

# REPORT

## UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN

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Muriel Smith, UN representative for NCWC

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# REPORT TO NCWC ON UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN '04

Muriel Smith, UN representative for NCWC

## Introduction

Every year during the first two weeks of March, like lemmings women from literally the four corners of the earth zero in on New York for the annual meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Thanks to the generosity and commitment of NCWC, I have been able to attend for the past three years. I always find this event stimulating as I meet women from far and near, and listen to politicians from a sampling of the UN's 195 members. I also find it heartbreaking at times. The HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa that increasingly attacks young women, and the large and growing global trade scandal of trafficking of women and children, are so painful to hear about. Fortunately, I also find it inspiring hope as I listen to so many bright, committed and articulate women giving their life energy every day to bringing about change for the better. Over 900 NGO women attended this year despite the financial barriers encountered by many.

The CSW consists of five rotating members. This year, the Chair was from Korea and the four Vice Chairs from Azerbaijan, Botswana, Canada and Peru.

### **The Encounters at the UN Proceed on Three Levels:**

Level 1: the formal meetings of government representatives who, as is their custom, selected from among the Beijing Platform for Action twelve areas of concern plus other issues that have emerged since 1995 (e.g. older women, Information Technology and Communication - ITC), this year tackled the two themes of:

1. *The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, and*
2. *Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building.*

They also dealt with six resolutions on:

1. *Hostages*
2. *Palestinian Women*
3. *Afghan Women*
4. *HIV/AIDS*
5. *Communications*
6. *INSTRAW*

Level 2: the NGO meetings that are much more informal but still structured; and

Level 3: the personal encounters and social occasions where heart-to-heart talks can take place with a surprising number of women.

**Process:** there are always **contentious aspects** of each theme. The governments start with a bare bones document developed by the Division for Advancement of Women (DAW) Secretariat based on earlier meetings of experts in different regions of the world. They then proceed to add and subtract (mostly add) from their national perspectives, and from the documents NGOs are allowed to circulate, the few speeches NGO

representatives are scheduled to give to the government forum, and from lobbying done by NGOs present and active. This process usually culminates in a critical and anxious time period at the end of the two weeks when most delegates present want to break through the juggernauts of disagreement and achieve a consensus document. Canada always plays a “helpful go-between” role in all areas except for the few where the Canadian Government takes an unyielding stand. This period is when compromise language appears, but it does so in public and the NGOs are free to write their critiques, speak to the press, tell their stories back home, and work towards the next opportunities to influence their own governments, and in time the UN CSW.

### **First Theme**

Key results called for:

- - a recognition by men of their joint responsibility for achieving gender equality;
  - member states and civil society to develop educational programmes, use information campaigns that target men and boys;
  - the provision of positive leadership models on gender equality;

Under this theme, the contentious issues revolved around:

- whether the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcomes document from 2000 should be “recalled and reiterated” or the stronger wording “reaffirmed” ; the US was the prime mover supporting the weaker wording “because,” as a Mission representative said, “the Administration doesn’t like the inclusion of the word ‘abortion’ in the Beijing document”; they carried the day;
- the emphasis given to the role of fathers in raising children; the compromise was to list fathers with mothers, legal guardians and other caregivers, and in another spot to replace “fathers” with “parents”;
- when referring to the increase in sexualized and pornographic images of women in the media, the compromise was to insert “to the extent consistent with freedom of expression” and “encourage men and boys to refrain from presenting women as inferior beings and exploiting them...”;
- legislation and policies to “close the gap between women’s and men’s pay” rather than “equal pay for work of equal value”;
- “encourage men and boys through education and projects and peer-based programmes in eliminating gender stereotypes as well as gender inequality in particular in relation to sexually transmitted infections” rather than an outright attack on the demand for sexual services that the NGOs promoted; however, a later clause did call for “an increased understanding among men how violence, including trafficking for the purpose of commercialized sexual exploitation, forced marriages and forced labour, harms women, men and children and undermines gender equality, and consider measures aimed at eliminating the demand for trafficked women and children”;

## Second Theme

Key results called for:

- governments and the UN system at all levels to improve data collection on women in the context of prevention and early warning systems;
- all peace agreements and processes to address the full range of issues from a gender perspective
- the promotion of women's equal participation in all post-conflict electoral, reconstruction and rehabilitation processes.

Under the **second theme**, the contentious issues were (with thanks to WILPF):

- same issue re “reiterating and recalling” vs. “reaffirming” Beijing;
- refusal to call strongly on the Security Council for implementation by and accountability for Resolution #1325 about involving women in all stages of peace processes;
- “the root causes of armed conflict are multidimensional in nature” rather than any reference to patriarchy etc.;
- the softer word of “steps” as necessary to promote women's political participation rather than extraordinary measures such as quotas to achieve parity;
- short of calling for gender mainstreaming that might eliminate support for women-only organizations, a call for “support” for the “involvement of women's organizations, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations”;
- later, the rather vague call for the “allocation of necessary human, financial and material resources for specific and targeted activities to ensure gender equality...”;
- a resistance to including refugee and displaced women as full participants, not just as victims in need of protection, when peace processes are underway, but as agents of change;
- no clear assignment of responsibility for carrying out the agreed conclusions;
- lack of strong sections on prevention.

