

Commission on the Status of Women

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) announced its priority theme in its multi-year programme for its 58th Session: “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls”.¹ As the 58th Session of the CSW will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the 10th to the 21st of March 2014, the agreed conclusions from the 55th Session will also be reviewed.² The review theme assesses the access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology.³ Upon review, CSW will begin to evaluate an emerging issue, women’s access to productive resources.⁴ This update will review the top CSW priority themes in its upcoming sessions and the progress regarding the composition of the post-2015 framework, and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.⁵ Throughout this paper, delegates will receive the opportunity to view recent CSW related activities, policy outcomes and the overall implementation methods of the body itself.

Looking onward, CSW’s 59th session has been scheduled to review the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from 9 to 20 March 2015, 20 years have passed since its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.⁶ This will be the opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, which highlighted further actions and initiatives within the Platform for Action after a five years appraisal in 2000.⁷ The session will also evaluate the major challenges that hinder implementation of the Platform.⁸ With 2015 steadily approaching, this leads to the discussion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda which is yet to be determined.⁹

Recent Activities

Construction of the post-2015 agenda is underway by intergovernmental and UN-led processes along with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰ The 58th Session will receive a chance to review the current MDG framework in order to better assess where achievements to gender equality are lacking.¹¹ The 58th Session will review the current MDG framework in order to assess the needs and achievements in regards to gender equality which will presume for a strengthened agenda in the post-2015 development framework.¹² This will further continue in the upcoming debate regarding the 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action in the 59th Session.¹³

In order to better assist CSW in its current research and help with its deliberations, UN Women along with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) collaborated and met for an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Structural and policy constraints in achieving the MDGs for women and girls” from 21 to 24 October 2013.¹⁴ Taking place in Mexico City, Mexico, the forum aimed at: identifying the challenges that women and girls face in regards to constraints that are structural and policy associated; examining the policy priorities and critical issues for the post-2015 agenda in relation to women and girls so they can further prosper by developing

¹ UN-Women, *CSW58 (2014)* [Website], 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Peace Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014; Peace Women, *Women for Peace; Peace for Women* [Website], 2014.

⁶ UN-Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)* [Website], 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ UN-Women, *Expert Group Meeting: Structural and policy constraints in achieving the MDGs for women and girls* [Website] 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

action-oriented recommendations; furthering the current achievements in relation to women rights for future MDGs.¹⁵

The Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals will hold its 8th Session from 3 to 7 February 2014 to discuss a “focus on promoting social equity, including gender equality and women’s empowerment.”¹⁶ This is essential in realizing the rights of women which are restricted and face numerous obstacles.¹⁷ The overall issue of oceans and seas, forests, biodiversity, conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, the promotion of durable peace, and rule of law and governance while promoting equality will also be discussed at the session.¹⁸ These issues pertain to the established Rio+20 Conference.¹⁹

The 2014 Annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) was held from 23 to 25 January 2014.²⁰ The Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka traveled to Davos, Switzerland where she met with representatives of the government, civil society and business to have interactive discussions that focused on gender-inclusive policies and practices to address barriers to empowerment and economic growth with a focus on gender.²¹

The *Women’s economic empowerment, entrepreneurship and participation in political decision-making* seminar was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, by UN Women on 26 January 2014.²² In regards to emphasizing the importance of gender equality and economic growth, the following remarks were given by Mlambo-Ngcuka, “Together we must tear down barriers so that women can claim their rights and realize their potential”.²³

Recent Policy Outcomes

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted in 2013 resolution (E/CN.6/2013/11), on *Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*.²⁴ Sections (mmm) through (qqq) describe how multidisciplinary research and analysis can reassess the structural and underlying cause of violence against women.²⁵ This can further improve development strategies, while revision of laws and policies can better inform and increase awareness to avoid risk factors.²⁶ Having the ability to collect, collate, analyze and disseminate reliable data can help figure out the statistics on a regular basis.²⁷ This is especially important at a local and national level, which will give reason so as to the causes and consequences of violence against women.²⁸ This can also determine the long terms health and economic costs of such discrimination against women and girls.²⁹

Along with the collection of data, geographical and ethical consideration of perpetrators can improve the effectiveness of services and or programs that are provided in the protection, safety guarantees and security for victims.³⁰ The creation of national monitoring process, preventative responses and strategies can help equip CSW to

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ UN-Women, *A focus on gender as the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals meets* [Website], 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ UN-Women, *UN Women Executive Director to call for women’s economic empowerment at the 2014 World Economic Forum* [Website] 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

²¹ Ibid.

²² UN-Women, “*Together we must tear down barriers so that women can claim their rights and realize their potential*” – Executive Director [Website] 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (E/CN.6/2013/11)* [Resolution], 2013.

²⁵ Women Watch, *2013: United Nations Security Council Open Debate* [Website], 2013; Women Watch, *Information and Resources on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women* [Website], 2014.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (E/CN.6/2013/11)* [Resolution], 2013.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

address the violence that women face in both public and private spheres.³¹ The sharing of best practices and solutions to these issues thanks to a consultative process is highly encouraged by CSW.³²

Conclusion

Overall, the Commission carries a prestigious position in ECOSOC.³³ Each year priority themes are discussed during its formal session, from which emerges the agreed conclusions as a resolution.³⁴ Agreed conclusions serve as the principal output from the Commission however they place concrete measures and recommendations for... “governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, to be implemented at the international, national and regional and local level.”³⁵ Effectively the body adopts a number of resolutions on a wide variety of issues in relation to women and girls.³⁶ CSW can strongly promote its support during the conference through the decision-making process, however it cannot mandate its Member States to implement the policies and resolutions it adopts.³⁷

The Commission on the Status of Women at NMUN•NY 2014

CSW is a functional commission of UN ECOSOC. CSW is the primary global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to the advancement of women and gender equality.

Format: CSW is a resolution writing committee.

Voting: Each Member State present may vote once on procedural and substantive matters. Matters are decided by a majority vote.

