr.org)  
Website: [www2.ohchr.org/English/issues/trafficking](http://www2.ohchr.org/English/issues/trafficking)

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\* for NGOs interested in applying for consultative status

# UN GLOSSARY

<b>BPfA</b>	Beijing Platform for Action—the main outcome document of the Fourth World Conference, Beijing 1995
<b>CCUN</b>	Church Center of the United Nations, 777 UN Plaza (44th St. and 1st Ave)
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CoNGO</b>	Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations
<b>CSW</b>	UN Commission on the Status of Women
<b>DESA</b>	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>DPI</b>	Department of Public Information
<b>DPKO</b>	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council—serves as the central body discussing economic and social issues and formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and to the United Nations system
<b>GA</b>	General Assembly—main deliberative organ of the United Nations for governments to formulate and appraise policy which meets at United Nations Headquarters in New York from September to December annually
<b>GFMD</b>	Global Forum on Migration and Development—an initiative of the United Nations Member States (2006) to address the migration and development interconnections in practical and action-oriented ways
<b>Informals</b>	Unofficial meetings held outside the main forum



**Interventions** Statements made at an official meeting, first by member governments and if time permits, next by non-Member States, then UN Agencies, such as UN Women, and finally NGOs, who must register to make an intervention

**MDGs** Millennium Development Goals—proposed in the Millennium Declaration as essential measures of progress towards sustainable social and economic development

**NFLS** Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women—the main outcome of the Third World Conference on Women, Nairobi, Kenya 1985

**NGO-CSW** NGO Committee on the Status of Women

**NGLS** UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service—an inter-agency programme formed to facilitate the UN-NGO dialogue and cooperation

**NON-PAPERS** Unofficial papers with no standing in formal proceedings, usually composed of a collection of ideas circulated informally among members or participants involved

**PrepCom** Preparatory Committee—the preparatory process leading up to an important meeting

**PRSPs** Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers—prepared by governments to describe a country's poverty reduction plans and strategies

**UNCED** United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

**UNDP/GIDP** UN Development Programme/Gender in Development Programme

**UNEP**

United Nations Environment Program

**UNFCCC**

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**UNFPA**

United Nations Population Fund

**UNGASS**

United Nations General Assembly Special Session

**UNICEF**

United Nations Children's Fund

**UN WOMEN**

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women—an incorporation of UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and Office of Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)—Established July 2010 by the General Assembly

# USEFUL TIPS

## VENUE FOR CSW 56

The official UN meetings of CSW 56 will take place in the temporary building on the North Lawn of UN Headquarters (NLB). Access to the building is through the visitor's entrance on 1st Avenue. Only those with a valid pass for the conference will be admitted.

## INFORMATION ABOUT UN MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Information about UN meetings and other events is available on the UN website at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/56sess.htm>, the message boards on the walls of the UN buildings and the Church Center, and at the daily NGO Morning Briefings on the 2nd Floor of the Church Center. We ask everyone to make an effort to keep this room neat. Please straighten piles of leaflets and pamphlets before you leave the room.

Very useful information about the UN is also available to NGOs in the Department of Public Information (DPI) Resource Center, Room L 37, which is located near the post office area downstairs from the entrance to the main UN building.

## UN MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENTAL DELEGATES

Seats in the meeting rooms are assigned to delegates of the various countries. To observe these meetings, NGO delegates are asked to sit in designated chairs in the back and on the sides of the room. Cell phones should be turned off.

Meetings listed as "closed" or "informal" are not open to the public or NGO delegates to the CSW. These designations are made in the UN Journal, on the message boards or on the door of the assigned meeting room.

## ROOMS AND EQUIPMENT

The following are not available to NGO delegates: rooms assigned for the use of government representatives and their assistants; computers on the ground floor level; documents from the meeting room documents window.