## Agreed Conclusions

Both documents contain a wide range of recommended actions by individuals, gender groups and organizations, and governments at all levels including at the UN, to achieve the desired goals. There is a heavy focus on education in the first document, with greater specificity with regard to policies in the second. Both provide good road maps for the future, and will be presented to all entities within the UN system. They would make good checklists for Canadian NGOs to use when designing programs or lobbying of their respective governments.

## Resolutions

1. **Hostages:** presented by Azerbaijan – calling for the release of women and children taken hostage during armed conflicts, including those subsequently imprisoned in armed conflicts” (approved with US against because pre-ambular paragraph 4 could be interpreted as supporting the Beijing Platform for Action which refers to abortion)
2. **Palestinian Women:** Qatar speaking for the Group of 77 and China(G77) – Calling for a return to the peace process, improvements in the living conditions of the Palestinian women and their families, and the return by Israel of all refugees and displaced persons (US opposed, Canada abstained, rest supported, Israel complained it was one-sided)
3. **Afghan Women:** Ireland for European Union (EU) – calling for gender mainstreaming, protection of women’s human rights and fundamental freedoms, the elimination of violence against women and girls and observation of CEDAW through legislation and bringing those responsible to justice (approved)
4. **Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS:** presented by Angola for South African Development Community (SADC) – calling for the elimination of gender stereotyping and biases in all areas
5. **Communications:** presented by Guatemala – calls on the UN Secretary General to include in his reports all reports received throughout the UN system on human rights violations (thereby removing confidentiality)
6. **Mainstreaming** gender concerns at the UN and revitalizing **INSTRAW:** proposed by Bangladesh - calling on UN to integrate a gender perspective in all entities, documents, training and in research and data collection (vote postponed); also Qatar for G77 calling for the revitalization of INSTRAW with increased resources; this is one of the very few UN agencies located outside “the North” – it is in Dominican Republic (only INSTRAW portion approved)

## CSW Themes for 2005

1. *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century, and*
2. *Current challenges and forward-looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls*

## NGO Highlights

**ICW/NCWC presence:** President Anamah Tan, Brigitte Polonovsky and Marise Paishoud were present and active. NCWC President Catharine Laidlaw-Sly was present for the first week.

**DAW Questionnaire:** copies of the questions put to governments to report on for CSW '05 to measure implementation of Beijing and Beijing+5 commitments are available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/> NGOs can use these questions to shape any input they wish to submit to the Canadian Government or to an alternate report.

There were **over 900 NGOs present and 176 side events**. I was unable to attend the pre-CSW meeting held on Sunday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, to prepare NGOs. Fortunately, our President Catharine Laidlaw-Sly was able to attend and filled me in on the proceedings. Summaries of key panels I was able to attend follow, but as usual there was an embarrassment of riches.

**NGOs had daily briefings at 9 am at the UN, and also held special meetings and “hands on” thematic and regional caucus discussions** on Beijing+10, the Millennium Development Goals, and on the conference themes and resolutions. Their purpose was to develop consensus input to the positions being developed by the Governments. **The Linkage Caucus sponsored by WEDO** then coordinated the lobbying of the Government Representatives to promote NGO wording, and reported back on progress. **Getting involved in these processes enables NGO delegates to be an integral part of the CSW process.** It is time consuming and can be frustrating, but the experience of negotiating policy positions mirrors some of the discussions taking place behind the scenes among the governments. Opinion among NGOs is rarely as diverse as what the Government delegates face as NGOs are basically supportive of “moving ahead” while some of the Governments opposed to the basic thrust of women’s rights focus on delay and rear-guard action.

**Daily NGO Newsletter** provided by WILPF: <http://www.peacewomen.org>

### **Canadian Delegation and NGO Focal Point Initiative**

The recently appointed Ambassador Alan Rock entertained all Canadians at a Reception in the quarters of Gilbert Laurin, another Canadian UN diplomat. Apart from that occasion, there were daily meetings in the corner of a UN room with the government staff and NGOs, but since there was no master list and no regular location, it was difficult to gather everyone together. There were two official NGOs on this Delegation: Elizabeth Wright from Quebec City on the women and peace theme, and Faruk Faisal from Asia Pacific Partnership on the men and boys theme. Canada is one of the few states to include NGOs on their Government Delegation.