Membership: CSW is comprised of 45 Member States Member States are elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. Current membership is as follows:

Argentina	Bangladesh	Belarus	Belgium
Brazil	Burkina Faso	Central African Republic	China
Comoros	Cuba	Dem. Republic of the Congo	Dominican Republic
Ecuador	El Salvador	Estonia	Finland
Gambia	Georgia	Germany	Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Israel	Jamaica	Japan
Lesotho	Liberia	Libya	Malawi
Malaysia	Mongolia	Netherlands	Niger
Pakistan	Paraguay	Philippines	Republic of Korea
Russian Federation	Spain	Swaziland	Switzerland
Thailand	Uganda	United States of America	Uruguay
Zimbabwe			

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ UN-Women, *Outcomes* [Website], 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ UN-Women, "A safe and sustainable world demands women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality" - *Executive Director* [Website], 2014; UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website], 2014.

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United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). (2014). *Communications Procedure*. [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/communications-procedure>

The Communications Procedure section under the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women provides a direct form of communication and coordination in order to inform the Commission on current and recent issues that are rising. As these issues might directly affect women and girls everywhere, the Commission takes input and forms its priority themes accordingly.

United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). (2014). *CSW57 Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*. [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm#news>

The fifty-seventh session took place last year in March 2013. This presents the most recent priority theme that was discussed. Under this link delegates will be able to find the agreed conclusions that were formed by the collaboration of Member States and other entities.

United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). (2014). *CSW58 (2014)*. [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw58-2014>

The fifty-eighth session which will take place in March 2013, has chosen to discuss as priority theme the Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls. Here delegates can find the appropriate schedule of the annual session. Along with the discussion of the priority theme will be the review theme and potential issues that are being considered for the Post-2015 Framework in relation to the Millennium Development Goals.

United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). (2014). *NGO Participation*. [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/ngo-participation>

This website emphasizes the importance and role that NGOs play for the Commission on the Status of Women, insisting on their role within the consultative and decision making process of the Commission. This will give a better picture to delegates on how NGO and civil societies are attributed a participatory role within the commission and coordinate their work with the Economic and Social Council.

United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). (2014). *Outcomes*. [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/outcomes>

Within this webpage, delegates will gain perspective on the Commission of the Status of Women role, responsibility and overall methodological process, with a special focus brought to the reasons behind its establishment. Each CSW session has different priority themes that were discussed and later reviewed. Agreed conclusions are presented in five different languages for global accessibility, which allows a better understanding of what was accomplished during each session.

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http://peacewomen.org/peacewomen_and_the_un/peacewomen-un-monitoring/commission-on-the-status-of-women

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<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/2/un-women-side-events-at-owg-session>

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United Nations, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). (2013). *Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (E/CN.6/2013/11)*. Retrieved 28 January 2014 from: [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_\(CSW_report_excerpt\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_(CSW_report_excerpt).pdf)

United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). (2014). *At AU Summit, girls and young women demand attention of world leaders*. [Website]. Retrieved 28 January 2014 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/1/press-release-on-outcome-of-the-au-summit-2014>

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United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). (2014). *CSW58 (2014)*. [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw58-2014>

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I. The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Introduction

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is at the core of the Commission on the Status of Women's (CSW) agenda.³⁸ Despite clear success in various fields such as an increase in access to education for young girls and an improved prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), progress regarding this overarching goal remains irregular in various areas such as health care, reproductive rights, security, or access to justice.³⁹ As a result, involving men and boys to achieve gender equality represents a ground-breaking initiative, which could considerably spearhead the advancement of women's rights.⁴⁰ Indeed, men and boys are significantly implicated in this process, whether as resisters, advocates, or simply as beneficiaries of gender equality.⁴¹ In particular, recent reports have underlined that gender discrimination are embedded within our social norms and cultural traditions, which means that in order to promote gender equality, it is essential to take into account the role of men and boys in the construction of gender norms.⁴² At a policy level, this means that current frameworks should consider broadening gender-sensitive agendas so that the responsibility of achieving women's right becomes shared between all stakeholders and actors.⁴³ In practice, involving men and boys in the process of gender equality requires expanding current practices and actions plans, so as to reach out not only to women and girls, but also to men and boys.⁴⁴ Efforts to develop these initiatives have become central to the work of CSW in the past year, with Deputy-General John Hendra stating that: "to bring about change, we need to better target men of all ages and backgrounds to rethink ideas of masculinity and discriminatory gender norms."⁴⁵

There have been several new developments regarding this topic within the United Nations (UN) system. During its 2013 substantive session, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) passed resolution E/RES/2013/36 on the subject of *Taking action against gender-related killing of women and girls*, in which it urges Member States to involve men and boys in educational programs at the earliest age to prevent all forms of GBV.⁴⁶ Similarly, the report issued by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon during this substantive session on *Mainstreaming gender equality and perspective into all policies and programs in the UN system* (E/2013/71), offers a pluralistic approach on how we can engage men and boys at all levels into gender equality, emphasizing the importance of a cross-dimensional approach.⁴⁷

Additionally, several UN entities and agencies have discussed this topic, such as UN Women, which held a High-Level Stakeholders Forum in December 2013, to prepare the upcoming CSW Session.⁴⁸ According to UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri, part of the reason why the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

³⁸ UN-Women, *Speech by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at Stakeholder's Forum on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls: The road ahead"* [Website], 2013.

³⁹ UN-Women, *Speech by UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri: Opening Remarks at Stakeholder's Forum on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls"* [Website], 2013.

⁴⁰ Regional Learning Community for East and Southeast Asia, *Transforming Masculinities Towards Gender Justice*, 2013, p.9.

⁴¹ UN-Women, *Speech by John Hendra at the Government of Canada Side Event "Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence against Women and Girls,"* [Website], 2013.

⁴² Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (PMNCH), *Engaging men and boys in RMNCH*, 2013, p.5.

⁴³ International Institute for Sustainable Development, *News Stakeholders' Forum Recommends Gender Equality Goal* [Website], 2013.

⁴⁴ Burden, A., W. Fordham, *Gender Equity and Diversity Module Five: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality. Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE)*, 2013, p.8.

⁴⁵ UN-Women, *Speech by John Hendra at the Government of Canada Side Event "Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence against Women and Girls"* [Website], 2013.

⁴⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Taking action against gender-related killing of women and girls (E/RES/2013/36)* [Resolution], 2013.

⁴⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2013/71)* [Report], 2013.

