

The Women's Network – Your Network

Pumla Titus, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Convener of the International Anglican Women's Network

In March this year I attended the 61st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) which takes place annually at the UN headquarters in New York City. The priority theme this year was 'The Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls in the Changing World of Work'.

This was a great time to meet up with sisters from around the world as we gathered as delegates of the Anglican Communion. In considering the theme of UNCSW61, I recognised its resonance with IAWN's objectives:

- to promote gender equality – ensuring that the remuneration gap between men and women is closed
- to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children – ensuring that women can safely work in any sector, with special attention to the domestic worker sector
- to ensure that women and girls have access to educational opportunities and health care
- to empower women in the eradication of poverty and hunger, and
- to promote gender budgeting – especially in the area of unpaid work in the care economy.



Pumla Titus

This edition of IAWN News is a UNCSW61 special!

Inside are contributions from Anglican women who travelled to New York from a diversity of cultures and contexts. Their comments reflect their profound learning during CSW, and the realisation that any one of us can be an advocate for women and girls around the world.

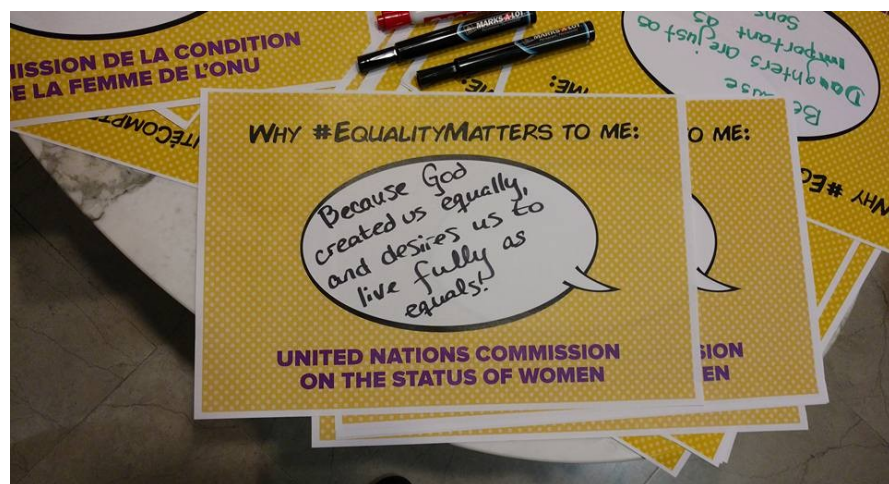
In a final statement, the Anglican delegates highlighted the importance of working with young women's and girls' groups to ensure that the voice and mission of all women continue to rise. Read the whole statement at <http://bit.ly/2rbi1kG>.

Each year, the Anglican Communion Office at the UN manages and supports the participation of 20 women from all regions to attend the CSW two week programme. Contact Rachel Chardon at the Anglican Communion Office at the UN in New York to find out about future sessions of the UNCSW, email unoffice@anglicancommunion.org.

We were grateful to the Episcopal Church Center for offering its hospitality space as a base to all Anglicans and Episcopalians in New York for CSW, to Ecumenical Women for our daily worship in the UN Church Center, and to our Episcopal sisters for their kind contributions to ensure that all the delegates from warmer parts of the world were wrapped up enough to face the cold streets of New York City.

We want to hear from you!

We would like to hear from all women around the Communion as this is *your Network* and so *your Voice* is very important wherever you are. Send your news and views to Lizzi Green at lizzigreen48@gmail.com. Find out more at <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org> and do join our Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/IntAngWomen.



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125 years of loving service

Two Anglican schools in Australia have celebrated a century and a quarter of ministry by sisters of the Anglican Society of the Sacred Advent. 'Mother Emma's Day' is celebrated each year on 9 March, and this year students from St Margaret's and St Aidan's girls' schools gathered at St John's Cathedral in Brisbane to give thanks for the presence of the Order over such a long period of time and to pray that the work started by the Society may continue for years to come.

Photo: Revd Gillian Moses at the Eucharist. Gillian is IAWN's Provincial Link for the Anglican Church of Australia. Read the full story at <http://bit.ly/2qnhVWd>.



Children are hungry in Burundi

Mathilde Nkwirikiye, pictured left, has let us know about her work among families in Burundi, one of the poorest countries in the world, where cycles of conflict in recent years and a dry growing season have led to families being unable to feed their children adequately.

Mathilde has asked for our prayers for the recovery of families—that they will be able to grow enough food in the next growing season; and for dialogue and reconciliation in her country.

"Join us in prayer and advocacy. We need your support. We need to see peace restored and to build up our resilience."



Mathilde has had a leadership role in the Mothers' Union in Burundi, which has been making a real difference, running literacy, financial skills, and parenting programmes. She features in the Anglican Communion News Service video 'Anglican campaigners at UN women's conference' at <http://bit.ly/2qnZNv7>.