Status of Women Minister Jean Augustine was there for the first few days. Many of the Government Officials were women we had met before: Diana Rivington who is now permanently at the UN, Sheila Regehr - Status of Women Canada and Head of Delegation after the Minister left, Beatrice ?, Nell Stewart DFAIT, Julia Bracken CIDA, and others.

**Focal Point Initiative:** Because several of us who had attended earlier UN meetings felt the lack of an NGO coordination person (called focal point in UN language), we collected one night towards the end of the two weeks in a pub and drafted a consensus proposal to submit via email to all women's equality seeking groups we could identify in Canada. We were up against a tight timetable. The deadline for input to the Canadian Government Report is August '04, and for input to the "European and Other (ECE)" region to which North America belongs is December '04. Their reports will review progress made by Governments since Beijing in 1995 and Beijing+5 in 2000 in implementing their commitments. They will be submitting these to the CSW and at the '05 CSW event, they will be drafting strategies for the future. For these reasons, a very speedy process was proposed:

1. *to seek a volunteer person and organization to serve as Canadian focal point for a two year term,*
2. *to communicate with women's groups in Canada regarding preparations,*
3. *to seek funding for cross-Canada preparatory and celebratory events to help re-animate Canadian women and to reach younger women,*
4. *to communicate with Charlotte Bunche, interim focal point for the US, and with Marise Paischoud in Geneva, the overall focal point person for the ECE (our region),*
5. *to coordinate Canadian NGO presence and activities at CSW '05, or to delegate that responsibility in the event the focal point individual might not be able to attend,*
6. *to request a response by March 31<sup>st</sup>, no response indicating agreement, and*
7. *to identify a process for evaluating the effectiveness of these arrangements at CSW 2005.*

Emails were sent to as many organizations as we could identify, recognizing the notice given was very short. To the great pleasure of the sponsors, a reply was received from FAFIA (Feminist Alliance for the International Advancement of Women) volunteering their organization and Charlotte Thibault, whom many of you know, as the focal point person. Not only that, they said they already had a substantial grant from SW Canada and were expecting another to perform just that function. They can be reached at [npeckford@fafia-afai.org](mailto:npeckford@fafia-afai.org) or [bsutton@fafia-afai.org](mailto:bsutton@fafia-afai.org)

## **Government Sponsored Events**

**Opening on March 1st:** This is always a special event as key women working at the UN for the many aspects of gender equality address the Assembly. **Amb. Rogge**, first woman President of ECOSOC, spoke of the value of CSW as monitor and catalyst for ECOSOC; **Jose Ocampo**, head of Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), stressed the importance of CSW to all UN processes – Millennium Development Goals (MDG – gender equality only one goal but in fact a cross-cutting goal), Financing for Development (FFD), World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), identifying women's human rights concerns.

**Angela King**, a great favourite with all, after 30 years at the UN and 7 years as Special Gender Advisor to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, had announced her intention to retire at the end of the month. She gave failing health as her primary reason. Angela

urged women to focus on Beijing + 10 in '05 as an opportunity to review progress to date, and to strategize for the future. Her list of key events follows:

1. There have been total of 175 ratifications of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with 24 occurring during the past year. She cited 7 states that have strengthened equality for women principles in their constitutions;
2. Poverty is a primary threat to gender equality. 1/5 of the world's population still live on less than \$1/day;
3. Sustainable Livelihoods, particularly in the South, are negatively impacted by northern agricultural subsidies and the focus on export economies; the current economic recovery is being led by China, India and the US and must be harnessed to benefit the less developed countries;
4. AIDS is hitting more young women in Africa than men. Brazil, Romania, Uganda, and Senegal have been leading the way by halting the spread.
5. Regrettably, the maternal mortality North-South gap is widening; gender analysis of all health programs is urgently needed.
6. Women are gaining in political influence, particularly in West Africa, through the use of proportional representation and quotas. Of particular relevance to Africa and Iraq has been the example of Afghani women achieving 17% in the Loya Jirga, but their gains are very fragile. Rwandan women elected to government achieved an impressive 48%; there have also been gains in Pakistan, Nigeria, Bosnia and Slovakia. At the UN, 6/32 heads of Human Rights bodies are women; all are welcoming the recent appointment of Canadian Louise Arbour to head the UN Human Rights Commission.
7. INSTRAW has been offering valuable research on the topics such as how to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, protect and share water, and improve the situations of indigenous women and women in export sectors.

**Carolyn Hannan**, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) – referred to earlier expert meetings on men and boys in Brazil, and on women and peace in Canada; she also pointed to the role played by election processes in post-conflict periods by UNDP and UNIFEM. She **urged all NGOs to complete DAW questionnaire** (on their website) re progress made since 1995 for input to their report for CSW '05. DAW has been giving technical assistance to many states re implementation of Beijing documents.