⁴⁸ UN-Women, *Speech by UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri: Opening Remarks at Stakeholder's Forum on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls"* [Website], 2013.

progress stalled is due to the lack of accountability and compliance given to men and boys in its framework.⁴⁹ As a result, particular attention was brought to the fact that a post-2015 structure should “win hearts and minds for these agreements to matter”.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) held a conference in September 2013 to discuss how men and boys could be encouraged to advance women’s rights.⁵¹ The talks focused on the positive impact of gender equality on men, which according to SIDA’s research increases their well-being, as well as makes them happier, healthier, and stronger.⁵² One panel outlined the fact that some men feel threatened by women’s growing independence, resulting in their resistance towards gender equality.⁵³ It was noted that it is important to put an end to this traditional masculine role given to men, in order to adopt a more progressive perspective.⁵⁴

The key documents, which continue to underpin this topic, are the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979).⁵⁵ Additional international legal framework includes the third MDG focused on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, as well as the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), an international declaration of women’s right currently undergoing a review process in anticipation of 2015.⁵⁶ Finally, in 1994 the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) promoted a *Programme of Action*, which took ground-breaking steps in regards to men’s role in the promotion of gender equality, as well as sexual and reproductive health rights.⁵⁷ During the recent conference ICPD Beyond 2014, UN Human Rights Chief Navi Pillay emphasized that in order to reinforce the ICPD in its twentieth year of implementation, youth should be promoted as agents of change, so as to tackle gender norms, besides preventing the predominant discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes from persisting.⁵⁸

This topic was at the center of debate recently during the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, especially with UN’s Secretary-General UNiTE to end Violence Against Women campaign, which mobilized women’s civil societies, men, young people, and grass-root actors as advocates for change.⁵⁹ On a regional and national scale, the 2013 East Africa Men and Boys GBV Symposium brought together civil societies, as well as leaders from the region to explore key themes and challenges regarding the role of men and boys in the prevention of violence against women.⁶⁰ Similarly, in South Africa, the organization MenEngage held a course on the topic of *Masculinities, Leadership and Gender Justice in Sub-Saharan Africa* to strengthen existing practices and increase knowledge regarding men and boys involvement in the prevention and response to GBV, sexual harassment, HIV and AIDS, as well as fatherhood and other issues related to gender equality.⁶¹ Lastly, in England, the NGO the Great Initiative sent off its innovative national campaign called Great Men: Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality, which sets up among other things free school workshops for boys to discuss various themes relating to gender equality, and women’s empowerment, ultimately aiming at transforming gender roles so as to portray men as the solution, rather than the problem.⁶²

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ SIDA, *Work with Men and Boys for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment* [Website], 2013.

⁵² SIDA, *Gender equality makes also men happier, healthier and stronger!* [Website], 2013.

⁵³ SIDA, *Work with Men and Boys for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment* [Website], 2013.

⁵⁴ SIDA, *Gender equality makes also men happier, healthier and stronger!* [Website], 2013.

⁵⁵ Charter of the United Nations, 1945; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/217 A (III)), 1948; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (A/RES/34/180), 1979.

⁵⁶ Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

⁵⁷ United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *ICPD Beyond 2014: advancing human rights for all women* [Website], 2013.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ United Nations Secretary-General’s Campaign, *UNiTE to End Violence Against Women* [Website], 2013.

⁶⁰ AWID, *2013 East Africa Men and Boys GBV Symposium*, [Website], 2013.

⁶¹ MenEngage, *MenEngage Africa Training Initiative: Masculinities, Leadership and Gender Justice Training course* [Website], 2013.

⁶² Global Dimension, *Great Men: Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality* [Website], 2013.

Recent Developments

Including Men and Boys in the Post-2015 Development Framework

During UN Women's High-Level Stakeholders event held in December 2013, an appraisal of the MDGs underlined the importance of integrating men and boy within the post-2015 framework on gender equality, so as to ensure that the agenda be comprehensive and all-inclusive.⁶³ In order to be transformative, the Beijing +20 review, as well as the post-2015 agenda must include a series of cross-cutting solutions and address the structural drives or gender inequality, by including young men, and boys in the process.⁶⁴ It is essential to involve men and boys within the overarching framework and goals, so as to deconstruct and ultimately put an end to the current gender perceptions linked to discrimination.⁶⁵ MenEngage calls for a broad and significant change within the post-2015 agenda, so that men and boys be counted in goals, and considered as official partners to women regarding: their access to HIV treatment or sexual and reproductive healthcare; the prevention of GBV; the implementation of gender-sensitive education; women's economic and political empowerment; equal-share in domestic tasks; and childcare.⁶⁶ MenEngage underlined the impact these policies have on men and boys, as it will allow them to improve their own health, their access to education, and their general well-being.⁶⁷

Involving Men and Boys in the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence

In the past few month, particular attention has been brought on the role men and boys can have in preventing and reducing GBV.⁶⁸ Especially, a survey published by the United Nations Population Fund in December 2013 indicated that over 52% of Chinese men have practiced physical or sexual violence against a women in the course of their lifetime.⁶⁹ This research reveals that one of the root causes of GBV lies in the unequal power relations between genders, with men being forced into complying with the social perceptions of "real men" toughness, authority, and sexual aptitude.⁷⁰ In short, the achievement of the elimination of violence against women will need to transform the ways in which boys and adolescent men are socialized, so as to be more considerate towards women's rights and well-being.⁷¹

In addition, Partners for Prevention, which seeks opportunities for men and boys regarding the promotion of gender equality, published in December 2013, the UN multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific.⁷² This document offers a fresh perspective on GBV, taking into account the point of view of men regarding violence against women.⁷³ While ultimately men must be held accountable for their violent and dominant behavior, the research indicates that in order to prevent GBV, their societal and historical background must be taken into account.⁷⁴ Indeed, the use of violence is particularly high for men who have themselves been abused psychologically, or physically during their childhood, which has led them to feel overpowered.⁷⁵ Similarly, in contexts where violence is normalized due to cultural impunity, men tend to practice GBV as a means to assert their power, which they feel they have been robbed of due to social exclusion or economic marginalization.⁷⁶ The fact that violence against women is correlated to men's own childhood experience indicates that in order to prevent effectively GBV, comprehensive strategies must educate boys regarding gender equality, as well as promote male

⁶³ UN-Women, *Speech by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at Stakeholder's Forum on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls: The road ahead"* [Website],2013.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Peacock, D., *South Africa's Sonke Gender Justice Network: Educating Men for gender equality*, 2013, p.3.

