

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 2017

61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Monday 13 March - Friday 24 March 2017

Priority Theme

Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work

Review theme

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



www.scottishwomensconvention.org



@swcwomen

or find us on



Scottish Women's Convention

Introduction



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

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

To ensure the voices of women in Scotland are included as part of the debate, the SWC produces a report every year. The report for 2017 explored the work undertaken by women in Scotland, accessing and sustaining employment and barriers to progression in the workplace. The report was forwarded to Scottish and UK Government officials and key decision makers.

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



CSW2017

The main business of CSW took place in the UN Building from 14 - 24 March. The theme was: **Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work**

The SWC delegation attended during the first week. They were present at a number of side and parallel events as well as meeting with other representatives at CSW. The SWC was given accreditation, through its links with UK organisations, to access proceedings in the UN building.

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

A reception was held at the UK Mission by the UK Ambassador to the UN. This networking event gave UK delegates the chance to meet with UK Government officials as well as representatives of the Commonwealth.



Global Award4 for Women - Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahah Al-Khalifa

Over the course of the 20th Century Bahrain has been considered one of the leading countries in the region with regards to women. Many have had the right to participate actively at various levels of Bahraini society. In 1928 girls were allowed a formal education and by the 1950's were working in banking and finance. During the 1970's they were participating in international sports as well as in the military field. The reform era of the present King provided a quantum leap for Bahraini women at local, regional and international levels.

In 2001 the Supreme Council for Women was set up. The Council is considered as a reference to all official authorities in respect to women's affairs. It specialises in expressing opinions and decisions on matters related to the status of women, directly or indirectly. All official institutions must take its opinion before conducting any action or decisions in this regard. The Council consists of 16 women members from varying sectors of Bahraini society and is presided over by the Princess. The Council has a General Secretariat headed by a Secretary General at ministerial rank. They are responsible for activating the terms of reference of the Council to achieve objectives and develop plans and programmes related to women's issues. The Council supports the empowerment for women in roles in public life and has set up training courses for women in engineering, medicine etc, areas which were previously male dominated.

The Princess funded support for women involved in commercial activities. This provides loans and financial assistance for female entrepreneurs. The Princess's work has pushed forward gender balance, being sensitive to the culture of the country. Bahrain is the leader in the area of gender balance.

Women's Economic Empowerment in the World of Work

The Chair posed two questions to the Panel.

- Policies and regulations by Governments. Are they working to decrease gender pay balance?
- What steps can Governments take to ensure women are getting to same pay for doing the same job as men?

The Belgium Deputy Prime Minister said that the labour market in Belgium is complicated due to women holding down mostly part-time or temporary jobs. At present women working part-time in Belgium is above the European average (43%) with longer working hours. Belgian companies do not currently make full use of the existing female labour force. The Belgian Government is actively trying to ensure all types of jobs and classifications are gender neutral.



Belgium has an 8% gender pay gap (one of the best in the world)

The Jordan Government Minister said that Jordan is quite low in the world rankings. The Jordanian Government is aware of this issue and is looking into the gender pay gap. The culture of the country plays a large part. The Government is attempting to persuade men that if a woman does the same job then they should be paid the same wage. Women are undervalued and the Government is working to change attitudes. Jordan has a 77% gender pay gap.

Empowering Women through Education and Social Policy – Transforming Elder Care

This event focused on the need to assess and provide the correct care for elderly patients who have experienced a major trauma of surgery. The discussion centered on the elderly person who had enjoyed a healthy lifestyle before a major illness. More attention should be paid to needs of the patient. Many families insist on taking their loved ones home when they are well enough to be discharged but recent findings show that in some cases it is more harmful to elderly patients being discharged into the care of family. Studies have shown that the majority of patients who have serious illnesses and are released to the care of their families will require to be taken back into hospital.

Going forward medical professionals should be aware of this need and patients should not be released in the short term but more time and effort should be put into ensuring that they are ready to be discharged. As the majority of this type of caring is carried out by women, who may be elderly themselves, all the stresses of caring may have adverse effects to their own health.

More education is required and social policy should be looked at to ensure that this aspect of care is recognised and fully covered.

National Council of Women in Canada (Manitoba) – Rural Communities

There are approximately 6 million people who live in rural Canada. This meeting discussed the impact on women living in remote areas and the difficulties they face with regard to work, child care and networking. Canada must take a holistic approach to reach the potential of women entrepreneurs, including those living outside the urban centres. 51% of Aboriginal owned small to medium enterprises belong partly or wholly to women. Creating incentives for women-owned businesses to apply and win government contracts would open up new avenues for women to start and grow their businesses.



