

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW61)

14-24 March 2017



REPORT OF THE NEW YORK UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVE

TO THE WORLD PRESIDENT OF WFMUCW

MAY, 2017

Madam World President and World Officers of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women:

I remain grateful for the opportunity afforded me to attend the Commission on the Status of Women 61 (CSW61) in New York, 13-24 March, 2017. Serving this organization in the capacity of UN Representative for New York has given me the opportunity to join with other UN Representatives to ensure that the voices of the religious community are heard at the UN. As stated by Mr. Christopher Ferguson of the World Council of Churches, “Religious groups are important to each other, the UN and themselves to fulfill the obligation to intervene and speak for all, and religious groups must also ensure that those voices that are not heard are, in fact, heard.”

I was particularly delighted that our World Vice President, Matilda Johnson, who represented our organization with such class and dignity, was able to attend and participate in CSW61.

As noted by the UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Lakshmi Puri, “Expectations were very high because CSW61 came on the heels of the landmark Agreed Conclusions of CSW60, which set out a detailed roadmap on how to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in a gender-responsive manner, so as to ensure that no one – no woman and no girl – is left behind.” As stated, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “analyzes the links between various dimensions of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and recognizes that gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires the acceleration of action on both recent and long-standing commitments to realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

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There were numerous side events and training sessions sponsored by both UN women and other NGOs related to the theme – women’s economic empowerment, which reminded me of a panel discussion on which I was invited to participate on March 21, 2016 entitled, “Mentoring Boys and Girls for Sustainable Development.” An excerpt of my panel presentation is as follows:

Dr. **Marian Wright Edelman**, Esq., Founder and President of the Children’s Defense Fund notes (and I quote): “The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to. Investing in (children) is not a WORLD luxury or a WORLD choice. It’s a world (national) necessity. If the foundation of your house is crumbling, you don’t say you can’t afford to fix it while you’re building astronomically expensive fences to protect it from outside enemies. The issue is not are we going to pay – it’s are we going to pay now, up front, or are we going to pay a whole lot more later on.”

I would suggest today that there are barriers to Gender equality, such as education, cultural tradition, lack of resources and a Geo-political barrier as well; however, they can be overcome by having programs, which have sustainable goals and objectives, by raising awareness, by intentionally and deliberately changing the paradigm that stigmatizes women and girls, by having mentoring programs, which can be and many are being implemented by NGOs and other organizations for both girls and boys in their communities and around the world. The 2030 Sustainable Development goals and agenda are transformative and very ambitious; however, we must move from commitment to implementation. Action speaks louder than the great words we often like to use. Each of us can do something! There is inequality in countries and inequality across countries. For boys and girls must be prepared to survive, to develop the skills, attitudes and values which will enable them to work together to bring about change, and certainly we would hope that they could even thrive, and be prepared to take over the future management of this world. There is no way they can be excluded. Everyone who desires a quality education should be able to receive it. In the area of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, for example, studies suggest that women and girls are underrepresented and that there are many positions that are not being filled today. We need to expose young people to these professions as early as their primary grades; and in particular, we should introduce them to females who hold these positions in order to counter gender stereotypes. I do know there are a number of NGOs including those who are represented today, who have or are supporting STEM programs where both young men and young women are learning and exploring together, respecting each other’s ability and wanting to explore new concepts, and who are receiving mentorship opportunities. No one NGO has all of the solutions, but by partnering, we can extend and expand our reach in terms of funding and program implementation. Mentoring is really investing and depositing in the lives of others. Finally, as I suggested previously, teachers