⁶⁶ MenEngage, *MenEngage Call for Action: Post-2015 Agenda*, 2013, p.2.

⁶⁷ MenEngage, *MenEngage Call for Action: Post-2015 Agenda*, 2013, p.3.

⁶⁸ Peacock, D., *South Africa's Sonke Gender Justice Network: Educating Men for gender equality*, 2013, p.2.

⁶⁹ UN News Center, *Despite progress, China needs to do more to fight gender discrimination, says UN group* [Website], 2013.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Promundo, *International Symposium: Men, Peace and Security: Agents Of Change* [Website], 2013.

⁷² EngagingMen, *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* [Website], 2013.

⁷³ Fulu, *Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Summary Report of Quantitative Findings from the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific*, 2013

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.13.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.14.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.18.

role models, life skills, and caring ways 'to be a man'.⁷⁷ This requires amongst others challenges, addressing the current perceptions of gendered familial and societal responsibilities.⁷⁸

Conclusion

This topic is the intersection of multiple relevant issues for the Commission on the Status of Women, such as GBV, access to sexual and reproductive health rights for women, education, and access to legal rights.⁷⁹ Indeed, the Empowerment of women and gender equality can only be achieved through a transformative and all-inclusive program, which will take into account the role of men and boys.⁸⁰ This is illustrated by the current work that it is being done regarding gender equality in the post-2015 framework, as well as the significance accorded to gender mainstreaming within the UN system.⁸¹ In order to enable future action on this topic, particular attention must be given to boys and young men's socialization process, and education, as well as men's well-being and social inclusion. Moreover, careful consideration must be brought to the role, place, and responsibility of men regarding the promotion of gender equality. Recommendations and options for action during the Commission on the Status of Women's upcoming conference can be found in various sources so as to strengthen the existing knowledge-base on this topic.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Kaufman, *We must enlist Men and Boys in the Fight to end violence against women*, [Website], 2013.

⁷⁹ UN-Women, *Speech by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at Stakeholder's Forum on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls: The road ahead"* [Website], 2013.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ UN ECOSOC, *Substantive Session of 2013, Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2013/71)* [Report], 2013.

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Fulu, E., X. Warner, S. Miedema, R. Jewkes, T. Roselli, & J. Lang. (2013). *Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Summary Report of Quantitative Findings from the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV. Retrieved 27 December 2013 from: www.partners4prevention.org/sites/default/files/resources/p4p-report.pdf

This Report represents the result of a four year research program set up by the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific. Its findings focus on answering the following question: "Why do some Men use Violence against women and how can we prevent it?". Essential for a more comprehensive perspective on Gender-Based Violence, this guide will provide delegate with an interesting point of view on violence against women, which will focus not only on its impact, but also on the root causes that lead to the use of violence. This report allows delegates to consider the cultural and historical background leading to a path of violence, and will therefore allow them to rethink this issue in a ground-breaking manner.

MenEngage. (2013). *MenEngage Call for Action: Post-2015 Agenda*. Retrieved 27 December 2013 from: http://www.menengage.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=111&Itemid=23

MenEngage is a global alliance of NGOs, civil societies, and UN Agencies which seeks to involve men and boys in gender equality and the empowerment of women. This document is a call for action made by MenEngage regarding the post-2015 Framework. In this appraisal, MenEngage underlines the need for increased responsibility and accountability for men and boys within the Post-2015 agenda, so as to foster concrete action and change. In particular, the alliance review's five different MDGs (End Poverty; Empower girls and Women and Promote Gender Equality; Provide Quality Education; Ensure Healthy Lives; Ensure Stable and Peaceful societies) and the ways in which men can positively contribute and reinforce them.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. (2013). *Gender equality makes also men happier, healthier and stronger!* [Website]. Retrieved 27 December 2013 from: <http://www.sida.se/English/current-topics-archive/2013/Gender-equality-makes-also-men-happier-healthier-and-stronger/>

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency held Development Talks in September 2013, so as to answer to the following question: "How can we encourage men and boys to strengthen women and develop societies based on gender equality?" Clearly, this represents the most recent dialogue focused specifically on our topic, and the article linked above summarizes the discussions held during the conference. Delegates will find in this document an analysis of why it is crucial to involve men and boys in the promotion of women's rights, and how to tackle this issue in a innovative way, by optimizing the impact of gender equality for both men and women.

UN -Women. (2013, December 05). *Speech by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at Stakeholder's Forum on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls: The road ahead."* [Website]. Retrieved 27 December 2013 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/fr/news/stories/2013/12/closing-remarks-by-ed-at-stakeholders-forum>

In December 2013, UN-Women held its High-Level Stakeholder's forum to prepare the upcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The main focus of the debate was an assessment of the current progress of the MDGs regarding the achievement of women's empowerment and gender equality, as well as the challenges that lay ahead. This speech made by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka provides a general appraisal and review of the three-day conference, summarizes the decisions taken, and underlines the upcoming challenges. As stated during the speech: "Achieving gender equality is not the responsibility of women; it is the responsibility of all of us." Indeed, the role of men and boys is currently being reconsidered by stakeholders, so as to be included to upcoming actions plans. This speech provides a clear indicator that including men and boys represents a future, if not current strategy, within the Commission on the Status of Women agenda's and it's UN agencies.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Substantive Session of 2013. (2013, June 28). *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2013/L.14)* [Draft Resolution]. Retrieved 27 December 2013 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2013/L.14>

This draft resolution was sponsored by Austria during the Economic and Social Council Substantive Session in September 2013, on the basis of informal consultation. While not included in the footnotes above, this Draft Resolution offers a clear perspective for delegates on how to tackle this topic during the conference and address the issue at hand formally and officially. As the resolution was drafted on the topic of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, it discusses at length strategies with which various actors can be involved at all levels within the UN System to promote gender equality. This represents an interesting read for delegates unfamiliar with resolution writing, and coordination between UN agencies.

