



Women's

Federation for World Peace International

United Nations Office Newsletter

Spring 2011

Improving Education for Women and Girls in Science and Technology 55th UN CSW WFPWI Parallel Event and Luncheon Meeting February 23, 2011 ~ UN Church Center, UNHQ, New York City



By Cynthia Shibuya and Merly Barlaan
Speakers:

- Ms. Sachiko Mori, Vice Project Director, WFPW School Project in Kenya
- Dr. Gita Bangera, Microbiologist and Instructor at Bellevue College, Bellevue, WA, Founder of the ComGen Project, Authentic Research Experiences for Undergraduate Students
- Ms. Lily Lin, President, National Alliance of Taiwan Women's Association
- Ms. Karen Smith, Vice Chair of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and Founder of the NGO Academy

Moderator:

- Ms. Bonnie Berry, UN Representative, WFPW International



In a gathering of 100, that had standing-room only, **Ms. Sachiko Mori** opened the session with her moving slide presentation on the Handow Secondary School located in rural Marakusi village 400 miles from Nairobi, Kenya. In 1998, the Handow Secondary school opened officially

with an enrollment of 45 students. The school built a science lab for students to fully experience science in practice, not just in theory, creating excitement in the pursuit of careers in science and technology. Ms. Mori described the culture in rural areas as still heavily emphasizing education for boys, and expectations of girls to focus on duties within the home, i.e. cooking and gathering water, etc. Tuition-free education at Handow School has allowed an increase of girls' participation in education. Because of free enrollment there are now over 360 boys and over 280 girls in ten classrooms and two Science labs. The government requested the second lab to be built because of the increase in enrollment. It is very remarkable to have two laboratories in a rural area school. Educating girls in the field of science has resulted in many girls pursuing careers in medicine.



Dr. Gita Bangera gave a very exciting report on her innovative teaching strategy for undergraduate level science students. Her U.S. National Science Foundation funded project provides opportunities

for community college students to conduct research for a USDA research study. Dr. Bangera conducts her class similar to a graduate level class. Rather than the instructor driven lecture/study method of instruction, students start immediately in the research project and get involved in the problem-solving process, generating the student's creativity and abilities. It is a whole new teaching dynamic that has been highly effective, stimulating greater interest and involvement. Students have the opportunity to meet and interact with the scientists leading the research study and begin to associate themselves within the scientific research community. Some students have participated in six week summer internships in research labs alongside these leading researchers. Alumni of this class, particularly women students, experience a much stronger self-image with regard to their confidence in conducting scientific research as well as a stronger vision of themselves as scientists. Dr. Bangera's style of "thinking outside the box" generated much excitement among workshop participants.

WFPWI Parallel Event, contd. on pg. 8

Contents

55th CSW - WFPWI Parallel Events -----	1
At the UN in New York	
NGO Briefings-----	2
Reports from Special Events-----	3
At the UN in Geneva -----	4
International Women's Day-----	4
Can UPR Reach Slow Learners -----	5
At the UN in Vienna -----	5
10th Anniversary of UNTOC-----	5
Activities Around the World	
Africa-----	6
Asia-----	6-7
WFPW Conferences	
Costa Rica-----	9
11th WFPW Int'l Leaders Workshop -----	11
Upcoming Events-----	12



Statement of Purpose

The Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) supports a network of National WFWPI Chapters worldwide.

WFWPI Chapters adhere to the principle that women, working together, taking initiative and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture and religion to create healthy families, are resolving the complex problems of our societies and world.

Ultimately "solutions" come as *true* partnerships between men and women are established in all levels of society. The beginning point is within society's most elemental level—the family.

Peace then expands into our communities, nation and world. Therefore, WFWPI works to provide women worldwide with:

the knowledge, tools and support needed to create peace at home, peace in our communities, our nations and our world.

WFWPI International is a non-profit, non-governmental international organization in General Consultative Status of ECOSOC and DPI Associates with the United Nations

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At the UN in New York...

Reports of NGO Briefings

Launch of UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking

Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

November 4, 2010 - North Lawn Building, New York

By *Cynthia Shibuya*

H.E. Joseph Deiss, President of the UN General Assembly 65th Session, opened the launch with thanks and welcome to the Secretary-General and his on-going effort on this issue, introduced special guests, New York Times Pulitzer Prize winning author and journalist Nicholas Kristof (panel moderator) and humanitarians and actors Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher, and expressed special thanks to UNODC, administrators of the Fund. H.E. Deiss explained that, "The Trust Fund is one of the most important elements of the new United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons adopted by the General Assembly in July 2010. It will provide humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims of human trafficking with the aim of increasing the number of victims who are rescued and supported, and broadening the assistance they receive."

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon opened his statement by welcoming the panelists and thanking UNODC. Secretary General Ban is so committed to this issue, as it is closely tied to his agenda to end violence against women and children. Ban stated, "So much of our work at the United Nations is about widening the horizons of hope for women and girls. This is my priority as Secretary-General of

the United Nations. We know that when you educate a girl, you educate a family. But when you traffic and enslave a woman or girl, you hold the future hostage. Our efforts today will identify more victims, particularly women and children, who can get the help and care they so desperately need, reintegrate into society,



and ensure they never again become a victim. And we have made progress. One hundred and forty-one States have become party to the United Nations Protocol against Human Trafficking. The international community has an agreed definition of trafficking in persons. It is no longer an ignored crime. We are seeing concerted action. Many countries have adopted anti-human trafficking legislation, established anti-human trafficking police units and set in motion national strategies to stop this horrible

Trafficking, continued on pg. 10

"May I Ask a Question, Madame Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children?"

December 16, 2010 - North Lawn Building, New York

By *Cynthia Shibuya*

In 2006 a UN study on violence against children was conducted by Paulo Serfio Pinheiro, Brazilian diplomat and former UN Special Rapporteur. He found that millions of children throughout the world suffer the effects of violence, including injuries, disabilities, life-long emotional and psychological effects and sometimes even death. The study recommended that governments act to establish a Special Representative to the Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG). The role of the SRSG would be to act as a high-profile global advocate to promote prevention and elimination of all violence against children.

On May 1, 2009, Marta Santos Pais, a national of Portugal, was appointed as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children. She reports directly to the Secretary-General, chairs the UN Inter Agency Working Group on Violence against Children and collaborates closely with a wide range of partners, within and beyond the UN system. She has more than

30 years of experience on human rights issues and Children's Rights.