**Noeleen Heyser, UNIFEM:** pointed to some gains over the decade but said they were fragile and uneven; UNIFEM has \$8.4 m. in voluntary contributions, works on 155 projects in 85 countries; they are keen on action oriented research (training police, women combating honour killing, link between poverty and HIV/AIDS); some countries have incorporated gender equality in constitutions (e.g. Burundi, Afghanistan); conflict prevention initiatives (Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania); see <http://www.womenwantpeace.org>).

**Carmen Moreno:** Ambassador for INSTRAW described how INSTRAW plays a catalyst role through applied research, information/communication, capacity building and institutional development, but the amount of work they can do is dependent on human and financial resources.

**Feride Acer, Chair of CEDAW:** 175 states have ratified, 66 the Optional Protocol; the goal is 100%. They have been focusing on penal, family and civil codes; some activist



courts are using the Convention directly. The plan for '05 is to assess the impact of CEDAW, set timetables/priorities, build awareness of human rights, especially women's. Prejudice and tradition based on patriarchy and discriminations are the major impediments to progress. Activist women inside and outside Iraq were able to stop reduction of women's civil rights in marriage/custody/inheritance. CEDAW's 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be marked at the UN General Assembly in Sept. '04.

**Responses** were made by Ireland for the European Union (EU), Qatar for Group of 77 (G77+China), France to urge other states to follow their lead by endorsing the Gender Equality Charter (to be presented to the French Government on March 8); Morocco (probably speaking for many Arab states) cited their gender equality initiatives – a new family code recognizing greater rights for women, very tight restrictions on polygamy, based on a blend of Islamic law and jurisprudence rather than following UN norms; referred to the recent SG Report on declining living conditions for Palestinian women (Tunisia later said they had had gender equality for years).

**High Level Round Table on Role of Statistics Institutions: “Love statistics, fight for them and dare to work for them”, “Statistics matter but content must be broader”**

**Value of Statistics:**

- gender disaggregated and internationally qualitative and quantitative data needed as important tools for monitoring progress on gender equality; e.g. Sweden was able to show unequal distribution of economic resources. They can also help identifying gender differences in impacts of new policies;
- publicly available if regularly published, particularly on website;
- work done in one state can be shared by others (e.g. Canada is using Swedish booklet format on violence against women and unpaid work, uses annual UNDP's Human Development Reports; India has done time-work study to show different gender patterns)
- many states now have National Bureaus of Statistics
- Australia published booklet on economic, social and environmental dimensions;
- Election quotas for more equal political representation impossible without statistics;
- Problems can be identified (e.g. separate police desk established for women to encourage reporting of violence, girls choose different areas of study with long term impact on their earning power);
- UNICEF uses multiple indicator cluster surveys – new data needed (e.g. on FGM, violence against women and girls, AIDS orphans);
- ILO held international conference on labour stats – questions re definitions, methodology, sub components e.g. on occupations;

**Problems with Statistics:**

- negative attitudes to data, sex-disaggregated data;
- women's departments may not make adequate use of statistics; men's needs dominate because they are the majority of the government decision-makers;

- UNESCO: studies on women may not ask the right questions (e.g. women and science is studied without reference to women's empowerment, access to resources, priorities);
- WHO: data on death does not count women missing because of pre-natal sex selection, infanticide etc. so population gender imbalances may be buried; little gender disaggregated data on health;
- use depends on literacy;
- centralization of data collection may be a problem;
- professionals may not understand gender issues;
- governments reluctant to share data;
- GINI index (measure of inequality) not robust enough to capture important gender information;
- time lag between collection of data and publication;
- problems with efficiency of collection and dissemination;
- lack of uniformity, especially of data from sub-state level;
- may not be relevant and reliable;
- big gap between capacity of developed and developing states;
- cost, time and professional expertise – shortage of resources;
- need for more and better indicators;
- need more interaction between producers and users of statistics;
- need UN help with capacity building;
- collection depends on political will;
- budget process needs permanent committee to oversee;
- women's unpaid labour and sex role not counted in positive or negative terms (e.g. misuse through porn, trafficking, prostitution);
- gaps: no data on support for equality seeking NGOs;
- lack of data on diverse sub-groups or issues – aboriginal, single parents, domestic violence, race, religion, ethnicity, refugees, displaced women, AIDS orphans, isolated women, women with disabilities;
- most data is sectoral rather than based on gender;
- lack of data on impact of global financial/trade/debt policies;
- difficult to collect data in culturally sensitive and taboo areas; voices must also be heard – reluctance of victims of violence to report;
- need ways to measure social capital;
- need more longitudinal studies;
- ethics code and high professional standards required to protect scientific integrity of data;
- not much use made as yet of data for advocacy;

### **Panel on Peace:**

**Colombia:** during the civil strife, a social movement of displaced and widowed women staged effective demonstrations and organized against violence;