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II. Addressing the Promotion of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in the Post-2015 Agenda

Introduction

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women remains a pertinent international topic, particularly in relation to the upcoming expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, and current global dialogue on what should replace the MDGs after 2015. Discussions on international development goals post-MDGs have focused upon the post-2015 development agenda, and in recent months much conversation has occurred within the international community on what the post-2015 development agenda should look like, and how its goals should be structured. Of particular relevance is the debate on how empowering women and promoting gender equality should be included within the post-2015 development agenda, given the importance of women in supporting all aspects of international development.⁸² In 2014, the post-2015 development agenda will be a vital aspect of all levels of international discussion, including at the UN, by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and within civil society, as the deadline for the new set of goals comes near.⁸³

Recent Developments

UN-Wide Developments

In recent months, the international community actively considered the role of international development goals and the empowerment of women. In September 2013, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) published a report titled *A Million Voices: The World We Want*.⁸⁴ The report was compiled through the participation of over a million global citizens reviewing their personal development priorities, as well as through consultations with Member States on relevant themes, and is meant to serve as a guiding document in the establishment of the post-2015 development agenda.⁸⁵ It includes information on what topics are of particular importance to citizens in different regions throughout the world; it also provides details on how different development topics were discussed, such as within the themes of education, energy, environmental sustainability, governance, and inequality.⁸⁶ It also addresses the individual topics and the regional deliberations information on including women in the post-2015 development agenda. It includes particular emphasis on women having access to decision-making on all levels, including in their personal lives; the causes of inequality and how it can be ameliorated on personal, local, regional, national, and international levels; and the importance of expanding the discussion on women and development past the three targets of MDG 3.⁸⁷

Also recently, during its 68th session, the UN General Assembly (GA) held a Special Event on the MDGs and released an outcome document (A/68/L.4) on 1 October 2013.⁸⁸ The document emphasizes the importance of Member States and the international community to maintain commitment to the current development goals.⁸⁹ The outcome document noted the need for “cross-cutting and multiplier” efforts in achieving development goals, and showed that gender equality and the empowerment of women are germane examples of a topic that intersects with many development goals.⁹⁰

⁸² UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Key Gender Equality Issues to be Reflected in the Post-2015 Development Framework*, 2013.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the Special Event to Follow Up Efforts Made Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (A/68/L.4)*, 2013.

⁸⁴ UN DPI, *New UN Report Reflects Voices of More Than 1 Million People on Development Issues*, 2013.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*; UN Development Group, *Presentation of the Report's Key Messages* [Web Site]; UN Development Group, *A Million Voices: The World We Want* [Report], 2013.

⁸⁶ UN Development Group, *A Million Voices: The World We Want* [Report], 2013, p. VIII.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 5, 11.

⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the Special Event to Follow Up Efforts Made Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (A/68/L.4)*, 1 October 2013; Mohammed, *Leaving No One Behind: Towards a Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013.

⁸⁹ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the Special Event to Follow Up Efforts Made Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (A/68/L.4)*, 2013.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

The theme for the General Assembly's general debate during its 68th session, set by GA President H.E. Dr. John W. Ashe, is "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage!"⁹¹ This theme highlights the crucial nature of dialogue to be held in 2014, as the penultimate year to the termination of the MDGs in 2015. On this theme, the GA will hold three high-level events throughout 2014, relating to key post-2015 agenda targets of addressing poverty and promoting sustainable development; they will also hold debates on international partnerships, peaceful societies, and water and energy in the development agenda, all of which relate to the role of women internationally.⁹² On 6-7 March 2014, the GA will hold one such high-level event on the Contributions of Women, the Young, and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.⁹³ Focusing on how women can be fully included in the goals of the post-2015 agenda and the need for women to have access to decision-making at all levels of society, it will include opening and closing plenary sessions and several panels.⁹⁴ Topics will utilize the post-2015 development agenda as a means to look at inequality and ensure that women and other societal partners are able to inform the development of the new agenda; and the role that Member States see for women in post-2015 development goals.⁹⁵ In addition, in January 2014, the new president of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Martin Sajdik, stated that a main ECOSOC goal for 2014 is to discuss the post-2015 development agenda, emphasizing the continued need "to put the spotlight on the final year left to achieve the MDGs."⁹⁶

The Commission on the Status of Women and UN-Women

In December 2013, a UN-Women Stakeholders' Forum occurred prior to the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2014.⁹⁷ Entitled "Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls: The Road Ahead," a set of five panels and a closing session examined lessons learned from challenges to MDG 3 and the empowerment of women, and how such information can inform the post-2015 development agenda.⁹⁸ The final session deliberated how the challenges and successes of the MDGs in relation to women should be considered in the coming two years as a post-2015 development agenda is finalized; how the *Beijing Platform for Action* (1995) and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) can be incorporated into new international development goals; and how the above discussions can motivate the 58th session of CSW as it approaches conclusions from the MDGs and the post-2015 development goals.⁹⁹ A civil society session was also held during the conference, in which women and girls shared their own experiences in relation to the MDGs, as a method to illustrate that the different voices and experiences of women are important as development goals are shaped.¹⁰⁰

A key conclusion of the December 2013 Stakeholders' Forum was that the post-2015 development agenda must include a goal specifically focused on gender equality, though this is a point of contention; considerations for female empowerment and equality must also be involved in all established development goals.¹⁰¹ It was also considered that existing rights-based documents such as the *Beijing Platform for Action* (1995), approaching its 20th anniversary, and CEDAW are useful aids in achieving the MDGs and in shaping the new agenda.¹⁰² At the end of the Forum, the Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, concluded, "the lessons learned from the review of

⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *Preliminary Organizational Arrangements for the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013.

⁹² UN General Assembly, *The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage!* [Website].

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *High-Level Event of the General Assembly "The Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda"* [Website]; UN General Assembly, *High-Level Event of the General Assembly The Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013.

⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *High-Level Event of the General Assembly The Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013.

⁹⁶ UN DPI, *Accelerating Development Agenda Top Priority for UN Economic, Social Body, New President Says*, 2014.

⁹⁷ UN DPI, "Mixed Picture" of Women's Progress Shows Need to Better Harness Synergies – UN Official, 2013

⁹⁸ UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls: The Road Ahead*, 2013.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ UN-Women, "What Do the MDGs Mean to Me?" *Girls and Women Speak From Their Own Experiences at the Stakeholder's Forum*, 2013.

¹⁰¹ UN-Women, *Stakeholders' Forum Concludes with Agreed Course of Action for Post-2015*, 9 December 2013.