After greetings and introductions by the Moderator (Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte: Public Information Officer), a short video was presented illustrating the predicament of small children of young, uneducated and heavily-drinking parents in poor areas of Central America. Referring to the video, Ms. Pais discussed the deeply-rooted belief that physical punishment is an acceptable intervention for children's misbehavior. After four years of study she found violence against children is widely accepted but a taboo subject. It is a difficult problem to address because children are afraid to talk for fear of reprisal. Also, it is very difficult for a child to tell and be believed. They may tell five to ten times and still not be believed, which also traumatizes the child and has a lasting effect.

Girls, particularly, are at risk. Worldwide, one in five girls experience sexual abuse. 20% of girls in Africa are sexually abused. They

May I Ask?, contd. on pg. 10

NGO CSW Consultation Day

February 21, 2011 - Salvation Army HQ, NY

By Merly Barlaan

NGO CSW New York organized a Consultation Day for NGO leaders coming from around the world including WFWPI delegates from USA and Taiwan attending the 55th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The keynote speaker was Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the new UN Women. Also featured: a speech by Dr. Kaosar Afsana, Associate Director, Health Programme, BRAC Bangladesh, a panel on education, science and technology, a discussion on UN Women, and breakout sessions on : 1. Increasing women's access to and use of technology, including more gender responsive products, 2. Increasing

CSW Consultation Day, contd. on pg. 10



WFWP International and WFWP Japan donated \$9000 for Victims of Pakistan Flood to World Food Program on December 1, 2010. Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama, VP and Director of UN Office of WFWP International and Mr. Pedro Medrano, Director of World Food Program-NY and North America Office.

49th Session of Commission for Social Development on Poverty Eradication

February 9-18, 2011 ~ UN HQ, New York City

By Jeanne Carroll

The 29th Session for the Commission for Social Development was held in order to assess global efforts toward fulfilling Millennium Development Goal #1, to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day. The Commission took into consideration the Secretary-General's report outlining current poverty trends and the global economic condition. In the sixteen years since the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, eradication of poverty is still an undeniable requirement to achieve social justice and all-inclusive development for all people.



Commission Chair, H.E. Jorge Valero, Chairperson of the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development;

Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Venezuela to the United Nations stated that the current model based on external implementation hampers fulfillment of Goal One. He encouraged the construction of a new human centered model of development. The aim is to achieve social justice through social inclusion, equity and active participation of people. The Chair also cited, "The process of formulating social policies should be sovereign, inclusive, participatory and co-responsible. Here we have a good space for civil society and social and popular movements to participate in. Likewise, further progress is needed in gender equality and the empowerment of women and special measures should be implemented to ensure equal opportunities for the most excluded and vulnerable sectors of the population." The power of these opening statements set the tone for the speakers.

H.E. Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe, Ambassador

and Permanent Representative of Zambia to the UN, President of the Economic and Social Council emphasized that the poverty-education interconnection is always clearly defined in the work of the UN. Since 2005 ECOSOC has been overseeing effort toward achieving the MDGs. While accomplishment of Goal One seems probable, "nearly 900 million people will still live in poverty in 2015. Mr. Kapambwe focused on the Secretary-General's report emphasizing the vicious cycle between poverty and low levels of education. H.E. Kapambwe earnestly stressed the necessity for access to quality education in order to seize opportunities that enable individuals to emerge from poverty. He added that, "many of the countries most affected by poverty are not expected to meet Millennium Development Goal 2 on universal primary education. Without urgent measures, 56 million children are expected to be left out of school in 2015. Currently, 759 million adults

Poverty Eradication, continued on pg. 11

55th Commission on the Status of Women

February 22 - March 4, 2011 ~ UN HQ, New York City

By Bonnie Berry

The priority theme for the 55th CSW was: Access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

More than 1350 NGO representatives from 106 different nations were in attendance. A cap of 20 delegates per NGO was in place as the remodel of UN Headquarters in New York City continues. The turnout was much lower than last year, which made access to parallel events much more manageable. But due to limited capacity in the conference rooms where official

sessions were held, each NGO received only one ticket per day to gain entry into official sessions. For those who had lobbying agendas and those who came great distances, this restriction was frustrating. As one NGO representative pointed out, "you can't lobby if you can't get in the right building". Other NGO representatives expressed fervent hopes that when the remodel is complete there will be accommodations for larger numbers of participants from civil society and NGOs.

Dignitaries offering statements at the opening of the CSW were UN Deputy Secretary General Ms. Asha Rose Migiro,

UN ECOSOC President H.E. Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe, H.E. Mr. Garen Nazarian Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Silvia Pimentel, Chair of CEDAW and newly appointed Executive Director of **UN Women** and UN Undersecretary General H.E. Michelle Bachelet. Each speaker affirmed the great stride forward in creation of **UN Women**, which consolidated the four UN agencies that serve women and placed leadership in the UN Secretariat. Ms. Bachelet reminded participants that research shows gender equality is an instrument of development. She expressed appreciation for all efforts to prepare for the formation of **UN Women**. Ms. Bachelet committed UN Women to five thematic priorities: expanding women's voice, leadership

55th CSW, continued on pg. 12

At the UN in Geneva ...

International Women's Day Commemorating Advances of Women's Right To Education and Decent Work

March 8, 2011 - Geneva, Switzerland

By Alan Sillitoe

The CONGO Committee on the Status of Women hosted their annual international roundtable titled, Celebrating Women's Rights: Higher Education - Pathway to Gender Equality and Decent Work on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. WFWPI, represented by Ms. Carolyn Handschin, of the Executive Committee, was the main organizer of this event. The roundtable was chaired by Ms. Conchita Ponchini, President of the Committee.

Ms. Kyung Wha Kang, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights spoke on gender disparity in higher education. She also pointed out that women represent only a small fraction of elected officials in most countries. This disparity exists in many other areas. For



example, difficulties faced by educated women who cannot find decent work, constitute one of the key elements contributing to recent developments in the Arab world. Security Council resolution 1889 in 2009 spoke of the need to address the problems of discrimination faced by women.