Social Care Worldwide – UN Update

UN Envision2030 Goal 5 - to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. This meeting discussed advancing the Triple R framework to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care for children, elderly and sick people. Updates were given by experts from the UN on what is happening around the world. In almost all areas of the world women undertake unpaid care varying from a few hours to 24 hour care. The UN is working with governments around the world to recognise and set out goals to try help and change the expectation that women are the only care givers. The economies of families in these countries could be boosted if women were freed to take employment either part time or in an entrepreneurial role. In some areas the male dominated customs of the countries prove challenging.

The UN is working towards Envision2030 to show a genuine improvement in the caring responsibilities for women worldwide.

Educating Girls in Southernmost Africa

Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe make up the countries in the southernmost region of Africa. This event discussed the steps being taken to improve the education of girls in this region.

For a long time girls were denied an education due to various obstacles including lack of sanitary facilities, social customs, child marriage and FGM. The enrolment rate in education for girls in countries such as Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique is lower than that for boys across primary, secondary and at university level. It has been proven that educating girls is one of the most cost effective ways to promote development and economic growth. Educated mothers tend to have healthy babies who in turn go to school thus breaking the cycle of illiteracy and poverty.

The governments of these countries work with the UN Girl's Education Initiative (UNGEI), under the auspices of UNICEF, which has a goal of ensuring equal access to free quality education for boys and girls. Since 2000, programmes have been rolled out in those countries where there was the widest gender disparity in primary education - those places where simply being born female resigns many children to a life of illiteracy and missed opportunities.

Women's Access to the Internet: Eliminating Online Violence and Engendering Digital Equality

Due Diligence is an international project focussing on violence against women and girls. It has submitted a report to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) about ways to bridge the gender digital divide.

The main points of the report are -

- There is now increased activity using online violence against women, with a lack of effective measures to prevent and contain it.
- The Due Diligence project has developed a Due Diligence Framework on eliminating online violence, using the SDG's.
- Removing violence against women (VAWG) from online and digital platforms can strengthen freedom of expression. This is especially true in women with other protected characteristics.
- Women are urged to view social media and digital forums as 'Public Spaces' and not a 'Private Space' to ensure that they do not disclose delicate information.
- Once something is posted online and is then used to create a violent experience, then there is a chance that the digital footprint never goes away.
- Lobby governments to create laws and special measures to protect women from online and digital VAWG.



Women's Stories, Women's Lives: Bridging the Disconnects between Law and Reality

This event, held by Musawah, focussed on the lives of Muslim women in the Philippines and the effect that polygamy has on them.

Presentations were given by three lawyers around the effects which early forced marriage has on women in the Philippines, particularly when the husbands choose to take a second wife. The first wife bears children to the man and when he decides to take a second wife the law in the Philippines is meant to protect her. In the majority of cases, however, the wife is ultimately forced to give her permission for him to have a second wife and the law allows it.

The law states that the husband has to keep both wives in a comfortable lifestyle while splitting his time equally between households. The reality, however, is that the first wife and her children are treated as outcasts. This creates stigma for the first wife and her children resulting in difficulties in integrating with their community.

Discussion took place around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how women can use these to challenge inequalities.

Human Trafficking and Labour: Accessorising Our Lives at the Cost of Others

Organised by the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons about Human Trafficking and the Labour, this event looked at the hotel and restaurant sectors.

The Fair Trade Foundation provided an overview of how retailers and businesses have a responsibility to find out if their products are being produced by victims of trafficking for labour.

A speaker from New Zealand discussed the changes in their laws to protect trafficking victims. This followed a report in a national newspaper regarding New Zealand companies who use trafficked labour.

Using the SDGs can hold businesses to account for using trafficked employment to produce products. They can also be used to challenge hotels and restaurants who use trafficking victims for manual labour.



A Year Focused Actions to Combat Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Focussing on actions to put an end to VAWG, 5 speakers from different backgrounds and countries spoke about what is being done to tackle VAWG.

VAWG should not only be discussed with International leaders and governments. Training and awareness raising must be carried out with police officers and local authorities.

Over the year, the European Commission will undertake a series of actions and events.

Women in the Workspace: How Violence Curbs Economic Empowerment

Held by the Breakthrough India, this event focussed on VAWG in the workplace.

Using media, arts, technology (including games and music videos) and social media can educate and challenge what people believe is normal. Educating communities and children in schools or at home can instigate better community engagement. This will result in a change of attitudes in society and support for women.

Contacting women at work in India is often difficult. The use of media is often the only way. With many working in rural communities, awareness raising and support will help the vulnerable.