**Liberia:** believing no one would give them their rights, women organized across party lines to secure a place in the peace negotiations and post-conflict elections;

they were the main actors in community reconstruction, care of orphans etc.;

**Canada (Ariane Brunet):** the expert group on Security Council Resolution 1325 met in Canada; saw poverty rooted in the current approaches to economic growth and militarization as causes of conflict; there has been weak political will to follow up on #1325; protecting women's human rights has been used as a pretext to intervene in a state's affairs, but paradoxically they are ignored afterwards on the basis of the principle of non-intervention; women in conflict areas lack the resources, information, transport and training to participate effectively in both formal and informal peace negotiations; Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) lack women members and women's safety needs are not recognized; resource allocation post-conflict must be fair to women;

**Jordan:** post-conflict processes include legislation, political empowerment, civic education, supportive election administration and observation; women have little access; recommendations: separate registration, documentation and polling stations; pictures as well as names on ballots;

**UN Directorate of African Affairs: Yussuf Mohammed:** in addition to the above, there needs to be gender sensitive monitoring and more gender advisors on international peace missions; the Security council put ending violence against women at the top of the agenda and directly funded training in gender sensitivity in the Cote d'Ivoire's Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation (DDR)

**Discussion:** special plight of widows and need to recognize the contributions they are already making as "bottom up" agents of development, and to incorporate them into peace processes; otherwise they may be expelled by their families and left homeless or abandoned in refugee camps; need to recognize root cause of poverty;

**Romeo D'Allaire** listed the horrendous loss of life he witnessed while powerless to do anything in Rwanda; urged women be included as combatants and commanders as they are more sensitive to overall needs. Women are better at conflict resolution than men. Women have more knowledge of local situations and have much to offer. A UN Special Rapporteur on women and children in post-conflict situations is needed; otherwise women may be re-victimized. When the Secretary General periodically calls in his special representatives, they should be given training in gender sensitization. Early Warning Systems are needed.

*"It is in the minds of men that war is created. It is in the minds of women that peace is created."* Peacekeeping personnel should have strict codes of conduct. Women suffer most from the social disintegration that accompanies war; however, this also opens opportunity for new ideas, new roles.

#### **NGO inputs:**

**ICW President Animah Tan:** start with education of young children; work with media and with groups of fathers re sharing of all tasks; some rural communities do share. Change within the family may be harder than change in the public sphere;

**Mary Robinson:** must intervene to break the cycle of suffering and silence; *"Mothers are as much role models for their sons as for their daughters, and fathers for their daughters as for their sons."* Louise Arbour is the new head of the UN Commission on Human Rights and can promote the realization of human

rights and values-led globalization among governments, civil society and institutions. Mary Robinson initiated in 1996 and chaired a Council of Women World Leaders that started with 30 members and now has 600. Madeline Allbright is the current chair. They have networks on environment, trade and finance, and health. Violence against women peaks in post-conflict conditions: there is rapid change, often social disorganization and unemployment; men feel threatened from external world and often turn anger against the household. Training and employment projects need to involve both men and women, boys and girls;

**Israeli women spoke of film they had produced:** *“He’s mad About Me”* to warn girls about violence from intimate partners.

### **Panel on Role of Men and Boys:**

**Prof. Connell, Australia:** there is no single definition of masculinity; men can be and some already are partners and supporters of gender equality; local situation may foster male dominance. There are good principles favouring gender equality: it is right, there are gains to offset losses of privilege, the whole community benefits, the lives of women and children are better. Broad policies and special programmes are required, plus help with consciousness raising. Men and boys have often been socialized to be autonomous, independent, not expressive of emotion. Fatherhood is often linked to denial (not his DNA); separate gender roles can separate men and women, father as financial provider, mother as affection provider. Brazil is doing re-education of males by going where they congregate - army, sports, bars, schools – and by redirecting resources from the military to the social.

**Morena Ina, Kenya:** AIDS is being spread among young married women because they lack the power to confront their husbands, insist on safe sex, access better jobs. More girls drop out of school to care for siblings, or bear their own children at too early an age. We need to meet with groups of men living with AIDS.