Mr. Mohamed Samir Koubaa, Chief of the UN Mission of Tunisia gave some intriguing insights into Tunisia's situation. He stated that while Tunisia has nothing to be proud of in terms of its past human rights record, it has started out on its difficult journey toward democracy, which may be long, but is irreversible. He suggested that the revolution in Tunisia was made possible by education. Many highly educated people participated in this revolution, including women. In July there will be a constituent assembly to form a new government and constitution. Tunisia is now making many efforts to conform to the various international human rights obligations. All political prisoners have benefited from amnesty. "All special rapporteurs are invited to visit the country", Mr. Koubaa announced. He added that he grew up with three sisters and has two daughters. He stated that there are many women human rights activists in Tunisia who were marginalized until now, but who will now be able to play an important role. Indeed, in Tunisia, women play an important role in preventing extremism in all its forms.



Ms. Schulz, Ms. Kang, Ms. Ponchini, Ambassador Koubaa, Ms. Haslegrave, Ms. Handschin

Ms. Patricia Schulz, member of the CEDAW committee and former Director of the Federal Department of Gender Equality in Switzerland explained that Switzerland is a country in which the roles are shared between the federal and local governments regarding education. There has been a lot of catching up in terms of gender equality in education. Previously, girls had to be better than boys to attain the same level of education, but this has been abolished. There are now more women than men in higher education. However, there are more men than women in the technical fields. In terms of doctoral students, there are about 40% of women. There are 52% of women in the universities, but only 14% of professors are women. Therefore, in spite of progress, this is not reflected in employment. Therefore, several measures are now underway to overcome this disparity. However, strong political will is required for these programs to continue, especially as attempts are being made to declare them unconstitutional. Ms. Schulz also pointed out that the Swiss fiscal system is unfavorable for couples who both work. Changes are needed to rectify this. The federal government has analyzed measures necessary to respond to the recommendations of CEDAW. It is particularly important that measures be taken to overcome stereotypes.



Ms. Jane Hodges, Director of the ILO (International Labor Organization) Office of Gender Equality cited the catch phrase of the ILO, "learning for earning", indicating that it is important that equality exists not only in education, but also in employment. Generally, women earn less than men for the same jobs. Gender equality is at the heart of decent work. What does that mean? The roles of women and men in society have changed. The response to the present financial crisis should not impact gains made by women in the economy. The G20 is turning to the ILO for reports on education and training. Empowering women is a key to emerging from the current financial crisis. Maintaining a minimum wage is a key to ensuring women's place in the economy. Convention 100 of the ILO deals with equal pay for men and women and convention 111 is about equality in the workplace. Ms. Hodges hopes these conventions will be ratified by 2015. The participation of women in leadership positions needs to be increased. She was happy to hear about the role played by women in the democracy movement in Tunisia.

Marianne Haslegrave, President of the International Federation of University Women

(IFUW), just returned from the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. As a historian, she explained that we are looking at something that started 100 years ago. Women then wanted the vote, equal pay and equal opportunities. We have the vote but the other two goals have yet to be achieved. During the CSW, UN Women was inaugurated, thanks to the efforts of the NGOs. CSW is part of ECOSOC. We must make sure that its work continues as it is the best conduit for women's issues. Various attempts were made to change the wording of certain terms in the agreed conclusions. Attempts were made to replace maternal health by women's procreative health. American conservatives tried to question the term "gender mainstreaming". One of the phrases being used was that women's rights are human rights. The priority theme was access for girls and women to science, technology, engineering and math education and careers. This provided an opportunity. Getting children into education is not sufficient, however. We have to keep them there, especially girls. We have to ensure secondary education for girls. We have to ensure that girls can go to school without suffering from violence. We have to give girls sexuality education so they are empowered to make choices that value themselves. We have to prevent early marriage. These things prevent girls from getting secondary education. We can be happy that there is parity in tertiary education, but this is not the case in science and technology. Girls go into medicine but not so many into applied sciences. Also, what happens to girls when they graduate? In the UK, they don't seem to end up in the science field. However, our data is insufficient.



Mr. Daniel Kull of the Disaster Risk Management Department read a statement on behalf of Selina Jackson, Head of the Media Department at the World Bank regarding their gender action plan. The GAP or Gender Action Plan, with a budget of about 70 million dollars, is used to support gender mainstreaming. The GAP has provided funds to 260 projects in over 70 countries. The AGI, Adolescent Girls Initiative, is a flagship program with a budget of 24 million dollars. The World Bank is now evaluating GAP, which ended in 2010. Gender will be a special theme for the IDA (International Development Association) program. At the World Bank, about one third of managers are women. He emphasized that the World Bank is committed to further progress on gender parity at the management level. 

Can the UPR Reach Even the “Slow Learners”?

February 20, 2011

By Carolyn Handschin and
Yvonne Von Stedingk

A central mission of the UN is to protect human rights. From its inception, the body entrusted with promoting respect for human rights, fostering international cooperation in human rights, responding to violations in specific countries and assisting in building human rights capacity, was the Commission on Human Rights.

Sixty years later, times changed. Shortcomings of the Commission were increasingly obvious. The main criticism was that the motivation for States to seek membership in the Commission often appeared to be to protect themselves against criticism rather than strengthening their human rights system. An increased need to support strong domestic human rights institutions, especially in countries emerging from conflict and in the fight against terrorism, influenced the Security Council efforts to upgrade the Commission to a Human Rights Council (HRC), as a Charter body.

In his March 2005 Report “In Larger Freedom”, then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed, “if the United Nations is to meet expectations of men and women everywhere – and, indeed, if the Organization is to take the cause of human rights as seriously

as those of security and development – then Member States should replace the Commission on Human Rights with a stronger Human Rights Council”. On March 15, 2006, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/251 setting up the Council. In the very last paragraph of that Resolution is stipulated that “the Council shall review its work and functioning five years after its establishment and report to the General Assembly”.

Secretary General (SG) Ban Ki Moon said of the Human Rights Council’s (HRC) Universal Periodic Review (UPR), it “has great potential to promote and protect human rights in the darkest corners of the world”. It is too early to judge this global platform for governments to showcase their best practices and align their human rights obligations to the standard of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it holds great promise. It also opens a new dynamic of influence on states’ conduct through the interface of assessment by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, national human rights institutions and NGOs.

In 2004, within a larger UN reform plan, human rights were prioritized as crucial to meeting global security and development needs. At this time, criticism on the credibility of the

Commission on Human Rights was prevalent. The criticism reflected a memory lapse about great achievements made by loyalists to the Commission, its Sub-Commission and its many Special Procedures, mechanisms to monitor and report on human rights issues in specific countries and without which the work of the Council would be hard to imagine.

