

March 13, 2007

ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES WITH THE UNITED NATIONS:  
PRESENT AND FUTURE

Thursday, February 15, 2007, 10:00 AM – 12:00PM

Moderator:

Juan Carlos Brandt, Chief,  
NGO Section

Speakers:

Carolyn Hannan, Director for the Advancement of Women

Shamina de Gonzaga, Special Advisor on NGO Relations  
In the Office of the President of the General Assembly

Barbara Adams, Chief, Strategic Partnership and Communications  
United Nations Development Fund for Women

Maria Jose Alcala, Senior Technical Advisor,  
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment,  
United Nations Population Fund

1. From 10:00 AM to 10:30 AM a video presentation of Snap Shots of Change was shown. This was a compilation of videos produced by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

2. The Moderator, Carlos Brandt welcomed everyone and introduced each of the speakers and their backgrounds. He indicated that UNIFEM together with Hewlett Packard prepared the video and the exhibit for this session.

3. Carolyn Hannan, the first speaker has been working on Gender Equality since 1995. She is a Swedish national. She indicated that accomplishments that have been made is because of strong support of United States of women's agendas. She is aware of the NGO work on this subject.

She understood the need for the cooperation of NGOs and Governments. Ms. Hannan stated that we need the work of the United Nations, Unions and NGOs on these challenges. We need to look at what we have done and the achievements to date.

Ms. Hannan indicated that we have made very good legal achievements at the United Nations. Eighty-five nations have ratified a resolution on this convention Addressing Gender Issues. Progress for women is progress for all. The Achievements for the human rights for women are critical to achieving the Millennium goals.

She stated that there have been advances on women's rights. She asked the question as to how do we close the gap between the rights and what is actually on the ground? Her department is focused on the global level. The Commission is trying to accomplish the achievements of women's rights in each country.

The theme this year is the discrimination against the girl child. NGOs should keep an eye on the Commission to see if they move forward on the girl child issue. In 2008 the Commission is going to work on financing women's rights. In 2009 the Commission will be focusing on the relationship between women and men.

It is important that each country work on recommendations made by the Commission and report back to the Commission in five years on the results they achieved.

#### 4. Questions/Answers by Carolyn Hannan:

4.1 The General Assembly has passed a resolution on women's rights.

4.2 NGOs can and should meet with their government's representatives on the issue of women's rights. We need the push and challenge of DPI/NGOs on this issue.

5. The next speaker was Shamina De Gonzaga.. She asked the question as to how the system is going to be restructured or reformed. We need to have the reverent actors present and involved.

The 2004 Cardozza report was released on NGO's status with member states. Member states still do not understand NGO's work. She stated that NGOs and Member states must resolve their differences and she encouraged that they work together. NGOs best understand how they work with the United Nations and member states.

6. Juan Carlos Brandt, the Moderator, at this point indicated that a number of officers at the United Nations work on these issues. It is up to us as NGOs to select/work on these issues.

7. The next speaker, Barbara Adams, has an impressive background. In addition she is also an NGO. In 2005 at the conference in Mexico she indicated that this work was addressed. She indicated that it must be continued.

The United Nations has been an organizing place of women's issues. In 1990 at the United Nations meetings were held on women's violence. The United Nations is the hub of campaigning on this issue. In 1990s, United Nations conferences provided the impetus on women's issues. There have been networking with other women's organizations on this.

Barbara Adams stated that we need to develop new ways to accomplish this task. The real challenge is to take the break thru made to date and move forward. She indicated that Women's Rights was the outcome of the Mexico conference.

She indicated that UNFEM has fifteen offices worldwide. UNFEM has granted eighteen million dollars to various offices to implement support for women's groups. Resolution 1325 that was passed by the Security Council supports women's rights in peace building (i.e. Somalia, etc).

Ms. Adams indicated that we must set up tools to examine and upgrade the budgets of governments and their accomplishments. We must hold governments accountable.

8. The last speaker, Marie Jose Alcala, is the principal author of the 2005/2006 Human Rights reports. She worked for the NGO organization before working for the United Nations. Her work is based on the Conference held in Cairo in 1994.

Gender equality is the goal and a key area. In the United Nations Reform, she is pushing thru the gender equality issue. She is the sponsor of the HIV/AIDS issue. Ms. Alcala played a lead role in the issue of Rights of Migrant Workers, and Child Education, etc.

She indicated, that the issue of Refugee Women, are now being addressed. They are also trying to rebuild areas of Women's Rights destroyed by conflict. They need compelling evidence on why governments should invest in gender equality and human rights.