¹⁰² UN-Women, *Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls – The Road Ahead*, 2013; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls*, 2013, p. 4.

Beijing+20 and the MDGs must inform the post-2015 development goals, in particular our proposed one goal for women's empowerment and gender equality. CSW58 therefore has a particularly heavy responsibility, not only to work for a strong outcome to accelerate MDG achievement, but to kick-start and connect effectively to the Beijing+20 and post-2015 processes.¹⁰³

Recently, UN-Women promoted several events and projects that highlight the continued international need to focus on gender equality and female empowerment. On 25 November 2013, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka stated that it was the role of all Member States and the international community to remember the goals of the *Beijing Platform for Action*, CEDAW, and the outcome of CSW57 to ameliorate violence experienced by women and girls worldwide.¹⁰⁴ She also emphasized that UN-Women believed in “a stand-alone goal on women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality, and for gender equality to be mainstreamed across all other goals,” and that the MDGs had failed to explicitly address violence against women, something which the new development agenda must do.¹⁰⁵ UN-Women similarly highlighted the importance of incorporating women in the post-2015 development agenda on Human Rights Day on 9 December 2013.¹⁰⁶ In December 2013, UN-Women also provided access to two important projects: a Constitutional Database which provides information on how 195 Member State constitutions address the rights of women; and a 2013 Year in Review timeline, which shows successes in gender equality in 2013.¹⁰⁷ In January 2014, the UN-Women Executive Board held its first regular session of 2014 and discussed the theme of female involvement in leadership, peace, and security.¹⁰⁸

Regional Efforts

Regional discussions also illustrate the needed consideration of women in the upcoming development goals. In August 2013, the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue was held in Bangkok.¹⁰⁹ As the first ministerial event held regionally on post-2015 considerations, it included partners from Member States, the UN, and civil society, and its resulting document was the *Bangkok Declaration*.¹¹⁰ One of the main elements stressed in discussions was that empowering women is essential to sustainable development.¹¹¹ In November 2013, the European Commission held the European Development Days conference.¹¹² On 26 November, a discussion was held on how women were to be included in post-2015 development goals, asking, “do we have to choose between a stand-alone goal and mainstreaming?”¹¹³ The session, although it did not comprehensively answer the question, focused on the need for continued support of women in positions of decision-making and in achieving MDG goals prior to 2015. It also showed that it remained of international significance to fund female empowerment as a method to increase it, as well as include men and boys in promoting gender equality.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

The work of international organizations, including the UN General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, and UN-Women, as well as the efforts of regions and Member States, highlight the significant attention currently on the post-2015 development agenda. The international debate over the coming year on incorporating women into the new development agenda largely will focus on whether to include a

¹⁰³ Mlambo-Ngcuka, *UN Women Executive Director Concludes Stakeholder's Forum With High Expectations for Progress Towards Gender Equality*, 2013.

¹⁰⁴ UN-Women, *Statement of UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka*, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ UN-Women, *Message of UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on Human Rights Day*, 9 December 2013.

¹⁰⁷ UN-Women, *UN Women Launches First-Ever Database Mapping Gender Provisions in Constitutions Worldwide*, 2013; UN-Women, *2013 Year in Review* [Website], 2013.

¹⁰⁸ UN-Women, *We Cannot Win With Half of the Team Left Outside of the Game*, 2014; UN-Women, *First Regular Session 2014* [Web Site], 2014.

¹⁰⁹ UN ESCAP, *Asia-Pacific Countries Stress 'Leave No-One Behind' as Critical for the United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015*, 2013.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² European Commission, *Women's Empowerment Post-2015*, 2013.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

specific goal related to empowering women and improving gender equality. In relation to this, UN-Women and the Commission have specifically emphasized the vital importance of including in new development goals an outcome that specifically focuses on gender equality, as well as considering female empowerment and gender equality in every development goal established in the coming years. As the 2015 expiration of the MDGs fast approaches, 2014 will serve as a significant year in determining how women can be more fully included in the post-2015 development agenda.

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A significant recent event in relation to incorporating women into the post-2015 development agenda was a Stakeholder's Forum held by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in December 2013. As an event meant to inform the work of the CSW in its 58th session in March 2014, the Forum discussed the successes and failures of the Millennium Development Goals to help inform the post-2015 development agenda. In her closing remarks, UN-Women's Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka summarized the main findings of the Forum and emphasized the need for the incorporation of women into a specific post-2015 development goal, as well as including women into all other goals planned.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2013). *Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls: The Road Ahead* [Concept Note]. Retrieved 15 January 2013 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/58/CSW58-StakeholdersForum-ConceptNoteDiscussionGuides-en%20pdf.pdf>

On 4-5 December 2013, the Commission on the Status of Women held a Stakeholder's Forum to discuss, previous to its 58th session in 2014, the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals and the upcoming discussion of a post-2015 development agenda. This concept note provides in-depth information about each of the five panels and the closing session held at the Forum; it also lists proposed questions for discussion that would be beneficial to delegates to consider in relation to their own country's position and as a representative to the Commission, as the Forum was meant to inform the upcoming work of the Commission. In particular, the final session (Panel 6) is directly related to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in relation to post-2015 development goals, and accordingly the material related to it will be important for delegates to consider in preparation for the upcoming conference.

United Nations Development Group. (2013). *A Million Voices: The World We Want* [Report]. Retrieved 14 January 2014 from: www.worldwewant2015.org/bitcache/cb02253d47a0f7d4318f41a4d11c330229991089?vid=422422&disposition=in-line&op=view

*The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) conducted an extensive online survey of the world's citizens, resulting in responses from more than a million individuals on what was important to them in relation to international development. In addition, almost 100 Member States were consulted, and theme-based discussions were held on several topics; the result of this material is the UNDG's report *A Million Voices: The World We Want*. As this report is extensive and recently published, it provides an important global perspective that will shape upcoming discussions on development goals after 2015. It includes sections on prominent voices from different regions of the world, as well as on different topics (including Addressing Inequalities); accordingly, it will reflect well for delegates what individual citizens are concerned about within their individual regions and according to the role of women in the post-2015 agenda.*

UN General Assembly. (n.d.). *High-Level Event of the General Assembly "The Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda"* 6-7 of March, 2014 [Concept Note]. Retrieved 14 January 2014 from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/pdf/sts/Concept_Note_on_the_Contributions_of_Women_the_Young_and_Civil_Society.pdf

On 6-7 March 2014, the United Nations General Assembly (GA) will discuss at a high-level event the role of women, youth, and civil society in the upcoming post-2015 agenda. As the theme for the GA's 68th session is "The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage!" This, and the other two high-level events held throughout the year, will include important discussions on establishing international development goals once the 2015 expiration of the Millennium Development Goals is reached. While each relate to women in international society, this event will be particularly pertinent to the inclusion of women in the post-2015 development agenda, and accordingly this

concept note on the event will be helpful in understanding the circumstances behind the event and its main objectives to discuss. As the Conference will be held following this event, delegates should also research into the outcome document(s) and/or report(s) of this event.