Those NGOs who experienced this very “high gear” period of closing the Commission and placing the mandate for a new body, felt that they were making history. The Human Rights Council was given one year from March 15, 2006 to form. And it did so.

Central to the HRC and the most tangible innovation is the UPR, a visionary mechanism to avoid the pitfalls of the elder institution that relies on nations’ motivation to improve human rights standards when faced with a peer review, according to common criteria. The HRC is required to review fulfillment of human rights obligations and commitments by all UN member States, beginning with members of the Council. The entire Council, as a working group, conducts the UPRs through an interactive dialogue with each state. The close of the first cycle of four years will end in 2011. All states will have an opportunity to declare actions taken to fulfill human rights obligations

Nations, like people have personalities. The UPR process will not influence those hiding

Slow Learners, contd. on pg. 11

At the UN in Vienna ..

Conference of State Parties to the UNTOC and Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

October 2010 - Vienna

By Elisabeth Reidl

October 18th, 2010 marked the 10th Anniversary of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols (UNTOC). WFWPI collaborated with other NGOs, including victim based NGOs serving migrants and trafficked persons and those NGOs affected by the illicit trade in firearms to develop a joint statement requesting the establishment of a victim-centered review mechanism to UNTOC, which is both inclusive and comprehensive, involving all stakeholders in UNTOC, including implementing partners in the Convention.

The statement expresses concern that momentum to implement the Convention and its protocols is waning and belief that in order to achieve UNTOC’s aims, there is a pressing need to reinvigorate this treaty by assessing successes and limitations in its implementation.

The following are the 4 main areas of concern in the statement:

Transnational organized crime- The statement declares that illegal assets confiscated from organized criminal groups should be redistributed through community projects and activities. Further, endemic official corruption, which reinforces and promotes links between criminal activities such as terrorism and

drug trafficking, must be acknowledged and addressed in order to reduce these crimes.

Trafficking in Persons- Signatories expressed that though progress has been made in States which have adopted and implemented legislation that is victim-centered in design, they are concerned that these states are the minority. Too often anti-trafficking legislation is not drafted with trafficked persons in mind. Only through victim-centered anti-trafficking initiatives can states successfully combat trafficking, punish traffickers and offer victims appropriate assistance, redress or remedy. The legal framework outlined in the Human Trafficking Protocol acknowledges the primacy of human rights in all anti-trafficking initiatives; thus the statement stresses that rights must be integral to anti-trafficking legal frameworks.

Smuggling of Migrants- The statement emphasizes the rights of smuggled migrants and the importance of freedom from criminalization of those who have been victims of smuggling. The recent murder of 72 smuggled migrants in Mexico is deplored in the statement. It is imperative that no more migrants pay the price of their lives as an impetus for States to recognize the need to offer migrants access to justice and protections from inhuman

treatment and exploitation. The signatories urge parties to this treaty to protect, respect and uphold all migrant rights regardless of their legal status and in particular to put in place all necessary measures in order to prevent violations of their rights.

The statement endorsed **The Firearms protocol** as an essential tool in curbing the spread of illicit weapons and reducing their harmful impact on individuals and communities, and asked that those States that have not yet done so to ratify this important Protocol. Implementation in line with the obligations of the Protocol includes regulating manufacturing, marking, record-keeping, and international transfer of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition and criminalizing illicit manufacture and trafficking. To this end, the signatories encourage States to utilize the UNODC Model Law to strengthen their national law in a manner consistent with the Protocol.

(Complete text of the Statement by NGOs to Conference of State Parties to the UNTOC and Working Group on Trafficking in Persons 18.10.2010 is available at www.wfwpi.org)



Activities Around the World in 2010

Kenya ~ International Women's Day Celebrations

By Mrs. Susan Kone,
WFWP-Kenya/International VP WFWPI

Kayole Celebrations

March 8th, 2011. WFWP-Kenya collaborated with St. Thaddeus Child Welfare Society to organize celebrations in commemoration of International Women's Day at Kayole Social Hall.

The invited guests were the District Officer of Kayole, (DO), Mr. Ondachi, the Labour Officer of Kayole, the Representative of Maendeleo ya Wanawake Embakasi- Mrs. Grace Akinyi, Human Rights activist, Pamela and WFWP-Kenya officials.

WFWP-Kenya chairperson Mrs. Susan Kone introduced WFWP's vision and philosophy. She also issued certificates of participation to women leaders who had participated in a Leadership and Management seminar, and donated bean seeds to the women's group. D.O. Mr. Ondachi spoke representing the Kenya government praising the work being done by women in an effort to empower themselves and to promote peace in the nation.

This day ended with much song and dance in celebration of women's achievements.



On behalf of WFWP, Mrs. Susan Kone Donates Seeds



School Children's Choir



The District Officer Presents Certificates



The District Officer Presents Certificates

Brahma Kumaris Spiritual University

Mrs. Rattan K. Channa, Chairperson of the United Religions Initiative-Kenya gave a speech about the challenges women go through in their lives, the kind of attitude they need to adopt to be successful in their lives and to contribute to building a peaceful, prosperous society and nation.

Mrs. Susan Kone WFWP-Kenya talked about letting go of negative energy and letting go of things we do not need in our physical and spiritual lives. Finally she offered guidance on how to live for the sake of others, giving to and serving others.

Mrs. Sylvie Compaigne of UNEP shared her personal experience in overcoming and healing from cancer. The Director of BKSU gave a testimony about how she started her mission with the spirit of pioneering. She explained how she overcame all kinds of challenges, sailing through out of sheer determination and deep faith.



Speakers



Guests

Thailand ~ Participation in UN Activities



WFWP Delegation at Int'l Women's Day Celebration at UN Conference Center, Bangkok (3/25/10)



Participated at Launching of Int'l Year of Youth 2010



Attended UNESCAP Distinguished Lecture on "Peace, Violence & Development in Modern Society", presented by Prof. Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate



Commemorating Int'l Family Day: Skill Training for Women: "Shower Gel" Making...



WFWP joined Tree Planting project with RYS participants and villagers...



Scholarship awards for children in need.