**Mr. Leland:** listed possible actions, youth friendly health services, role of media in defining what is “cool”, big role for education (e.g. preventing HIV/AIDS infection in girls, reduce violence against women, ensure women have property and inheritance rights, ensure equal access to care, support and treatment, more community based health care, universal education

**Discussion:** gender equality is the responsibility of all; use human rights terminology rather than women’s rights, deal with male demand that fuels trafficking and prostitution, work for political leadership from the top, include both sexes when designing programmes, sensitize troops/peacekeepers/all UN workers to the role they play in sexual exploitation of women. We need to believe *“A Better World is Possible”*; examine new notions of power – it is not a limited commodity, it grows when it is shared; Botswana has a national anthem that states *“Women Should Stand UP, Men Should Wake Up”*. NGOs can be catalysts in public education; need to develop critical mass of men to support gender equality to help overcome male peer pressure; group most likely to be violent are males aged 14-24 based on the belief *“Cowboys Don’t Cry”*; they need opportunities to

break the silence. Inhumane treatment of women is often justified by custom, tradition, religion. Parliaments are 85% controlled by men who protect their privilege. Resourcing programmes for men and boys must not be at expense of funding programmes for women. Internet is saturated with misogynist images of women. Consumerism and link between sex and violence help promote unhealthy attitudes. Democracy and work sharing in the home are crucial. In China, some progress has been made but many men still see gender equality as a women's issue.

### **International Women's Day: Women and HIV/AIDS**

**Kofi Annan** hosted this grim discussion. In Africa today, more young women are contracting AIDS than men, and among those, the rate is higher among married women because their husbands persist in having multiple partners and resisting the use of condoms. Women are most active in anti-AIDS work. Carol Bellamy, UNICEF, led a recent task force in South Africa on young girls and AIDS. ABC's (Abstain, Be faithful and use Condoms) not effective. All can help. The women need faith, resources and hope.

**Dr. Jong-Wook Lee, WHO:** women have less information and access to treatment than men, may need male permission to ask for help; they also fear stigmatization; social norms must be changed; access to retroviral drugs essential.

**Queen Nor, Jordan:** the UN mandate is to promote global security, not to deal with borders and treaties; inequalities breed terrorism; Millennium Development Goals provide road map; women need more power, lack information, services and resources; they do more but are acknowledged less; there are many legal and political barriers, particularly in the Middle east; there was a slow increase in infection in Middle east and North Africa, possibly because of strong traditional families; since '02 the rate of infection has grown and for young women is now greater than for young men; risk within family magnifies fear; some countries provide hotlines, counseling (Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine), Algeria has National Action Plan and Iran has taboo breaking programme; a human rights crisis even more than a public health concern; *"Put women at the centre, today, tomorrow and every day"*.

**Angela King, GE Advisor to SG:** women want human rights, sustainable development and peace for all; time to celebrate individual acts of courage, also to raise taboos of HIV, FGM, honour killing and Violence Against Women; women are specially vulnerable to AIDS; GDP in Zimbabwe has declined by 30%; age of mortality in Botswana from 69 to 44, and in Zambia 1000 teachers per year are dying. Hope depends on Voluntary Funds, Bilateral arrangements and the results of the campaign by the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS;

### **Panel: What Can Be Done to Reduce Impact of AIDS on Women?**

**Ms. Noerine Kaleeba, UNAIDS:** To deal with this pandemic and the resulting anger and frustration, women living with AIDS have organized with the slogan "Living Positively and Dying With AIDS"; information is not enough for young girls who are often coerced into unprotected sex with older men for money for school fees or to replace a lost father; women breastfeed even when it is dangerous because of fear of stigma as a "bad woman". *"Educate the Girl, Help the Family"*.

**Dr. George Alleyn, Caribbean:** this issue can consume you; earlier pandemics were “equal opportunity” diseases but AIDS kills selectively – youth and more women than men; women won’t report because of fear of stigma; women outperform men in the educational system constituting 70% of the graduates in one university but education does not protect them against AIDS; some small poor countries have shown this pandemic can be defeated but international action is needed.

**Ndioro Ndiaye, IOM (migration):** migration has been feminized; women migrants are often alone, without resources and very vulnerable to abuse, violence, damage to their mental health, and increasingly to AIDS; they lack information and empowerment; some men believe intercourse with virgins will cure them and even seek out infants; AIDS is a cross-cutting issue rather than simply a physical problem; governments need systemic programs.

**Dean Peacock, South Africa:** traditional gender roles compromise health of women because men are expected to be risk-taking, dominant, take drugs and to have multiple sex partners; still, many men care deeply about the women in their lives; men and women are affected by the persistence of stereotypes; relationships based on equality and mutual respect are the way to go; success stories should be highlighted but programmes must be rooted in local communities. Personally, he says, *I have to take a stand*”.

**Dr. Linda Distlerath, Mercks:** pharmaceutical companies must facilitate access to drugs, build partnerships and systems because AIDS is increasingly manageable; however, for most people now living with AIDS, it is not manageable. 120,000 in 63 countries are accepting drugs, in the poorest countries at no profit to the companies, in other countries at discounted prices. Reducing cost is not sufficient; health care delivery systems are still necessary. The Gates Foundation is helping; A lofty goal of 3 by 5 (3 million people receiving treatment by 2005) has been set; *“Failure is not an option”*. Focus should be on the needs of women and girls.