Church of South India recommits to gender equity

During the inauguration of a two-day orientation on its 'Gender Equity Enabling Timetable' which addresses sexual harassment in the workplace, domestic violence and positive masculinities, Moderator Bishop Thomas Oommen, President of the Synod Women's Fellowship, Dr Susan Thomas, and other church leaders affirmed the Church's commitment to gender equity in church and society.

The Church of South India was the first Province in Asia to consecrate a woman bishop and has over 300 women priests. It runs women empowerment programmes has had a particular focus on the education and well being of the girl child. Read more at <http://bit.ly/2pUnWqv>.



Historic Trans-Tasman Bishops' gathering

The seven female bishops of the Anglican Church of Australia and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia have used their first ever meeting to speak out "for the well-being of girls and women across the Anglican Communion and the opportunities for them to live into the fullness of their humanity".

During their three day meeting near Melbourne, Australia, the bishops reflected on the journey of women to ordination to all three orders of ministry in their respective Provinces and also affirmed the statement drawn up by the Anglican Communion delegation to CSW61.

Read the Bishops' communiqué at <http://www.anglicantaonga.org.nz/Features/Extra/Historic>.

Our Experiences at CSW61

In addition to having first-hand experience of observing a UN instrument in session, the Anglican delegates had a wealth of opportunities to learn about issues critical to women's empowerment, discover new tools and resources, and network with others who have similar experience and goals. They also had opportunities to contribute in Parallel Events.



Anglican Church in Japan described their church's ministry of peace and reconciliation and spoke about Hiroshima as a place of pilgrimage.

Here follow the thoughts, impressions and discoveries of some of the delegates...

Lesley Lewis, Anglican Church of Australia

My CSW experience was a rich spiritual place of enlightenment, growth, friendship, faith and hope. The journey took me outside my social norms and relationships. It was a space to look, listen, learn and reflect without the usual distractions. In the Anglican Communion delegation, I found an eclectic group of new friends from many countries, cultures, and circumstances. Through them I have gained an intimate understanding that makes me feel more connected and empathetic for the circumstances, challenges, uncertainties and dangers faced by many sisters around the world.

I am conscious there are still places where women are denied full participation in faith communities. My highlight was worship with the women at the UN Church Center where we celebrated our diversity through many ethnic voices, traditions, styles, languages and songs all raised in communal worship to the Lord. I particularly responded to immersion in the feminist theological model as a lived experience of inclusiveness and acceptance as a woman. The female-centric language, scripture readings, prayers and sermons had an inherent inclusiveness that embraced me with a sense of peace and hope. It was the place where I found 'my place'.

Noreen Njovu, Zambia, Anglican Church of Central Africa

I attended a session on 'Tacking Gender Violence at Home and in the Workplace'. Raphael Crowe, Senior Gender Specialist at the International Labour Organization (ILO) based in Geneva, addressed the meeting. His presentation was followed by open discussion and I was surprised to discover that we have the same problems worldwide.

One of the youth raised the issue of violence caused by drunkenness. This is a big issue but most countries have never taken a census to find out how many women suffer because of it. Some women were of the opinion that the answer is to punish these men but the house resolved that no violence, only dialogue, will solve the issue - plus the education of women. In my country it has not been documented so it is difficult to tell how many homes

For example, Joy Kwaje Eluzai and Harriet Baka Nathan from the Episcopal Church of South Sudan led an event on 'South Sudan: Women of faith building peace and economic empowerment'. Pumla Titus and IAWN Steering Group member Paula Nesbitt (pictured far left) joined an international panel looking at 'Listening across our differences: Empowering women cross-culturally for transformation'.

After a Sunday morning Eucharist at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, a panel of Anglican Communion delegates from Argentina, Samoa, Hong Kong, South Sudan and Scotland spoke about the economic status of women in their particular contexts. Miki Hamai and Maya Kobayashi from the

experience this type of violence. However, I have seen some homes where such violence takes place.

Maya Kobayashi, Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Church in Japan)

This was my first time to join CSW, and through that I could spend a precious time with wonderful people. It was a very valuable experience for me.

Before I had participated in this gathering I didn't have enough opportunity to think about empowerment of women because many Japanese young people are not



Khushbakht Peters, Sar Kabaw Htoo and Maya Kobayashi from from Pakistan, Myanmar and Japan

concerned with that. I think, however, that it is a very important subject which needs to be considered more.

During the CSW, I met many people from lots of different countries. I was very impressed because even if countries or languages are different, all of them tried to work hard together using various ways. I want to make the opportunity to give the young generation in Japan the impetus to think and try to work together in similar ways.

Miki Hamai, Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Church in Japan)

Attending CSW61 was a rare and valuable experience for me. It is difficult for the Anglican Church in Japan to have some impact on national policies, for the Anglican Church population in Japan is less than 1 per cent (32,000 out of a population of 120,000,000). Anglican women aim to play a part in the economic empowerment of women in cooperation with ecumenical networks and NGOs.