Africa & Asia

Nepal ~ Women Leadership Training & Service



70 Seminar Participants at "The Role of Women Leaders in Peace-building and Good Governance" on 6/23/10



Stationary distribution by WFWP-Gorkha: 697 students benefit from Mr. Ozumisan's aid, President, Lions Club of Japan;



Toilet Repair Project: before (left) & after (rights)

Laos ~ Microfinance Project



Bamboo Basket Project of Pioneson Village Women, in Vienkam District, Vientian Province:



Investment of \$1500 has multiplied to \$2300 and served 58 families



The District Officer Presents Certificates

Myanmar ~ Vocational training for Women



Sakura Vocational School
3 Level Sewing Classes: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced



Multi-Cultural Networking with 22 Org. (WON-Women Organizations Network), sharing information, resources, trainers.



During Cultural Festival Town Officer, representing local schools, receives donation raised by WFWP USA.

Taiwan ~ AIDS Prevention & Anti-Drugs Programs



AIDS Prevention & Anti-Drug Program Press Conference, Launching Fund Drive & Creative Competition



WFWP assists Taipei Municipal Education Bureau 2010 Anti-Drug Advocate Carnival (20,500 Participants)



Lecture Campaign throughout Campuses in Taiwan: Total of 80 lectures and 37,219 participants.



WFWP invited Government, Enterprises, NGOs, Media and Schools to assist activities



Students like the Campaign Posters



"Youth, Let's Concern About AIDS & Say No to Drugs—Speech & Quiz" Creative Competition

WFWPI Parallel Event, contd from pg. 1



Ms. Lily Lin spoke on efforts in Taiwan by a coalition of women's organizations for engaging high school girls in science and technology education and career pathways. She identified old attitudes in Taiwan that "the woman's place is in the home" as a major obstacle in engaging more girls in science and technology careers. This tradition is still very strong in Taiwan. To combat this, the Taiwan Women's Alliance initiated conferences, symposiums and speaking tours aimed at high school girls to promote understanding about careers in science and technology. Other best practices



that the Alliance initiated are: computer and internet application training courses for girls and women, speeches and remarks from women leaders in science and technology were compiled into a book which was distributed to high school students. Ms. Lin told a story about a Taiwanese woman who after her divorce, tried to make bread for a living but was not able to sell enough bread to be successful, even though the bread was very tasty. After attending a course on the internet and social networking, the woman created her own blog about her products and now has a thriving business with her now famous "breathing bread."



Ms. Karen Smith gave a compelling presentation using physics analogies to demonstrate the need for effective strategizing and advocacy to gain real results. Essentially she posed the idea that just stating your needs over and over does not always result in having those needs met. One idea of an effective strategy to gain government and UN support to develop science and technology education for girls is for NGOs to send representatives

to intern at the UN to gain advocacy skills and experience. Having that international advocacy experience on one's resume gives greater credibility and a stronger, more effective voice when bringing issues up to national or local governments. The combination of a strong resume and advocacy skills lends power and authority to voices of advocates for girls' educational development.

All in all, this was a very powerful and exciting workshop with many best practices presented. Participants left feeling empowered with new ideas and strategies for furthering the cause of developing the area of science and technology education for girls.



The Role of NGO in the Access and Participation of Women and Girls To Education, Training, Science & Technology

WFWPI Luncheon Meeting - Parallel Event, 55th UN CSW

February 23, 2011 - UN Delegates Dining Room at UNHQ, New York City



Dr. Lan Young Moon Park



Ambassador Daniel Antonio



Luncheon Participants with Guests of Honor



Keynote Speaker, Mr. Andrei Abramov

WFWPI held its annual luncheon meeting to commemorate the 55th Session of CSW just following a very successful parallel event. Around sixty guests consisting of WFWPI leaders, constituents, and CSW delegates from Japan, Taiwan, and USA attended the event. The event was graced by the guest speaker, Mr. Andrei Abramov, Chief, NGO Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Office for the ECOSOC Support and Coordination, and His Excellency Mr. Daniel Antonio, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique to the United Nations.

Ms. Motoko Sugiyama, WFWPI VP and Director of WFWPI UN Office as well as host and organizer of the Luncheon Meeting was the program moderator. Prof. Lan Young Moon Park, President of WFWPI International delivered a heart-warming message that the 21st century is the age of information and technology as well as the era of women. She emphasized the importance of seeking harmony through female leadership in all sectors and advancement of the feminine qualities that bring the necessary balance with male-centered leadership to enhance global development.

She stressed the role of NGOs in influencing governments, lawmakers and society, to improve opportunities for women to enter into the fields of science and technology. She concluded her remarks by thanking WFWPI representatives worldwide who have been sincerely carrying out volunteer service work and education programs based on true maternal love in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Ambassador Daniel Antonio began his remarks, thanking WFWPI for its long standing friendship and partnership with the Mozambican people and its government through WFWPI's school projects. The school project and the role it plays in helping shape the lives of youth through access to vocational school and education in the field of science and technology have made a lasting positive impact in Mozambique. Ambassador Antonio concluded his remarks by leading a celebratory toast.

After lunch, keynote speaker, **Mr. Andrei Abramov** spoke on the role of NGOs in access to and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology. He stated that NGOs are key partners in the quest to achieve peace, prosperity and gender

equality for all women and men. Mr. Abramov explained that NGOs' specialized knowledge and understanding of local populations, regional economic and social issues and policy implications often enable governments and UN programmes to deliver aid to those who need it. He also emphasized that NGOs' partnership with ECOSOC ensure that the international community is synchronized and informed about realities on the ground. On the perspective of women and technology, Mr. Abramov pointed out that better educated women are more productive and the accumulation of knowledge increases the rate of technological change thus accelerating economic growth.

Mr. Abramov informed luncheon participants about upcoming and increasing opportunities for NGOs to provide input to both the UN General Assembly's and ECOSOC's dialogues. He concluded his remarks by thanking all NGOs working on education related issues and encouraging them that 2011 will provide many opportunities to make contributions. (For complete text of Mr. Abramov's speech, please refer to WFWPI website: www.wfwp.org.)



In Costa Rica, a Step Toward “Soft Power” Leadership

International WFWP Women’s Conference

January 21-23, 2011 - San Jose, Costa Rica

By Angelika Selle,
WFWP President USA



More than 500 women leaders and professionals from Anglo and Latin America gathered in San Jose, Costa Rica to discuss and learn about the unique role of women’s leadership in solving the world’s problems in the century ahead.

Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP) International and WFWP USA organized the conference to promote the United Nations’ overarching goal of engendering harmony among the world’s peoples, especially through women’s leadership. The meeting took place at the Herradura Hotel in the beautiful natural surroundings of Costa Rica under the theme “Women’s Role in Leadership in the 21st Century: Toward a Culture of Family and Peace.”

The conference speakers and discussions among participants focused on practical and innovative ways that women impact their families, society and community for the better. Professor Lan Young Moon Park, WFWP International President, welcomed delegates by saying, “The 21st century is the era of women. We have come to feel the limitations of male leadership, which has led history until now, only through its logic of power. Humanity today is in need of women’s leadership, which has been described as “soft power”, based on more feminine qualities such as love and service, forgiveness and tolerance, sensitivity and friendliness.”

Among the women leaders attending the conference were a current first lady (Ms. Kim Simplis Barrow, wife of the prime minister of Belize) and three former first ladies (Ms. Estrella Zeledon Lizano de Carazo, of Costa Rica; Ms. Graciela Rompani de Pacheco, of Uruguay; and Ms. Elizabeth A.de Calderon Sol from El Salvador), as well as national lawmakers, mayors, educators, the assistant to the former First Lady of Chile, a representative of the president of Costa Rica, two daughters of former presidents, university presidents and professors, directors of organizations and foundations, three mayors (men were welcome as attendees) and Mayoresses from countries in the region.

The two keynote speakers were Dorothy Bush Koch, daughter of former U.S. President George H.W. Bush; Rev. In Jin Moon, CEO of Manhattan Center Studios and daughter of WFWPI founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. Among the many other speakers from both the North and Latin Americas was Ms. Ellen Sauerbrey, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State and ambassador to the UN Commission

on the Status of Women during the George W. Bush administration.

Some of the issues the women delegates addressed during the conference were:

- ◆ Establishing literacy programs (one part of Koch’s presentation).
- ◆ Women’s rights - Congresswoman Porras Pilar Zuniga, representing San Jose in the Costa Rican National Assembly, described the struggle of Costa Rican women to achieve gender equity in the workplace and assist victims of domestic violence.
- ◆ Religious rights and Raising a Generation of Peace - Rev. Moon told of an astonishing violation of human rights and religious freedom in Japan in which judicial and legislative authorities turn a blind eye as members of minority religions are kidnapped and subjected to intensive faith breaking pressures. She also emphasized the need to invest in and raise the next generation of young women, nurturing and building their positive self-images and leadership capacity, especially by being good role models for them.
- ◆ Buttrressing the family - Ms. Sauerbrey explained how the two-parent family is a natural bulwark against crime, violence, and war, because properly raised children become citizens of peace.

“We celebrate that women leaders in the 21st century can be doctors, lawyers, business owners, and legislators,” Sauerbrey said. “But we should not lose sight of the fact that the most important role, and the one that only she can fulfill, is that of mother and the center of the family. Your greatest power is the influence you have on your children. The family is the cradle of nations, and women rock the cradle.”

The conference concluded on January 22nd with an evening banquet. The banquet began with the “Bridge of Peace” ceremony, a signature observance of WFWPI. In this ceremony, ten pairs of women, representing reconciliation between Anglo and Latin America, embraced on a white wooden bridge at the center of stage. As “Let There Be Peace on Earth” played in the background, each pair of women walked one after the other from opposite ends of the stage, met in the center, and embraced in tears of genuine union and friendship. Seven women also received the WFWP “Woman of Distinction” award for their outstanding accomplishments in the area of media, education, women’s rights, family values, and leadership in politics.

The evening ended with lots of dancing and expressions of joy as delegates celebrated womanhood, motherhood and life!



Trafficking, contd from pg. 2

crime. The General Assembly also recently launched the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. All of these are critical steps that will help put traffickers where they belong — behind bars.”

After Secretary-General gave his remarks, Moderator Kristof asked both Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher what motivated them to become involved in this issue. Ms. Moore answered that they were watching a profile on Cambodia about girls being sold into slavery and felt strongly that they must respond. They took a trip to Cambodia for research and spoke with many people about the trafficking problem. Ashton recommended that we use social networks to educate people about the scope of the problem, strongly enforce existing laws, hold men accountable and support the victims. Ashton became very emotional as he spoke about the rape of very young girls in the fields of Cambodia. Moore and Kutcher founded DNA – a foundation to raise awareness about human trafficking and help children who have fallen victim to traffickers.

The panel proceeded to discuss the situation of prostitutes and domestic slavery. Rani Hong founder of the Tronie Foundation (promotes human trafficking education, policy change and helps trafficking victims) then gave her life story as a victim of human trafficking which was heart-wrenching. Ms. Rachel Lloyd, founder of GEMS - Girls Educational and Mentoring Services for prevention of sexual exploitation of children and young women presented on the work of her organization.

Following the panel discussion, the room was filled with emotion. Those present responded generously to the appeal to give to the fund. The first pledges to the Trust Fund were made by the governments of Qatar, Luxembourg, Egypt and Thailand, as well as by Mr. Naguib Sawiris, Executive Chairman of Orascom Telecom. Mr. Yury Fedotov, UNODC Executive-Director expressed his gratitude to these donors for taking the lead in making pledges and for the wholehearted response of those in attendance.



May I Ask?, contd from pg. 2

face dangers from their teachers and older men. Many are forced into a “sex for grades” situation. But the girls put themselves at risk if they come forward to report the crime.

The situation of violence against children is very difficult to address because of lack of data, documentation and lack of victims’ voices. We need stronger laws and general legislation. We need to create safe environments for the victims to speak.

There are more laws in place for victim response but not enough measures in place for prevention. We need to strengthen prevention measures. How? Involve schools and curriculum, religious groups, media, local governments and civil society. Information sharing, tech support,

data, research and testimonies are needed as well as legal mechanisms.

Schools play an incredible role. They can create an environment that is safe for the children to open up through storytelling and dramatization, educating about respect and dignity for children, teaching respect for others’ feelings, democracy, etc.

Finally, collaboration and partnership among like organizations can hasten progress toward the goal of ending violence against children.



CSW NGO Consultation, contd from pg. 3

women’s access to and participation in science and technology education and training, 3. Eliminating barriers to women’s participation in science and technology employment, 4. Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

Ms. Bachelet stressed essential issues for UN Women to address: empowering women as negotiators, funding for national partners that is aligned with national action plans. Ms. Bachelet emphasized her mandate from the General Assembly to consult with civil society. She will appoint an NGO Advisory group to brief her on important issues and strengthen ties with NGOs. She concluded that empowering women relies on cooperation and support from all stakeholders.