## **UNIFEM sponsored events on the peace theme**

**1. Tribunal on the Effectiveness of SC Resolution #1325:** presented in the form of a debate; Canada’s Senator Mobina Jaffer was the “pro” judge, Cora Weiss the “con” judge; after hearing from several speakers, they concluded that:

On the pro side, publicity and conferences constitute a good start; accountability failures should be laid at the feet of the law breakers, not the law makers; NGOs have been strong supporters and have helped with training; some good examples are emerging (e.g. in Cote d’Ivoire, money and mandate were given women to work on peace process and reconstruction). On the con side, rhetoric has trumped action, lack of accountability measures, lack of awareness and political will, no systematic consultation with women on the ground on gender issues, too few gender advisors (30% should be the minimum goal).

**2. Panel on the Gender Perspective on Peace Processes:** perspectives and plans for action were presented from Macedonia, Zambia, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Colombia

**3. ICFTU: role of unionized women in peacekeeping:** very supportive of solidarity movement in Colombia; in Sierra Leone it was the village women's organizations who emerged as the most effective activists; in Zambia, the women linked to the churches organized demos for peace and against all forms of war related violence against women who, with children, were the main victims of four years of civil war over natural resources, but when peace was restored, the women were left out, achieving only 10% of seats in the election; the ICFTU send fact-finding missions to trouble spots, e.g Haiti..

#### **4. Delegitimizing of War/Culture of Peace:**

**Cora Weiss:** women want democratic representation in all Peace and Security negotiations, routine consultation with women's organizations, training of all UN personnel, routine collection and analysis of information re situation of women in zones of conflict, funding of women's organizations to facilitate their participation, and men and women benefiting equitably from all Demobilization, Disarmament and Reconstruction (DDR) initiatives, and when security forces are demobilized, needs of army, police and women's needs all to be considered. *War is Hell, Insanity. 80 million people protested against the war in Iraq, ...the Raging Grannies appeared at the Hague Appeal for Peace, ... in the 20th century, more people were killed by war than ever before because of technology (poison gas, tanks, air bombs, nuclear weapons, biological and chemical weapons), greed and quest for power; there is a glut of small arms, ... scorched earth policy... landmines and cluster bombs, ... Star Wars...*"

Modern war has no proportionality; there are no Just wars, only barbaric Wars.

The UN Charter Article 51 (self defense) was redefined in Afghanistan in the name of unilateralism, preventive attack, preemptive aggression. Einstein said, *Shall we put an end to the human race, or shall we renounce war?*" War is the biggest polluter. In peace accords, we have the opportunity to build infrastructure for non-violent conflict resolution by putting non-violence into the constitution. Peace and Human Rights Education should be integrated into all education. We should reallocate \$1 trillion of the world's military budgets to common security, strengthen chapters 6 and 7 in the UN Charter to permit the limited use of force. *"We have the capability if we have the determination to end war"*. Costa Rica has no armies; Japan has renounced war in its constitution.

### **NGO Sponsored Events on Men and Boys**

#### **COAT Panel: Ending the Demand for Prostitution & Trafficking: The Role of Men and Boys** <http://www.catwinternational.org>

**Luis Ramirez, Venezuela:** a young man who spoke of efforts to engage men in the struggles for equality; in '97 legalization of prostitution was terminated and in '98 a network against child pornography was formed; his group developed videos on sex trafficking to help sensitize men; *"If there was no exploitation by men, there would be no prostitution"*; what are needed are better laws and holistic education

**Aurora Jayate de Dios, President of COAT in Philippines:** one thrust has been to persuade peacekeepers to be orderly and get a code of conduct; the demand

side of prostitution has just entered public debate with the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on Trafficking – questions raised: is only forced prostitution offensive? What are the varieties of vulnerability? 100's of NGOs are united against prostitution and they link it to the struggles against drugs and pornography; studies have been made on concepts of masculinity in private and public life, among high school and university students, trade union members, and both rural and urban men and boys; a short film was developed using language of young men: *The First Time*; it presents the peer and relative pressure on young men to visit prostitutes for their initiation, and exposes the myths they accept: *"She was already a ruined woman", "It's essential for sexual release and satisfaction", the images portrayed in pornographic movies and pictures are for real*; there is no open discussion of sexuality. Using formal and informal methods of education, they explore alternative values, attitudes and practices. Philippines has followed the lead of Sweden to be the second country making trafficking illegal and penalizing the traffickers, not the women and children who are trafficked.