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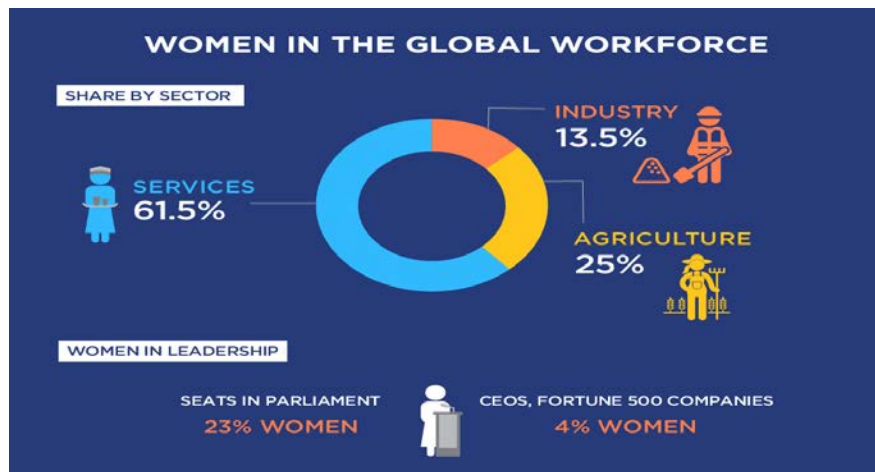
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should also take the opportunity to show female students female role models to counter gender stereotypes and have students read about scientists, while also taking the initiative to invite female speakers as well. Students should be provided with engaging and meaningful activities as part of regular instruction leads to improved skills and test scores. It has been suggested by experts that increased student engagement in math and science at school will eventually lead to involvement in math- and science-related after-school activities, career aspirations which, as we know, leads to life-long learning opportunity and sustainability.

The immediate past Secretary General, His Excellency, Ban KiMoon reminded us that we must invest in the next generation, for they are both our present and our future. The former secretary General, Dr. Kofi Annan suggested that, “No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline.” **Kofi Annan in his Address to the World Conference of Ministries Responsible for Youth Lisbon, 8 August 1998.**

The theme of this year’s Commission was “Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work” and His Excellency Mr. Antoinio de Aguiar Patriota of Brazil served as the Chair of the 61st session. Following the chairman’s address, he presented the Secretary General, His Excellency António Guterres, who expressed his appreciation to all in attendance. His remarks were very significant as he reminded all that “the empowerment of women must be a priority in a male-dominated world.”

Ms. Lakshmi Puri (UN Assistant Secretary-General) noted that “The review theme of MDGs (Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls) also provided a platform for countries to present their experience and success in implementing and achieving the MDGs for women and girls and how they are now adapting and creating necessary laws, policies, measures and institutions for the gender-responsive implementation of agenda 2030 and its focus areas on ‘the empowerment of indigenous women.’”



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All governments were challenged to take action in five areas:

- Strengthening normative legal and police frameworks,
- Fostering enabling environments for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls,
- Strengthening women's leadership and women's full and equal participation and women's full and equal participating in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development.
- Strengthening gender-responsive data collection and follow-up and review processes.
- Enhancing national institutional arrangements.

Some governments are doing more to ensure the immediate implementation of agreed-upon conclusions. Others have made commitments; however, governments have been asked to implement the goals and conclusions adopted in a more comprehensive manner.

It is important to note here that the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. It is the principal global policy-making body.

Every year, representatives of member states gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council to prepare recommendations and reports for the Council on promoting women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. The Commission also makes recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights. It consists of 45 members elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of four years. Members, who are appointed by governments, are elected on the following basis: 13 from African states; 11 from Asian states, 4 from Eastern European states, 9 from Latin American and Caribbean states, and 8 from Western European and other states. The commission meets annually for a period of working days.

In February, 2017, I was invited to participate in orientation sessions sponsored by UN Women, under the leadership of Dr. Phuzamile (Mlambo-Ngcuka) Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women, also in preparation of the Commission on the Status of Women 61. Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this position, having devoted her career to issues of human rights, equality and social justice. Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka has worked in government and civil society in addition to the private sector, and was actively involved in the struggle to end apartheid in her home country of South Africa. She was sworn into office on 19 August 2013.