Recent research shows that the number of women in work in India has fallen. There are a number of reasons for this but the main one appears to be unpaid care work which is undertaken by women. Job segregation also discriminates against women and makes them vulnerable towards VAWG.



Human Rights and Trafficking in Persons: Empowering Women to Address Poverty

The New York Anti-Trafficking Network supports women who have been trafficked to the City. It helps with their legal rights and provides support to those who have been found/arrested.

Trafficking between states is a huge problem in the US. Trafficked victims may be almost able to escape their captors when they are moved to another state. Families can traffic other family members, expecting them to work for free with little independence or access to the outside world.

When trafficking victims do reach out for help, there are so many legal processes in place that it is often difficult to support them.

US police have not been trained to deal with victims of trafficking. If arrested, trafficked victims do not have the support or help they need. They are often deported to their country of origin where traffickers will abuse them again.

There is a lack of focus on the economic opportunities afforded to victims of trafficking. This results in increased illegal activities and prostitution.

The US needs its legal system overhauled and new policies implemented to help victims of trafficking.



Empowering Rural Women to Develop Resilient, Sustainable Livelihoods and Communities

This event focussed on support for rural women farmers in Brazil to be able to build a sustainable income whilst also being able to stay within their own community and care for their families.

Women farmers control less land than men. They also have less access to the seed and supplies needed for farming. When disasters strike in these rural areas (like landslides and storms) women stay behind and care for their families and villages rather than find more land. This means that women have less opportunity to access sustainable economic activities once the disaster is over.

There is an ongoing focus on empowering rural women, ensuring that they are lifted out of poverty as well as access to decent healthcare and provisions.

Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Modern Day Slavery

Trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of women and girls is one of the most vile mistreatments of human beings. Trapped and often misplaced the mass majority of victims are hidden.

Criminal networks, who perpetuate these activities, are organised. There must be an international effort to stop slavery.

1. Bring criminals to justice.
2. Reduce vulnerability - work with global brands to eliminate exploitation.
3. Put women at the centre of all humanitarian work.
4. Greater cooperation between government, business and charities.



Other points discussed included - contemporary slavery, 'baby factory operations' (babies sold by racketeers), insurgency (women in conflict, weapons of war, sex slaves, child brides)

98% of those trafficked for CSE are women. They often live in poverty with limited opportunities. Traffickers target the women with the prospect of a job and money to support their families.

Tools do not exist to legislate for these challenging issues. In some countries, there are cross border issues which prevent targeted support for women.

There need to be legal empowerment - the legal system and victims working together.

Modern day slavery is preventing young women from an education. Mothers fear that their daughters will be handed over to gangs if they attend school so they are kept at home. Other young women are forced into marriage to an often older man. Many communities are struggling to protect women and girls.

Slavery is about power. It excludes people from power. Work needs to be undertaken internationally to ensure that women and girls are protected.

Empowering Young Women Entrepreneurs in Africa Through ICTS

'The smart phone is a powerful computer.'

Young women, in projects throughout Africa, are using social media, programming and coding to support and enhance communities.

The mobile phone is an empowerment tool and is being used for positive activism. 43% less women than men have access to the internet in developing countries. The informal economy has lifted 5.3million people (mostly women) out of literacy.



A number of young women spoke about the work they are undertaking and the difference it is making.

Sonatel is the largest company in Senegal. It works in partnership with the Government to support digital entrepreneurship.

'I am the Code' - an international project aiming to build a generation of women coders. Volunteers are looking to create digital clubs in communities and create hubs and support networks. Education teams will work with a hardware provider to ensure that as many young women as possible have access. The focus is on young people creating the technology for tomorrow.

A young woman has created a healthcare App which ensures that pregnant women have access to the support and services they require. The App is also used by GPs for follow up work. Research found that once a child was born the mother disengaged with services and post natal care. The App allows healthcare professionals to ensure that new mothers receive the care and support they need.

A mobile App looking at land management has been developed by another young woman. It promotes land which is for sale. The land and the prospective buyer have to register with the government. This process is giving young women the confidence to be land owners and provide for their families.

Martha Chumo is a young woman from Kenya. At 18, she had the choice to go to medical school but she decided against it as she would be dependant on the Government for work.

Martha began to teach herself coding, using books and on-line resources. She also trained herself in a number of languages. She then had the opportunity, as a young woman coder, to move to New York for 3 months. But was unable to go due to funding constraints. Martha set up a coding project in Kenya. The project was picked up by CNN news. Since 2014, she has been part of a global and UNESCO promotion to support young women.