Dr. Kaosar Afsana, Associate Director, Health Programme, BRAC Bangladesh shared best practices from the project, Mobile technologies helping poor urban and rural women. According to Dr. Afsana, in Bangladesh MDGs on maternal health and child mortality are on track, but there is unequal distribution and access to safe drinking water. The mobile technology, M-Health provides local women training on patient management and care, emergency management, monitoring and supervision. It is a way to deliver healthcare to rural villages via mobile phones. The technology improves delivery of services and empowers women.

The panel on education, science and technology was moderated by Ms. Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, Co-chair of the NGO Consultation Planning Committee and International Coordinator, Global Network of Women Peace Builders. Eleanor Nwadinobi, Medical Women’s International Association, Nigeria, presented on the topic, Increasing women’s access to and use of technology, including more gender-responsive products. Ms. Shelley Canright, NASA, USA, spoke on Increasing women’s access to and participation in science and technology education and training. Women and girls are lagging behind in technology education. She discussed initiatives of U.S. Pres. Obama’s administration: Educate to Innovate Campaign and the White House counsel for Women and Girls. Ms. Miriam Erez, Technion University Israel discussed Eliminating barriers to women’s participation

in science and technology employment – experiences from Israel. She identified traditional norms of gender segregation with women preferring social sciences and men inclined to technology. Now there are more opportunities caused by merging of technology and social and life sciences. She encouraged NGO leaders to build women’s self-efficacy, change curriculum to integrate science, technology and social science and provide incentives for policies that change social norms of gender roles. Prof. Akanisi Kedrayate Tabualevu of University of South Pacific, Fiji, presented Eliminating barriers to women’s participation in science and technology employment -- experiences from Fiji. Barriers for university women entering technological courses include: patriarchal society, religion, resources and prevalence of gender stereotypes. Fiji’s government has a plan for gender equality by 2015. Ms. Tabualevu emphasized woman role models in science are needed.

For the panel, A Discussion on UN Women, speakers were Ms. Charlotte Bunch, Center for Women’s Global Leadership, Ms. Bani Dugal, Baha’i International Community and Ms. Rachel Harris, Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). Ms. Bunch stated that creation of UN Women will raise women’s voices, raise the level of financial support for women and establishes a structure for the UN to lead in the 21st century. Ms. Dugal explained that the GEAR (Gender Equality Architecture Reform) proposal to UN Women offers a plan for civil society engagement with UN Women including the key points: 1). Establishment of NGO Liaison Units as focal points; 2). Establishment of a civil society counsel; 3). Establishment of a Thematic Working Group; 4). Appointment of Independent Thematic Experts; 5). Creation of a dynamic forum and hearings during CSW and key UN events; 6). Full participation of NGOs at the UN Women Executive Board meetings. (Access full proposal: www.gearcampaign.org)

Ms. Rachel Harris explained the role of the GEAR campaign in the creation of UN Women. Years of advocacy by GEAR Campaign’s network of over 300 women’s, human rights, and social justice organizations convinced UN member states to establish UN Women. Civil society must continue involvement nationally and regionally, “to ensure UN Women realizes its potential as a powerful vehicle for advancing women’s rights”. (View toolkit for Civil Society: <http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/November-2010-GEAR-Campaign-Toolkit.pdf>)

Afternoon breakout sessions provided delegates the opportunity to brainstorm about panel topics. Consultation Day provided a valuable vision for WFWPI delegates and the opportunity to share best practices with other NGO leaders and empower one another to create solutions to major issues that women face from remote rural areas to negotiation panels at the UN.



Slow Learners, contd from pg. 5

in the shadows or those who “cheat” like those who embrace the possibility of a strategy for freedom, justice and peace in the world. Each nation comes to their review after submitting a written response to a broad array of questions about their human rights situation. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also submits a report on the state which includes 1) relevant information from the local or regional office; 2) reports submitted by NGOs; 3) national human rights institutions. The peer “troika”, chosen by lottery, chair the session and make an outcome report listing recommendations to the nation under review. In a follow-up meeting, explains any reservations and can refuse compliance. So far, each state has committed to voluntary, specific improvements.

Ghana’s recommendation to Netherlands in their April 2010 review was to strengthen measures to increase participation by ethnic minority women in line with CEDAW. This was based on a report from women’s NGOs made to the OHCHR. The HRC encourages States to hold broad national consultations to prepare for their UPR. NGOs can urge governments to hold consultations, raise awareness about them and participate. Through this activism, government’s attention can be drawn to particular issues or regions of concern. Involving NGOs early is beneficial for governments, because they can hear and address NGO concerns before they reach the international level. In this case, Netherlands responded with its 1001 Strengths Programme designed to encourage ethnic minority women to participate in voluntary work, which provides opportunities for personal development and participation, as a stepping stone to accessing paid employment. The well thought out program in place in 25 municipalities was described as a valuable best practice that other

Slow Learners, contd. on pg. 12

Poverty Eradication, contd from pg. 3

are illiterate, two thirds are women. People living in poverty confront persistent barriers to realizing an education.”

The statement by Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Secretary-General for UN Conference on Sustainable Development delivered by Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development (UN DESA), stressed that the multiple dimensions of poverty make it challenging. The fragile global economy and social tensions compounded by the employment crisis forced, “millions of workers...into vulnerable employment.” In addition, “a growing number of countries have endorsed fiscal austerity measures, cutting resources for poverty reduction. At the same time warning signs show a new food crisis is emerging.” He emphasized the need to focus efforts on, “the most vulnerable groups, including youth, older persons, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.” He added that countries in which poverty was successfully reduced implemented programs of social protection, and highlighted the need to strengthen the family, which is the main source of social protection in poorer countries.

In his thorough summary of the previous day, Mr. Donald Lee, Chief, Social Perspective on Development Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development, noted that in Africa, “anti-poverty programmes have brought reductions in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. However, the absolute number of poor people actually increased. African economies must grow at a much faster rate for a sustained period, and growth must be job rich, inclusive and pro-poor.” The Secretariat stresses the importance of social protection to accomplish the goals for its affordability and its success in other countries. The strength of social protection lies in the ability to reach deeply into

the structure of the society through services that, cut income poverty, reduced inequality and improved social conditions on a broad scale. In addition it is affordable and attainable even in the poorest areas.