## PARALLEL EVENTS

Most parallel events are held in the Church Center or at the Salvation Army, 221 E. 52nd Street. The schedule is included in this handbook. Flyers advertising these events may be placed in the Grumman Room on the 8th Floor of the Church Center and on the message board or tables just outside the room. They may also be placed on the tables near the back of UN conference rooms but should not be affixed to the walls and doors of these rooms or distributed to the individual seats.

## FOOD

Food and drinks are available in the small coffee shop on the ground floor of the main building and in the Austria Cafe on the second floor of the North Lawn building in which the CSW meetings will be held. There is a UNICEF cafeteria on 44th St., near the Church Center, and another cafeteria on the 3rd floor of the DC2 building next to the Millennium Hotel on 44th St. In addition, there are many eateries in the neighborhood.

Except for bottled water, neither food nor drink is allowed in the conference rooms in the UN building. Water and food can be brought into the meeting rooms at the Church Center during informal group meetings only. If you do bring food into one of these rooms, please clean up all paper and throw away refuse in designated receptacles before you leave.

# INFORMATION FOR ADVOCACY

One of the main responsibilities of participants of the CSW is advocacy. Through the efforts of NGOs, the voice of civil society provides an alternative and/or complement to the views of governments. Outlined here are examples of how NGO delegates to the CSW, who are accredited to and in good standing with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), can engage in advocacy.

## NGO Caucuses

Advocacy centers mostly on the draft outcome document. NGOs can work on this document through caucuses, individually, or in self-organized informal groups.

Organized by theme and geographic region, caucuses are important for putting collective strength behind a particular issue in the outcome document, for setting up meetings with government delegates, and for strategizing about follow-up plans for the future. They also serve as a training ground for the learning of lobbying techniques and advocacy skills. Caucuses will be scheduled in the Church Center as well as the North Lawn Building of the UN. Please check the schedule in this Handbook.

Changes to the caucus schedule will be posted electronically on monitors at the Church Center. Further information will be available at the NGO/CSW Forum information desks at the UN and at the Salvation Army. No paper listings will be available.

## Working with the Draft Outcome Document

It is necessary to determine where in the proposed draft outcome document issues of interest to one's group or caucus appear or if they do not appear at all. Decisions should then be made regarding revisions or additions that can be inserted into the draft. When inserting these suggestions, it is important to write language that incorporates commitments already made in other documents. Examples of such agreements include The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, NFLS (1985), the Beijing Platform for Action, BPfA (1995), and the agreed conclusions of CSW 54, which reviewed the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Cross-referencing all such documents will lend power to your suggestions. You should also be aware of governments' individual and regional block positions.

### **Meeting with Governmental Delegates**

At the CSW, NGOs are encouraged to meet with members of their governmental delegation to communicate their concerns and offer suggestions.

### **Conversation Circles**

The NGO/CSW Forum will organize thematic Conversation Circles during CSW. These are free and open to all delegates attending CSW 56. The purpose of these sessions is to facilitate 'conversations' between groups around mutual interests, and to network for future collaborations. These are not primarily lobbying caucuses.

Participants interested in similar themes will be able to share stories about themselves, their organizations, their hopes and dreams, and find a place to build trust. Opportunities will be provided to network and to plan collective strategies to implement UN agreements and dialogue with governments. We would encourage these groups to work together after the CSW and possibly cosponsor events at CSW 57.

# MAP AND DIRECTIONS

**A**

## **CHURCH CENTER FOR THE UNITED NATIONS**

Address:

**777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY**  
(at the corner of 44th Street and 1st Avenue)

**B**

## **THE SALVATION ARMY\***

Address:

**221 East 52nd Street, New York, NY**  
(between 2nd and 3rd Avenues)

Walking directions from the UN Church Center  
(10-15 minute walk):

- 1 Head North on First Avenue to 47th Street
- 2 Turn left and go to 2nd Avenue
- 3 Turn right and go to 52nd Street
- 4 Turn left and go to #221 East 52nd Street  
(between 2nd and 3rd Avenues)
- 5 The building will be on your right

\* For some Parallel Events, 27 February - 9 March