Ms. Alcala expects a much greater effort to be made by the United Nations on gender issues and human rights. This area must also include that of adolescents. She indicated that in her work she has had wide efforts by NGOs in these areas. Their collaboration are critical in the decision making process with governments.

She ended by stating that UNFPA offices are located at the United Nations in New York.

9. Questions/Answers:

9.1 Shamina de Gonzaga; It is important for member states and NGOs to communicate. But NGOs may not get a fast response from member states because of their conflicting tasks.

9.2 Carolyn Hannan; Children will be selected to speak at the United Nations on their Issues. There are working with UNICEF to obtain adequate space for them to Speak. Compelling arguments differ from issue to issue.

9.3 Maria Jose Alcalá; She indicated that we can do more on this issue. We do not have the funds to do more on publicizing the issue. In London this was done funded by a corporation. It was very good. We have to explore how to show United Nations member Nations on how to accomplish this task. It is about time that we have a strong organization at the United Nations on this

9.4 Shamina de Gonzaga; If we do this we will have a strong body at the United Nations as a result of this.

**DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE GIRL CHILD:  
A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE**

Thursday, February 15, 2007, 1:15 PM – 2:30 PM

**Moderator:**

Carolyn Hannan, Director,  
Division for the Advancement of Women

**Speakers:**

Her Excellency Joyce Kananabalo, Minister Plenipotentiary,  
United Republic of Tanzania

Ted Brunch, Director, Safe Horizons Domestic Violence Program,  
Co-founder of a call to Men

1. The Moderator, Carolyn Hannan, welcomed everyone and introduced each of the speakers and their backgrounds. She indicated that this was a continuation of the morning session.

This meeting was organized by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York and the Working Group on Girls of the NGO Committee on UNICEFF in partnership with the Division for the Advancement of Women.

Ms. Hannan outlined what the United Nations Commission will be doing:

They will focus on the girl child.

Cover on going work of UNICEFF.

Review discrimination against the girl child and women.

The girl child has been neglected to date. They are at high risk. The invisibility of women and the girl child in many areas of the world is a major problem. Adolescent girls need to be focused on.

2. The first speaker, Minister Joyce Kafanabo, addressed women's programs and also the issues of children. She indicated that the issue of discrimination of girls is now at the head of the United Nations agenda. Minister Kafanabo holds a Master's Degree in Finance.

She indicated that in our society we tend to give more to men than women. Laws say there should be no discrimination but it is there. When a girl is born in Tanzania, the husband may abandon the family. Discrimination starts in the Family and in the community.

The tradition of discrimination in Tanzania is inbred for many generations. In their schools there is a "Head Boy" and a "Head Girl". The "Head Boy" always make any decisions. Girls have to grow too fast. Girls do not go into Physics, Engineering, etc. Girls that go to boarding school tend to do better.

Their schools have in-adequate toilets to serve girls. The quality and quantity of education that we provide are very important. We need to continue to provide resources for helping girls.

Minister Kafanabo indicated that they are trying to provide additional education for girls to be able to enter into science and engineering. Their gender transformation programs are trying to advance girls. These programs to be successful must include boys. Both boys and girls must advance in the same manner in a win-win situation for both sexes.

3. The second speaker was Ted Brunch. He is a recognized leader on ending violence and discrimination against women. He indicated that the discrimination problem also exists in the United States. The foundation of Discrimination against women and girls is sexism.

Discrimination is a Human Rights issue. This is male dominance and control. Any discrimination supports and helps boys and men. Mr. Brunch went into detail of how men and boys have more privileges than girls and women even in the United States. He indicated that the issue of Human Rights are very important.

4. Questions/Answers:

4.1 Minister Kafanabo; Privileges are given to men in Tanzania. Their loyalty is to the men who gave them power. Men at the top always tend to pull women down. Girls in science now go to girls schools to speak out on what they are doing. The leadership is now trying to help girls a lot. They have to find an innovative way that we teach. Those girls who have done well is because of the support of their fathers.

4.2 Ted Brunch; Women have to have conversations with women. They need to invite men to these conversations. They need to correct the oppression. Men need to have accountability to women. They need to look into how sexism plays out. Religious leaders must also participate.

4.3 Minister Kafanabo; They have to look into self examination of both men and women. It is important for men to talk with other men on this issue. There needs to be a balance between men and women.

4.5 Ted Brunch; The leaders need to speak on this issue. Men must speak out on this with other men. They must be leaders that other men respect. They need to organize more men to do this around the country. They can use the media and web sites to help with this.

5. Moderator Carolyn Hannan; She indicated that we must eliminate negative stereo Types. This is a huge challenge. There are many unanswered questions. How To get the understanding that discrimination is a human rights crises.

PDC George Weinstein  
National UN Chairman