The afternoon session began with a presentation by keynote speaker, Ms. Ana Maldonado, Deputy Minister of Communal Economy, Minister of Communal Economy, Minister of People’s Power for Communes and Social Protection of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. She stated the attempt to achieve objectives of the Social Development Summit in Copenhagen and Millennium Development with “the current rate of compliance...will not be achieved until 200 years later, in the year 2215.” After this staggering fact the speaker added that although few countries can attain the goal in isolation, it is necessary for all countries and all people to benefit. It is vital to consider the rights of every citizen to services, it is not enough to simply consider them as consumers but rather take into account the full gamut of their human rights.

Representatives from member states and civil society joined the discussion through a question and answer session. The impetus of social protection as a means towards eradicating poverty was apparent. The organizations support the effort for human rights of each individual in all situations particularly vulnerable groups; women, children, adolescents, people with disabilities, indigenous populations. Ms. Maldonado concluded with a quote from the sixth session of the General Assembly, “the equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, mutual interest and cooperation among all States, whatever their economic and social systems, correcting the inequalities and repairing the injustices among developed and developing countries, thus assuring present and future generations, peace, justice and economic and social development is steadily accelerating.”



11th WFP International Leaders Workshop



October 11-14, 2010 ~ Seoul, South Korea

EMPOWER TO ERADICATE POVERTY

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For more information about projects, see Biennial Reports at www.wfwp.org



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55th CSW, contd from pg. 3

and participation, ending violence against women, strengthening implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, enhancing women's economic empowerment and making gender equality priorities central to national, local and sectoral planning and budgeting.

There was a rich, varied menu of parallel events available each day. A strong and visible contingent of girls and young women were in attendance. The World Association for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS) sponsored a parallel event jointly with Soroptomists International. High school girls were eloquent panelists offering their personal experiences on access to science and technology education, access to information about science and math career pathways, their images of themselves with regard to these pathways, their opportunities and experiences to exert leadership and more.

Another parallel event highlight, on the theme of Best Practices in STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Math) Education at the Middle School level, offered a group of 8th grade girls as panelists. These girls had the good fortune to participate in a special program at the A Street School in Newark, New Jersey funded by U.S. Satellite and the Endeavor Project (NASA). The girls designed and built a full size rowboat, learning about blueprints, the importance of careful measurement when constructing, use of power tools such as saws, drills and sanders. They were enthusiastic about their work and accomplishment. As they told the story, they told of facing challenges and solving problems. Surmounting these challenges had created a stronger sense of confidence in their capacity to create and do. The soon to be young women talked excitedly about their aspirations for their futures.

Historically, UNIFEM (now part of the new **UN Women**) hosts wonderful interactive parallel events. This year was no exception. One event presented Women's Empowerment Principles, formulated by UNIFEM and UN Global Compact to guide businesses on how to empower women in their organizations. These principles are: Leadership promotes Gender Equality; Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Nondiscrimination; Health, safety and

freedom from violence; Education and training; Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices; Community leadership and engagement; Transparency, measuring and reporting. Participants broke into small, diverse groups to discuss obstacles to women's equal participation in the economic life of their countries, priority actions and policies needed in the private sector and how to work to forward the women's empowerment principles at home. Each small group reported on conclusions. The importance of affordable quality childcare, availability of professional jobs, family friendly employment policies, access to education and assets, affordability of education and healthcare were some of the issues reported.



On the eve of commemoration of the 100th International Women's Day, the official launch of **UN Women** was a star studded affair held on the evening of February 24th in the General Assembly Hall. I was in my seat well before the event began and was very touched to see two young girls age ten or eleven skipping across the floor of the General Assembly hall like they owned it, like it was their personal playground. Perhaps there had been a scene like this before but my sense was it represented a new beginning, and without a doubt, the launch of **UN Women** represents a new beginning in the way that women and their primary concerns are served by the UN.

Speakers at the launch included H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly; H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations; Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Under Secretary General and Executive Director, **UN Women**; Ms. Bandana Rana, President of Saathi, and NGO in Nepal (and Gender Equality Architecture Reform activist); H.E. Ms. U. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President, **UN Women** Executive Board; H.R.H. Princess Cristina of Spain,

President, Institute for Global Health of Barcelona; Mr. Ted Turner, Founder, UN Foundation; Ms. Geena Davis, Academy Award winner, Founder, Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media; Ms. Rakhi Sahi, Former Commander, all female Formed Police Unit, UN Mission in Liberia. Video messages from Ms. Victoria Justice, Ms. Nicole Kidman and Shakira were also shown. A beautiful grand finale debut of the **UN Women** theme song, "One Woman" was performed by Graham Lyle, Clay, Beth Blatt and others backed by the UN International School Choir.

It was a glorious night of hope to launch this new UN entity for women and girls worldwide, **UN Women**. (View WFWPI Joint NGO Statement to the 55th CSW at www.wfwp.org)

Slow Learners, contd from pg. 11

governments and NGOs can implement.

While the Review is an ongoing process among member states and NGOs participating in the sessions, the actual role of NGOs is fluctuating. NGOs are well served by the OHCHR's regular updates on extranet and e-mail. Regular briefings by the President of the HRC for NGOs are also helpful. Yet questions remain about several other areas like strict NGO speaking time limits at sessions. While trying to improve this situation and until improvements are obtained, NGOs seek avenues within the HRC including the UPR to submit information on countries, communicate voices of victims, highlight violations and ask for concrete action and follow-up on recommendations of Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies etc. It is important that the voice of NGOs be heard.

Before a complete UPR round, no conclusion can be drawn regarding success of the UPR mechanism, but clearly where there is sincere effort, the beauty of the system is revealed. The UPR naturally reinforces work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and contributes to greater inter-agency coordination within the UN. When states refuse, or when groups of states plot to defend one another's unrighteousness there is a hole in the system. What remains to be seen is will the advantages of this unique system, over time, entice even the slow learners?

Upcoming Events

- ❖ April 10: 19th WFWP Anniversary
- ❖ May 15: International Day of Families
- ❖ July 4-29: ECOSOC Substantive Session in Geneva
- ❖ Aug. 12: International Youth Day
- ❖ Sep. 3-5: 64th DPI/NGO Conference in Bonn, Germany
- ❖ Oct. WFWP 12th Int'l Leaders Workshop