



Outcomes of the 54th Commission on the Status of Women Beijing + 15

Synthesis

12 March 2010

Introduction

The 54th Commission on the Status of Women held from 1st until 12th of March 2010. During the CSW, the General Assembly celebrated the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on Tuesday 2nd of March 2010. It was the occasion to make a balance about the progress and efforts that still have to be done. On 2 March 2010, the CSW adopted a declaration on the 15th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

At the end of the CSW 54, on 12 March 2010, seven resolutions had been adopted on several issues:

- * Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS
- * Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts
- * The situation of and assistance to Palestinian women
- * Women's economic empowerment
- * Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women
- * Strengthening institutional arrangement of the UN for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women by consolidating the four existing offices into a composite entity
- * Ending female genital mutilation

To close the 54th Commission on the Status of Women, the United States Secretary of State, Hilary Rodham Clinton made an intervention to reaffirm the commitment of the United States for women's advancement.

You will find here a summary of the resolutions of the CSW 54 and the intervention of Hilary Clinton.



Outcomes of the CSW 54

Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS

The CSW expressed its concerns compared with the HIV and AIDS pandemic which increases the gender inequality. Indeed, women and girls are more affected and are more easily affected by the pandemic. It affirmed that the empowerment of women and girls is essential to reduce their vulnerability to HIV and to reduce the pandemic.

The United Nations reminds that governments and all concerned parties must “intensify national efforts and international cooperation” to struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The CSW has committed itself to encourage universal access to prevention programmes, treatment, care and support and to reproductive health programmes. This will help to reduce HIV/AIDS pandemic, maternal mortality, to promote gender equality and to eradicate poverty.

The United Nations urges governments to take into account the situation of older women with disabilities and girls who have to face with HIV/AIDS. States must facilitate the access to affordable, high-quality, safe and effective drugs, and HIV and maternal health-related pharmaceutical products.

The CSW demands States to promote the equal access for all persons to social and healthcare services such as sanitation, nutrition, food security, education programmes, etc. It urges States to increase their efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in relation to HIV and AIDS.

The CSW encourages the United Nations to support national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and encourages States to work in partnership with international organisms such as the Global coalition on Women and AIDS.

The CSW stresses the importance for girls and boys to have access to sex education, HIV education through social services, educational programmes, awareness campaign, etc. The prevention will enable to reduce the HIV/ AIDS propagation.

Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts

The CSW expressed concerns regarding the continuation of conflicts in several regions of the world. Women and children are particularly vulnerable and taken hostage in armed conflicts. Their human rights are violated.

The CSW is convinced that the release of children and women will promote the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action goals. It condemns all acts of violence against the civilian population during armed conflicts and demands parties involved in armed conflicts to take measures to determine the identity of women and children taken in hostage to create data that can be passed on international organizations. They must adopt comprehensive approach to respect and protect their human rights and apply the recommendations of international instruments about protection of civilians during armed conflict. All parties must facilitate and provide safe access to humanitarian assistance.



The CSW decided to tackle that issue during the 56th session of the CSW.

The situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

Several declaration and statements had been adopted by the United Nations concerning the situation of Palestinian women: the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in particular paragraph 260, resolution 2009/14 of 28 July 2009, the Declaration on the Violence against Women and its article relative to the protection of civilian population, etc.

Regarding the situation of Palestinian women, the United Nations have expressed concerns compared with the increased difficulties that women and girls living under Israeli occupation have to face in their daily life: home demolition, unemployment, food insecurity, trauma and decline of psychological well-being, etc. Moreover the economic and social situation of women is decreasing because of the construction and expansion of settlements and the Wall, the violation of Human Rights or the imposition of closures and restrictions.

In view of that, the United Nations highlighted the importance of giving support and assistance in order to ensure the safety and well-being of women of that region. Moreover it stressed the necessity to involve women in peace building and decision-making process. It urged to the international community to pay attention to the situation of Palestinian women living under Israeli occupation, to promote and protect their human rights.