**Melissa Farley, Director of Prostitution Research and Education, San Francisco Women's Centre, US:** she focused on the massive power imbalance in prostitution, named "sex" when it is really "violence"; quotes from Johns were telling: *"It's like going to have your car fixed, you tell them what you want", "As there are medical benefits to breast massage, so there are to prostitution", "I use them like any commodity – no questions, no demands", "It's clean, it's over", "I wanted a piece of ass and she was there", "These girls gotta eat, don't they? I'm putting bread on their tables. I'm making a contribution", "Violence is mostly the prostitute's fault – if she cheats by giving sub-standard service or forces the use of a condom", She has no choice. I feel bad. She's in the flesh market, the rules of the market apply to her. She's a commodity", "This is the part of me that can go hunting", "She wore a short skirt, she got what she asked for"*; John attitudes show they believe the woman enjoys prostitution, ignore the fact the men have the money and the power and the women feel they must act as though they like it in order to get paid; several examples were given of safaris (one in South Africa, one in the US) where men pay to hunt women who are turned loose in a fenced area with a paint ball gun, of sex tours openly advertised. Brothels, massage parlours, saunas and escort services are the locations for "services", the customers "want something different", code words for highly racialized stereotyping.

**Ken Franzblau, Equality Now:** the US passed a Trafficking Victims Act in 2000 but fails to enforce it and there is no prosecution of American citizens who have offended while abroad; prostitution "follows the flag" with videos of soldiers having sex shown in Hawaiian bars. There have been a few successful prosecutions against sex tour operators in the US; in Hawaii a law was proposed but rejected. *"Prostitution, sex tours, sex trafficking and mail order brides – not a profession but a victimless crime"; "If actions are stupid, ugly and filthy at home, they are the same in Thailand. The International dateline doesn't change your IQ or appearance, only the time"*.

**Rachel Paul, Centre for Gender equality, Norway:** Norway favours deterrence over current focus on victims that produces shame and guilt ; violence against



women has been shrouded in secrecy, is to be put into criminal law in order to mandate education of perpetrator; ethical guidelines are being prepared for employers traveling abroad and the military; “Clean the Street” strategies just hid the trade; they are cooperating with a South African group: their educational approach involves including men in the process, empowering women through confrontation of the men, persuading them to care for the health and wellbeing of women and girls

### **Mainstreaming or Malestreaming - Challenges of Working With Men and Boys to Achieve Equality:**

**Mary Kelly, National Council of Women of Ireland:** Violence is devastating for both men and women; equal decision-making is difficult within current patriarchal institutions and concepts; AI launched global human rights campaign against violence against women: “*It’s in our hands*”. It is important to develop solidarity with men to combat violence.

**Taina Riski, Finland:** we need young men to help but where are they? Parental leave is only taken up by 2.3% of the fathers; on the positive side, some men prefer community to military service and are role models for boys and other men; on the negative side, violence against women is still prevalent, men claiming they are reacting against the feminist movement. The media has been ‘pornified’. 80-90% of social power positions are still held by men.

**Query: How can Gender Mainstreaming Implementation be monitored?**

### **Other noteworthy workshops attended on Mental Health and Post-Partum Depression.**

### **NGO Consultation on Beijing+10 and CEDAW:**

Extended discussion were held by NGOs on the rationale for Beijing+10 as a time to evaluate progress to date and strategize for the future, rather than open up new language and risk backsliding on the principles established to date. Discussion also took place on the most effective venue and timing for celebration of the milestone. Consensus was achieved to use CSW ’05 as the time and place for the celebration, stocktaking and strategizing, and to encourage the invitation of as many Heads of State and/or High Level Representatives as possible to attend. A parallel thrust was to take place on the home front where women’s groups would be encouraged to use the leadup time to engage and energize their own women in the struggles for equality, development and peace, to critique their own government’s progress, and to generate enthusiasm for many women to attend CSW ’05.

### **Special Events:**

**UNIFEM reception and awards:** This annual reception, held in the Turkish Centre opposite the UN, was attended by the usual enthusiastic crowd. Two awards were given, one to for her work with the UN and another to Canada’s Stephen Lewis for his outstanding and extremely demanding work with UNICEF on HIV/AIDS.

**Peace Vigil:** the Peace groups, with Canada's Voice of Women for Peace contingent playing a prominent role, held a peace Vigil at the plaza at 46<sup>th</sup> St. and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. at 1 pm on March 8, International Women's Day.

**Angela King** is retiring after 40 years at the UN, 7 of them as the first ever Special Advisor on Gender to the Secretary General. She is a much beloved woman, and touching tributes were made to her by many of the speakers, especially by the NGOs who have found her to be their constant ally. In her farewell comments, she said she had submitted several names to Kofi Annan as possible successors, but to date, no announcement has been made.

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### **The Challenge**

The challenge for all of us in Canada is how to use this time, supported by FAFIA and their designated focal point person, Charlotte Thibault, in cooperation with women's groups across Canada, to review the Beijing and Beijing + 5 commitments made by Canada, and to hold them accountable for timely implementation. Let's all work to raise the profile of Beijing + 10 and use this opportunity to improve the life of women and girls in Canada and around the world!