In Kenya, there is also a project called 'mobile money' where women loan money to other women. It allows them to have a credit score and access other forms of funding.

Digitalisation in the Changing World of Work

The SWC was delighted to be able to hold a parallel event at CSW. As far as we are aware, we are the first Scottish organisation to host an event at CSW.

On Friday 17 March, 4 guest speakers were invited to the UN Church Centre to talk about 'Digitalisation in the Changing World of Work.'

The event was also broadcast on Facebook and social media with over 300 individuals viewing it during the 1.5 hour timeslot.

Pearl Sawyer, Executive Vice President of UFCW in Canada and Member of UNI Global World Women's Committee provided an overview of digitalisation from a gender perspective.

Digitalisation is sweeping workplaces throughout the world. Jobs are being replaced by processes which require little human input - manufacturing, food processing, surgery etc. This affects the world of work in a number of ways -



- Job creation - new sectors, products and services
- Job change-new forms of worker/machine interaction and new forms of employment
- Job displacement - eradicate jobs which can be digitalised
- Job shift - competition amongst workers with low levels of protection

These factors will impact adversely on women. There will be a widening of the technology gap and further job segregation. There will be a need for further training and lifelong learning to access the specific skills and jobs available.

Women do, however, need to access these jobs. Women are half the users of both technology and website. Their choices impact up to 85% of purchasing decisions in developed countries. Women's participation in ICT sectors will raise the economic benefits of a country as well as provide a more diverse workforce.

What can we do?

- Raise awareness - organise campaigns, activities and discussion groups to engage with women.
- Inspire and be prepared.
- Act - lobby governments and companies, organise collective bargaining and negotiation.
- Support - networks, skills and capacity building to assist women in the workplace.



Other speakers included

- Debbie Figures, Chair, Unite the Union (Scotland) Women's Committee with an overview of the trade union, the sectors it works with and how digitalisation will affect women in those sectors.
- Kate Russell, NAWO Youth providing an update on global digitalisation and the impacts on young women.
- Kara Brown, YWCA talking about the impact of social media. With women being judged on their appearance and abilities through media sources, the use of social media can seriously damage a woman's confidence and power. The influence of Twitter and Facebook, including derogatory images and words, sexualisation and revenge porn, will impact on women in the workplace.

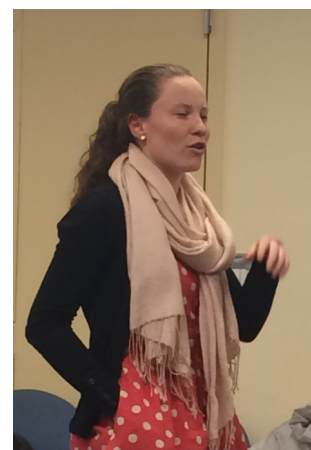
Kara's presentation also tied in with the SWC Booklet on Violence Against Women in the Media. The booklet was explained and handed out to delegates.

The event was chaired by Sarah Cumming, SWC Board member.

A question and answer session allowed women to ask questions and make comment on the presentations.

Feedback was excellent with all those attending remarking how well the event was organised, the excellent speakers and the opportunity to network with others.

A recording of the event can be found on the SWC website at - <https://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/content/international-csw/>



My Experience of Attending CSW



Debbie Figures

It was an amazing experience being at CSW. I met some amazing women and received such a great education from all of the various meetings.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to go .

Ann Scullion

The meetings I attended at the CSW event were both informative and humbling. To mingle with women from around the world in the magnificent setting of the UN Building (and their associate properties) was an experience I shall treasure. To be part of a group who follow the principle of Article 2 of the founding of the UN, which is "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples...". The only woman delegate appointed to the first UN Commission, Eleanor Roosevelt who was a great champion of women's rights, would have been proud to see women from almost every country in the world meeting, discussing and striving for solutions to the many issues which affect them.



My thanks to the SWC Board and Management for giving me this opportunity to experience at first hand the vision and excellent work undertaken by the CSW.

Agreed Conclusions

The outcome from CSW is Agreed Conclusions. They contain an analysis of the priority theme and a report of the discussions which have taken place during the 2 week session. They also contain a set of recommendations for governments and stakeholders which should be implemented at an international, national, regional and local level. It should be noted that these are only recommendations and governments are not held to account if they do not work towards them.

A copy of the Agreed Conclusions for 2017 can be found at -
<http://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2017/L.5>

CSW 2018

The dates for CSW 2018 are **12 to 23 March 2018**

Priority Theme

Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls;

Review Theme

'Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women'