The United Nations called upon Israel to respect the principles of the Universal declaration of human rights, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and all international instruments that protect Palestinian women and their families. It demanded Israel to facilitate "the return of all refugees and displaced Palestinian women and children to their homes and properties, in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions"

The CSW must monitor the application of all international instruments that protect women and their families during conflict situations.

Women's economic empowerment

The CSW reminded the goals and objectives of the Beijing declaration and Platform for Action. Women's economic empowerment is essential for their achievement. People are at the core of the development and direct economies to meet human needs. Empowering people and in particular women strengthen their own capacities to build their future.

However the CSW noted that there is an increasing feminization of poverty. But their empowerment is crucial for the eradication of poverty which is one of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG). Gender inequalities and disparities in sharing economic power prevent women's economic empowerment.

The CSW expects from States to introduce gender perspectives into their social and economic policies and to take action to promote women's economic empowerment. It encourages states to provide education for all and in particular for women and girl even



in case of humanitarian emergency situations. States must take legislative measures to ensure the full application of equal remuneration between men and women, to allow persons with family responsibilities to access to employment. States must implement awareness campaign for gender equality and must promote the full participation of women in decision-making processes.

The CSW calls upon States to take measures to overcome the negative impact of economic and financial crisis. They must promote the use of information and communication technologies to empower women and to facilitate educational and occupational access.

Women's economic empowerment is crucial for the development of the national and global economy and to face the financial and economic crisis.

Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women

The CSW expressed "concerns that more than half a million women die every year from preventable complications" during pregnancy or childbirth (severe bleeding, infections, obstructed labour, unsafe abortion, etc.

The CSW noted that the HIV increases the risk of maternal mortality. The failure to prevent maternal mortality is a brake to women's empowerment.

It reaffirmed its commitment to promote the equal participation of men and women in political and public life as a key element to eliminate maternal mortality and morbidity. Gender equality cannot be achieved without protecting women's rights and women's reproductive and sexual health. The CSW recognized that maternal mortality and morbidity are directly linked with poverty, gender inequality and non access to education or health services facilities.

Taking into account all these facts and other facts, the CSW 54 demands States to take measures to reduce the high rate of maternal mortality and morbidity and to achieve the 5th goal of the MDG on maternal mortality. The United Nations, the States and the civil society must include in their "development priorities, programmes that address the crucial role of men in supporting women to have access to safe conditions for pregnancy and childbirth"

The CSW 54 urges State to collect data by sex and age on all factors that contribute to maternal mortality and morbidity, to analyse them and to find appropriate and adequate solution to decrease the rate of maternal morbidity and mortality.

Member States with high rate of maternal mortality and morbidity must maximize the efficient use of existing resources for maternal health and implement awareness campaigns and educational programmes relative to reproductive health. They must facilitate women's access to health services.

Strengthening institutional arrangement of the UN for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women by consolidating the four existing offices into a composite entity

The CSW recognizes the role of the United Nations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at a global level.

Ending female genital mutilation (FMG)

The struggle to stop female genital mutilation is supported by several UN resolutions (56/128, 58/156, 60/141, etc). The UN Secretary General launched a campaign "UNite to End Violence Against Women" during the 53rd CSW. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the CEDAW firmly condemn that practice which kills every year thousands of young girls or women in Africa, Asia but also in Europe or in America. The Beijing Platform for Action, general recommendations or the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights support that fight.

Through its resolutions, the CSW 54 recognizes that the FMG are irreversible abuse that "affects one hundred and forty million women and girls alive today, and that each year a further three million girls are at risk of undergoing the procedure"

It stresses that the empowerment of women and girls is one of the keys to eradicate that practice and that awareness campaign and prevention programmes must be implemented. It calls upon governments to strengthen advocacy and awareness-raising programmes towards all the community: women, girls, boys, men, religious institutions, Medias, families, educational institutions, etc.