UN-Women. (2013). *Constitutional Database*. Retrieved 26 January 2014 from: <http://constitutions.unwomen.org/>
In December 2013, UN-Women released its Constitutional Database, a resource that provides the constitutions for 195 Member States in both English and the original language of each document. The database provides a focus on 16 different categories of consideration, including consideration of rights, citizenship, and access to political involvement and employment. It is text searchable, and also includes the ability to search by region or country. This resource would be a useful resource for delegates, in easily accessing and reading the constitution of their own Member State and considering regional and topic-specific constitutional aspects.

UN-Women. (n.d.) *CSW58 (2014)* [Website]. Retrieved 15 January 2014 from:
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw58-2014>

In March 2014, CSW58 will be held in New York. The priority theme of the 58th session of the Commission of the Status of Women will be “Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls,” and one purpose of reflecting upon the difficulties and successes of the MDGs since 2000 will be to analyze how female empowerment and gender equality can be more fully achieved and incorporated into the post-2015 development agenda. As this meeting will have occurred previous to the conference, the information found on this web page will be very informative to delegates, as it will include information on panels and links to documents related to the 58th meeting.

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III. Promoting Women's and Girl's' Access to Education, Training, Science and Technology

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) stresses the importance of education as a human right, and further, that “equal access to education, training and science and technology empowers women and girls in the context of global economic and technological changes.”¹¹⁵ In turn, this equality of opportunity promotes development and learning at all levels.¹¹⁶ Many women and girls lack access to adequate education and training, which thus inhibits opportunities to enter the fields of science and technology, and development overall; a number of countries lose more than \$1 billion each year by failing to educate females to the same standard as males.¹¹⁷ The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recently highlighted that progress towards gender parity and equality in education is slow, projecting that only 112 out of 161 countries will achieve gender parity in primary education by 2015, and that 31 countries “will still have severe disparities.”¹¹⁸ Access to education, training, and science and technology remains, therefore, a key component of the quest for a strong and sustainable post-2015 development agenda.

In the last few months, consideration of this topic took place in the General Assembly (GA), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).¹¹⁹ UNESCO recently published the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013-2014.¹²⁰ The topic is also due for consideration as the review theme of the 58th session of the CSW from 10-21 March 2014, and will be connected with the high-level meeting on Contributions of South-South, Triangular Cooperation and ICT for Development to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which will be convened by the President of the General Assembly in May.¹²¹ The UN system is not isolated in work upon this subject, and other significant discussion has taken place under the auspices of the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, and the International Labour Organization (ILO).¹²² Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on this topic include the Clinton Global Initiative and the National Girls Collaborative Project, and partnerships between governments and civil society organizations such as the Global Partnership for Education.¹²³

The primary international documents that continue to underpin work in this area include the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979), the *Beijing Platform for Action* (1995), and the *Dakar Framework for Action* (2000).¹²⁴ The Millennium Development Goals (2000) themselves, notably goal 3, are also concerned with this topic.¹²⁵ Within the UN, a subsidiary of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), functions as the substantive coordinator in this

¹¹⁵ UN CSW, *Agreed conclusions on access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology*, 2008, paragraph 6.

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Global Partnership for Education, *Girls' Education* [Website], 2014.

¹¹⁸ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p.76.

¹¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Globalization and Interdependence: Science and Technology for Development* (A/68/440/Add.2), 2013; UNCTAD, *The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development highlights the role of Science, Technology and Innovation in the Development Agenda*, 2013.

¹²⁰ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p.76.

¹²¹ UN General Assembly, *High-Level Event of the General Assembly “Contributions of North-South, South-South, Triangular Cooperation, and ICT for Development to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda”* [Website], n.d.

¹²² Yoo, World Economic Forum, *Why Women Make the Best Tech Investments* [Website], 2014.

¹²³ UN-Women, *UN Women Executive Director shares vision for women empowerment, gender equality at Clinton Global Initiative* [Website], 2013; National Girls Collaborative Project, *STEM-ulating Collaboration* [Website], 2014; Global Partnership for Education, *Girls' Education* [Website], 2014.

¹²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (A/RES/34/180), 1979; United Nations, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1), 1995; UNESCO, *Dakar Framework for Action*, 2000.

¹²⁵ United Nations, *MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women*, 2013, p. 1.

area to guide current and future policy.¹²⁶ The UNCTAD Secretariat is responsible for substantive matters within the Commission.¹²⁷

Recent Developments

Access to Education and the Post-2015 Development Framework

During the 68th session of the General Assembly (GA) from 24 September to 1 October 2013, the need to accelerate and enhance access to education for all children and improve educational opportunities for all was discussed and then delineated in the outcome document (A/68/L.4).¹²⁸ Another key feature of this session was the post-2015 development agenda. The Assembly resolved to build upon the foundations of the MDGs in order to “complete unfinished business and respond to new challenges.”¹²⁹ In pursuit of this mission, the GA launched preparation events on the theme of “The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage,” to be convened by the President of the Assembly, including on Contributions of South-South, Triangular Cooperation and ICT for Development to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.¹³⁰

Further discussion specifically emphasized the importance of access for women to education and training for jobs in fields such as science and technology. One report from this session advocates for a multi-faceted approach to successfully help women develop in these areas (A/68/440/Add.2).¹³¹ Another report reaffirms the need to help eliminate gender inequality at all levels by 2015, and further, the importance of education and training for women in areas such as administration, information, and technology (A/68/44/Add.2).¹³² Such education and training could work to alleviate extreme circumstances of poverty by helping women contribute to society through equal benefit and development opportunities.¹³³