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Every country should work to ensure the implementation of the agreed upon conclusions. We all agreed that action speaks louder than the good words we often like to use. We must implement suggestions and ideas and regularly evaluate our progress. We were reminded that the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls must be a pressing and central task. More than ever, urgent and sustained action is needed to transform the structures, institutions and norms—economic, political and social – that are holding back progress on gender equality. We were all in agreement that these systemic changes must be deep and irreversible; that we must seize all opportunities at national, regional and global levels, and give new impetus to the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and women’s and girls’ enjoyment of their human rights. During a discussion in the session on Women’s Role in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda: Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work and Human Rights,” I reminded participants of a quote shared by the late **Robert F. Kennedy**:

“Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man or woman stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends forth a tiny ripple of hope and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.” RFK

We were invited by the National Council of Women of the USA to attend a very innovative presentation titled, “Future Leaders Economic Empowerment in the Changing International Work World.” Speakers addressed the economic and empowerment issues confronting Future Leaders in the National and International Work World and shared some solutions. This event was sponsored in partnership with Medgar Evers College.

It was reported that there were approximately 2000 side events held and more than 500 workshop proposals returned due to lack of space. Every participant, from first timers to the most experienced individuals, had an opportunity to learn how to make the most of their time at CSW. Some topics covered during advocacy and training sessions were:

- how the UN functions;
- becoming a more effective partner in negotiations;
- how to plan out your strategy
- how to use tools and how to download women rights documents.

Translator services were also available during the orientation and during Ecumenical Women worship programs and advocacy sessions as well.

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ECUMENICAL WOMEN

Through the years, The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women have been privileged to be an integral part of Ecumenical Women, an international coalition of church denominations and ecumenical organizations which have status with the Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Department of Public Information (DPI) at the United Nations. Grounded in our faith and commitment to global justice, Ecumenical Women trains and empowers an expanding network to advocate for gender equality at the United Nations.

Our organization, WFMUCW, has been recognized for its involvement in the Commission and well as in the Ecumenical Women's (EW) organization. Ecumenical Women's overall theme for CSW61 was "Women who worked and believed in their work: Continuing the Legacy."

As a member of Ecumenical Women, for a nominal fee, religious organizations are afforded the opportunity to attend the annual briefing and orientation, which provided the spiritual preparation needed and to help the attendees understand the work of the Commission. EW orientation is held on the Saturday prior to the opening of the CSW. Attending the orientation with me were World Vice President, Matilda Johnson, Joan Capel, Mattie Taylor, Shirley Thompson, Marcella Shelton (members of the A.M.E. Zion Church). Among the members of Methodist Women, other religious organizations, such as the AME Zion Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society, Presbyterian Church USA, Salvation Army, Anglican/Episcopal, Lutherans, African Methodist Episcopal Women's Missionary Society, and the Ecumenical Worship Team, of which the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women is a very active member were each given a day during CSW 61 to lead devotion. The suggested questions on which our services were to focus were "What is the power of women's work? What does it mean to continue the legacy of the work of these biblical women--The women in your countries/village?). Ecumenical women's worship theme's scripture was "The Power of Women's Work" ... "This is the work of God that you believe..." John 6:29 (See attached).

The World Federation's topic was Mary and Martha, taken from Luke 10:38-42. Delighted that our World Vice President was in attendance, she was kind enough to deliver the message. Her mini-sermon gave the significance of the importance of the work of both Mary and Martha. Everyone in attendance shared that Matilda made it very clear why both Martha and Mary's work was significant. It clearly outlined the power of women's work. Our World Vice President's entire message may be viewed on the video forwarded by our World President to the webmaster for inclusion on our web site. It is my hope, however, that moving forward, members of our North America Area will find time to visit the United Nations both during the Commission on the Status of Women. I would also like to sponsor another Day at the United Nations during which time members can take a tour of the United Nations, an opportunity that every individual of an organization that is in consultative status with the United Nations should have.