Moreover it urges countries to take all legislative measures to condemn that practice in order to protect women and girls from that act of violence and to end impunity. Education and training on the rights of girls and women as well as gender-sensitive programmes must be included in school curricula, educational material or teacher-training programmes to tackle the discrimination against women or the FMG.

Governments and international institutions must develop programmes such as prevention or physical and psychological support to help girls and women affected by FMG and to change mentalities in order to eradicate that practice.

Panel discussion on "Women's economic empowerment in the context of the global economic and financial crisis"

On March 8, 2010, a panel was organized on women's economic empowerment in the context of global crisis. Women's economic empowerment is essential for equitable and sustainable development economic growth and development.

During the panel, speakers recalled that women's access to the labour market has increased but they have fewer accesses to high positions than men. They are confronted to low wages, vulnerable employment, lack of stability, etc. In some regions, a high number of women work in informal sector. Their precarious situation became worst because of the crisis as they are not protected by labour legislation or social protection.



The global economic and financial crisis caused new challenges for gender equality. Migrant and domestic women are particularly vulnerable during times of crisis. Moreover, the decreased flow of remittance has negative impact in the country of origin.

To face the crisis many countries have implemented employment guarantee schemes, public service employment programmes, public work programmes to create jobs and boost the economy. These efforts must also be oriented towards women's employment with appropriate training and child care facilities.

The crisis generates an increase in poverty. Governments must pay attention to women in rural areas by facilitating their access to free health care services, vocational training or micro-credit.

To respond efficiently to the financial and economic crisis, a collaboration and coordination between economic and social policymakers is necessary. The partnership with the civil society: women's groups or NGOs must be strengthened. The private and public sector must work together to create jobs for women taking into account external factors such as training, child care facilities, etc. All this will contribute to facilitate women's economic empowerment in a context of global crisis

Intervention of the State Secretary of the United Nations

On March 12, 2010, Hilary Rodham Clinton, State Secretary of the United States, the host country, made a speech to close the CSW 54. After introducing all the measures that the United States took to improve women's status, she invited all countries to respect their commitment and to intensify their efforts to achieve Beijing Platform for Action and MDG goals by 2015.

She making-up the 15 years between the CSW 54 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995. She declared that many progress have been done in South Africa with the creation of women group to build houses, in Liberia with women who participated to the negotiation for a peace agreement and with the first woman, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf elected as a president in an African country, in the United States with the development of a website to generate funds to support women entrepreneurship in developing countries.

She noted that women worldwide are working a lot to improve their conditions and those of their family, their community. Even young girls are fighting for the respect of their rights. In Yemen, they demonstrated to get the marriage of young girls forbidden. Women and girls are better educated and have better access to education.

However, The United States Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton outlined that despite of all the progress in many fields, a lot must be done. Women are still the poorest people. In many regions, their rights are not respected and they are dependent from their husbands, their fathers, their brothers. Violence against women (physical violence, psychological violence, abuses, rapes, slavery, etc) is still a big concern. She declared that "in the 21st century, it is the fight for women's equality."

She recognizes that when women have access to education, to healthcare services, to employment and when their rights are respected, their families, their communities are



more prosper. "When women have equal rights, nations are more stable, peaceful, and secure."

She called upon States to finish what have been started. The "women's progress is human progress". She recalled that gender equality is one of the MDG and explained that women are fully integrated in the US policies, strategies and programmes. Women are at the core of development. The foreign policy of the United States is based on diplomacy, defense and women.

The State Secretary of the United Nations invited all countries to commit themselves in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action "to build upon the progress of the past and achieve once and for all that principle that we all believe in."

The results of the CSW 54 were mitigated. Despite of all the progress done, the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action have not been achieved yet. Governments must intensify their efforts to strengthen women's empowerment and achieved the Beijing objectives by 2015. The crisis can be overcome with the full participation of women at all levels. They represent more than 50% of the world population and they are a driving force within their family, their community. They have all the capacities to be fully involved in decision-making processes, in formal economy, in politics, etc. All States must promote their advancement to get a more peaceful world.

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