



AFGW Inc eNews May 2016

The United Nations and You

Some very interesting events have occurred at the United Nations in New York and Geneva in the last few months and we would like to give you a very brief description of two of these as AFGW has contributed in some way to these important discussions and outcomes. Your membership of AFGW automatically provides you with membership of Graduate Women International (GWI) and through them we have representatives and observers participating in various forums with the United Nations. This is something that payment of your membership dues achieves.

MEETING 1 The 60th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60) 14-24 March 2016, New York

CSW is the principal United Nations gender meeting each year, where states and civil society come together to review progress on women's rights. It is exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The GWI President, Catherine Bell, and Graduate Women International (GWI) members from all over the world attended CSW60 to ensure that its mission, [the empowerment of women and girls through lifelong quality education](#), is visible and promoted at the highest levels. Two AFGW members were part of the GWI delegation – Kate Cantrell from GWQueensland and Jaya Dantas, AFGW Convener for Peace, Human Security and Human Rights, from GWWA. Excerpts from Kate's report are included later in this eNews.

CSW60 Themes

The priority theme for CSW60 in March 2016 was "*Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development*", and the review theme for the year was *The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*".

Discussion was based on the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets agreed by UN member states in 2015. These follow on from the Millennium Development Goals but have been refined and expanded. They now specifically include Education as a goal and in all goals gender is now an identified component. Details of all the goals and targets can be found at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>. Below we report on the agreed CSW60 conclusions for Goal 4: Education. Here is a link to the full list of agreed Conclusions: <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/60/csw60%20agreed%20conclusions%2024march.pdf?v=1&d=20160415T171708>

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

CSW60 agreed conclusions state: "Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education throughout their life cycle at all levels, especially for those most left behind, by providing universal access to quality education, ensuring inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, and promoting learning opportunities for all, ensuring completion of primary and secondary education and eliminating gender disparities in access to all areas of secondary and tertiary education, promoting financial literacy, ensuring that women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and by adopting positive action to build women's and girls' leadership skills and influence; adopt measures that promote, respect and guarantee safety of women and girls in the school environment, and measures to support women and girls with disability in all levels of education and training;

“Mainstream a gender perspective into education and training programmes, including science and technology, eradicate female illiteracy and support school-to-work transition through skills development to enable women’s and girls’ active participation in economic, social and cultural development, governance and decision-making, and create conditions that facilitate women’s full participation and integration in the formal economy.”

This Goal has 10 targets and our CIR, Dalma Jacobs, has been working with the Gender Statistics Advisory Committee of the Australian Bureau to develop specific measures so that Australia can clearly monitor our success in achieving these goals.

GWl’s National Federations and Associations hosted events at CSW60 in New York

Several NFAs co-hosted side and parallel events at the CSW60 including the Finnish Federation of Graduate Women and Women Graduates – USA. The Rwandan Association of University Women and the **Australian Federation of Graduate Women**, with Shirley Randell (AFGW-NSW) and Jaya Dantas, hosted a joint workshop on *Global Case Scenarios: Implementation of rights based approaches to enhance effective education of women*. Shirley was there as a member of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund delegation.

From Dr Kate Cantrell, Post-Doctoral Researcher, University of Oxford, GW Queensland member

“...after two weeks of negotiations, we were able to reach consensus on the agreed conclusions, which commence the implementation of the UN’s new gender-responsive Agenda 2030, which is a follow-up to the UN’s last 15-year plan, The Millennium Goals. Throughout the Commission, I was working predominantly on Goal 5: ‘Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls’.

“The focus of many of the side events and parallel events was mass migration to Europe, extreme violence against women (especially intimate partner violence), unequal pay for equivalent work, improved access to justice, and early, forced, and young marriage.”

From Shirley Randell: “Around 4,100 non-governmental representatives from more than 540 organizations participated, the highest number ever for one of the Commission’s regular annual meetings. The Commission recognized women’s vital role as agents of development. It acknowledged that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of Agenda 2030 will not be possible without gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Growing global commitment was already in evidence with a record number of more than 80 government ministers from around the world attending the Commission.”

AFGW has representatives on two of the **National Women’s Alliances** that have been heavily involved in CSW60. They are hosting a Webinar on Wednesday 25 May 1:00-2:30 AEST to which you are invited. RSVP to info@awava.org.au by Friday 20 May

MEETING 2: 31st session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva 29 Feb to 24 March 2016

GWl, as a member of the Non-Government Organisation Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO HREL) delivered a joint oral statement at the HRC on behalf of all members of the group. The statement welcomed the fact that Human Rights Education is now a part of the 2030 Agenda for Global Sustainable Development and urged states to comply fully with monitoring and reporting guidelines.

Tricia Blombery

Jane Baker, Dalma Jacobs, Merle Thompson