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On behalf of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, I have accepted the opportunity to co-sponsor with the United Nations Association/United States of America several activities, such as the International Women's Day celebration, which was held March 5, 2017. (Program attached). The theme for the 2017 celebration was "Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work." We were fortunate to have as the keynote speaker, Michaela Walsh, Founder of Women's World Banking, where she served as its President from 1975 to 1990; first woman partner of Boettcher & Co.; first woman manager of Merrill Lynch International; founder of the Global Student Leadership and Enterprise Management at Manhattanville College. A flyer and program are attached, which includes our logo. Prior to the presentation of speakers, I was given the opportunity to speak about our organization and shared copies of The Tree of Life. Immediately following the program, some attendees commented that they were impressed with the many programs in which we are involved that impact positively the lives of so many.

There were many other activities that were held following the two-week session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61).

I accepted an invitation to attend a program at the United Nations sponsored by the New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs. During the sessions, the panelists shared that the office of international affairs works to foster positive relations and encourage collaboration between the international community and New York City's agencies and local neighborhoods. This session was very interesting and shared information about the significant programs that highlight the synergies between the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New York City's local sustainability and development initiatives contained within "OneNYC: The Plan for a Strong and Just City." Of particular interest was the program that involves 7th grader Junior Ambassadors class that "seeks to leverage the UN as a resource for seventh graders and empower students in all five boroughs of New York City to become actively engaged with the UN and its mission of addressing the most pressing challenges in the world.

It was during this session that I realized more than ever the wonderful opportunity that I have been given to serve as UN Representative. There are times like these when I wish we had an office at the Church Center of the United Nations so that more time can be spent attending these meaningful commissions and sessions at the United Nations and engaging more regularly with other NGOs. Furthermore, I wish other members of our organization could take advantage of this great opportunity. It is again with thanks that I express my appreciation for the opportunity afforded me.

Brenda L. G. Smith, UN Representative

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World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women

**13th World
Assembly 2016**
Houston, Texas, USA

World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women

ALISON JUDD, WORLD PRESIDENT

29 August through 2 September 2016.

Houston, Texas USA

The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, at its 13th World Assembly in Houston, Texas, 29 August 2016 through 2 September 2016, submits the following Resolution to be presented during the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, 13-24 March, 2017. **(Received and documented by ECOSOC).**

RESOLUTION:

The 13th World Assembly of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council – ECOSOC - resolves that we are actively not supporting prostitution, sex for gain, pornography and industries that support them. We demand that associated organizations, including Non Governmental Organizations, both civic and religious, fight for the right of women and children to be treated with respect and dignity, and that the laws in all countries are changed to reflect this belief.

Alison M. Judd, World President
Matilda Johnson, World Vice President
Brenda L. G. Smith, NGO Main Representative (New York)

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UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
of the United States of America
A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION



UNA-USA Westchester, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Town of Greenburgh
and World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women
Invite you to celebrate

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2017:
"Women's Economic Empowerment in the
Changing World of Work"

Sunday March 5, 2017

Greenburgh Public Library, 300 Tarrytown Road, Elmsford, NY 10701

Registration 2:00; Program 2:30 - 4:00 pm

Featuring:



Keynote Speaker: Michaela Walsh: Founder of Women's World Banking and its President from 1975 to 1990; first woman partner of Boettcher & Co; first woman manager of Merrill Lynch International; founder of the Global Student Leadership and Enterprise Management at Manhattanville College.

Panelists:

Kecia Palmer-Cousins: Entrepreneur, engineer and small business advocate; co-owner/COO of G&K Sweet Foods, LLC and co-owner of Aero-Ba-Soul, Inc, a career training company; board member, Benefit Committee for Girls, Inc. and Mary J. Blige Center for Women.



Antoinette Klatzky: Executive Director and Co-Creator of the Eileen Fisher Leadership Institute (EFLI); recognized by the Westchester Business Council's Rising Stars 40 Under Forty award; Co-Chair, Westchester Women's Agenda and Theater of the Oppressed NYC.

Panel Moderator: Judith Beville, Town Clerk, Town of Greenburgh

Reception with refreshments will follow. This program is free and open to the public.

Register at www.unawestchester.org. For more information, contact us at unawestchester@gmail.com.