Science and Technology

The Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, gave a speech on 23 September 2013 at the Clinton Global Initiative Girls and Women Track Strategy Session.¹³⁴ Calling for a focus on innovation and technology to promote economic empowerment among women through access to education and training services, she also emphasized the importance of ending violence against women and pressing forward towards achieving the MDG goals.¹³⁵ Statistics from the World Bank and Council on Foreign Relations support this route to empowerment, finding women will produce a higher return on investment for her and her family’s life if she is able to stay in school.¹³⁶ A recent article from the UN News Center also emphasizes the importance of breaking down gender stereotypes in the fields of science and technology.¹³⁷ Jane Hodges, the Directors of the International Labor Organization’s (ILO) Bureau for Gender Equality, explained that gender stereotypes dissuade women from studying these fields. In the post-2015 development framework, it is thus “vital to ensure women are not left behind” and important to encourage women to enter these careers.¹³⁸

¹²⁶ UNCTAD, *Commission on Science and Technology for Development* [Website], 2014.

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the Special Event to Follow up Efforts Made Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (A/64/L.4), 2013.

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the Special Event to Follow up Efforts Made Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (A/64/L.4), 2013, p.3; UN General Assembly, *High-Level Event of the General Assembly “Contributions of North-South, South-South, Triangular Cooperation, and ICT for Development to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda”* [Website], n.d.

¹³¹ UN General Assembly, *Globalization and Interdependence: Science and Technology for Development* (A/68/440/Add.2), p.5.

¹³² UN General Assembly, *Eradication of Poverty and Other Development Issues: Women in Development* (A/68/442/Add.2), p.3.

¹³³ UN General Assembly, *Eradication of Poverty and Other Development Issues: Women in Development* (A/68/442/Add.2), p.3.

¹³⁴ UN-Women, *UN Women Executive Director shares vision for women empowerment, gender equality at Clinton Global Initiative* [Website], 2013.

¹³⁵ UN-Women, *UN Women Executive Director shares vision for women empowerment, gender equality at Clinton Global Initiative* [Website], 2013.

¹³⁶ Yoo, *Why Women Make the Best Tech Investments* [Website], 2014.

¹³⁷ UN News Center, *Countries Must Address Lack of Women in Science and Technology Fields-UN* [Website], 2013.

¹³⁸ Ibid

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization has focused many of its efforts on the need for educational equality between genders.¹³⁹ On 10 December 2013, the issue of female engineering graduates failing to progress to a career in engineering in was discussed in order to help these Member States reduce this disparity.¹⁴⁰ In some areas of Africa and in some Arab countries, the rates of women enrolled in engineering programs is higher than in North America and Europe; however, a large number of these women do not carry this education over into the workforce.¹⁴¹ Regional entities, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), have also provided a platform for bridging the gender divide in information, communication and technology (ICT) and entrepreneurship by providing capacity-building workshops for professional men and women.

Conclusion

In the past few months, some developments have occurred in regards to women's and girls' education and training in the fields of science and technology. As the review theme of the 58th session of the CSW from 10-21 March 2014, the Commission is focused on ensuring that progress, or lack thereof in this area, is addressed. This topic remains of particular pertinence, due to the upcoming deadline of the MDGs in 2015 and the post-2015 development agenda that will follow. Building upon foundations that the MDGs have laid to pursue sustainable development aims in access to education, science and technology, must therefore be a primary tenet for further work.

¹³⁹ UNESCO, *Workshop on Women in Engineering in Africa and the Arab States at UNESCO* [Website], 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ Ibid

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http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/Women_and ICTs_October_2013.pdf

This website gives specific examples of programs that have been established for professional women to become more integrated into the community of technology. The workshop is a great way for men and women to receive training and bridge the gender divide. It also provides an example for other Member States to model such programs upon. This report also mentions the Beijing Platform for Action and the specifically points out the highlighted review of women and entrepreneurship and the connection to the training program described in the report.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2013).

Workshop on Women in Engineering in Africa and the Arab States at UNESCO [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2014

from: [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/workshop_on_women_in_engineering_in_africa_and_the_arab_states_at_unesco/back/9597/#.UtLvAFR)

[view/news/workshop_on_women_in_engineering_in_africa_and_the_arab_states_at_unesco/back/9597/#.UtLvAFR](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/workshop_on_women_in_engineering_in_africa_and_the_arab_states_at_unesco/back/9597/#.UtLvAFR)
[Dvl8](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/workshop_on_women_in_engineering_in_africa_and_the_arab_states_at_unesco/back/9597/#.UtLvAFR)

The UNESCO website provides many news articles about the progression of women's education and training, such as the article on "Women in Engineering". It is a helpful website in order to look at specific examples in current events for what the world is doing to empower women. Links to other press releases and interviews are available to learn more on the most current events occurring within UNESCO and around the world.

UN Women. (2013). *The MDGs, Girls' Education and Gender Equality*. [Website]. Retrieved 29 January 2014

from: [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/58/EP4-Elaine-](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/58/EP4-Elaine-Unterhalter%20pdf.pdf)

[Unterhalter%20pdf.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/58/EP4-Elaine-Unterhalter%20pdf.pdf)

This report from the meeting of UN-Women describes the many ways in which the MDGs remain to be improved upon. It also discusses the recent statistics on girls', and boys', primary education enrollment and successful outcomes. Towards the end of the report, there is a detailed list and explanation of the current problems facing the ability to achieve the MDG goals. It also gives a solution to accelerating productivity and achieving the goals set for the world by 2015.

UN Women. (2013). *UN Women Executive Director shares vision for women empowerment, gender equality at Clinton Global Initiative* [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2014 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/9/ed-speech-at-clinton-global-initiative>

The UN-Women website provides specific articles about current programs and initiatives around the world that are helping women. This article gives a great example for just one of the most recent initiatives that will be provided for women in the near future. The website also lists links to other websites that are discussing the same subject area.

Yoo, Tae. (2014). World Economic Forum. *Why Women Make the Best Tech Investments* [Website]. Retrieved 26 January 2014 from: <http://forumblog.org/2014/01/women-technology-world-economy/>

This short, informative article provides helpful statistics and links for research. Two important links to access on this website include the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is a helpful website for learning general statistics and information on women in science and technology, as well as a helpful tool for visiting other important sites in relation to this topic.

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