I would like to report on our activities in Japan, not only concerning the economic empowerment of women, but about other important activities. We need reconciliation, dialogue, and ecumenical thinking to build world peace. As we belong to the Anglican Communion, we must try to build bridges among people.

Laura Marie Piotrowicz, Anglican Church of Canada

From a personal perspective, the highlight of my UNCSW experience was meeting all the Anglican Communion delegates. While we came with a variety of unique home experiences, personal interests, and professional specialisations, we quickly became sisters, lifelong friends who share in prayer, solidarity, and hope.

From my faith perspective, a highlight for me was the opportunity to acknowledge the intersectionality of issues affecting women and girls. I attended several events with foci on matters of human trafficking, climate change, and international development; and sought opportunities for discussions to extrapolate creative and practical ideas for ways in which we (the church) might engage the Strategic Development Goals (Agenda 2030).

Okkyung Lee, Anglican Church of Korea

When I found out that the theme of this year's UNCSW was 'the economic empowerment of women and girls in the changing world of work', I wondered why girls were included in the title.

However it was not long before I realized it was essential to the issue of this year. Still many girls give up going to school in many places. It is really sad and sorry for them.



Lesley Lewis from Australia and Lungelwa Makgoba from South Africa

It reminds me it was the same thing in Korea 30 or 40 years ago, even now in a few cases. At that time, Korea was very poor. When a poor family had an eldest girl, she gave up going to school and got a job to support her family.

But an eldest boy in poor family, he went to school or college even though his parents had no money. Because his parents supported him by selling their property.

If all children don't get education or take courses for skills, they aren't able to get jobs which lead to earning money and economic empowerment. We have to support and encourage girls' education through this campaign of UNCSW with Anglican Communion delegation. Because we've seen the fruit of our Mothers' Union in many places.



*Mariana Lang from Argentina and Odete Lieber from Brazil
Photo by Rachel E Jimenez*

Mariana Lang, Argentina, Anglican Church of South America

Fue mi primera vez en las Naciones Unidas y también en Nueva York. Muchas expectativas y temores acumulados en los últimos días se fueron despejando a medida que entramos en contacto con las demás compañeras. Fue un regalo poder estar esos días compartiendo experiencias y sentimientos. Las conferencias de las que participé me hicieron admirar el compromiso de muchas mujeres en la búsqueda de la igualdad de género; la valentía de la lucha por la paz, de las delegadas de Sudan del Sur. El mapa del mundo comenzó a desplegarse en mi mente y lugares remotos se hicieron más cercanos, debido a que allí vive alguien al que conozco. Asombro ante costumbres de otras culturas, indignación ante injusticias, alivio de no estar en tal o cual situación y descubrir las propias debilidades, son algunas de las emociones vividas.

Descubrir que la tecnología, que excluye a muchos trabajadores, puede ser a la vez una salida laboral para mujeres que no pueden salir de sus hogares en oriente, es por lo menos inquietante. Asombroso también es que sistemas de cocinas solares puedan proteger de posibles violaciones evitándose la exposición a ese peligro durante la recolección de leña. Conectar los cambios climáticos con la igualdad de géneros parece por lo menos irrisorio, sin embargo mucha agua o muy poca, aleja los cursos de agua o los cambia y por lo tanto muchas realidades en el sistema agrario cambian. Los más perjudicados suelen ser mujeres y niños.

Éstas son algunas de las informaciones que abren mundo y cabezas. Espero que junto a las vivencias compartidas

'Our heartfelt experiences presented in a simple way carry an astounding strength'

logren a nuestro regreso a casa movilizar a otros. A mí me llenó de energías para renovar en nuestra parroquia San Marcos (Argentina) algunas visiones y misiones.

Translation:

This was my first time at the United Nations and also in New York. My fear and anticipation dissipated as I met my colleagues in the delegation. It was a gift to be able to spend those days sharing experiences and feelings. In the sessions I attended, I admired the commitment of many women in the pursuit of gender equality, not least the Anglican delegates from South Sudan and their courage as they struggle for peace. The map of the world began to unfold in my mind and remote places came closer, because someone I now know lives there. Among the emotions I experienced were awe at the customs of other cultures, indignation at injustices, relief at not being in this or that situation, and discovering our own weaknesses.

Discovering that technology, which excludes many workers, can also be a way out for women who cannot leave their homes in the East, is at least challenging. Also amazing is that solar cooker systems can protect against possible sexual violence, avoiding the exposure to that danger during the collection of firewood. Connecting climatic changes with gender equality might not seem important, however to much or too little water or changes to water courses affect agricultural systems. Those most disadvantaged by this are usually women and children.

This is some of the information that opens up the world and minds. I hope that together, with our shared experiences, we can mobilize others on our return home. I was energized to renew our vision and mission in our parish of San Marcos in Argentina.

Odete Liber, Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

All the sessions were important, but the most striking was an afternoon session of 14 March. It was a day of snow blizzards and New York City stopped! People came out of the cold to listen to Joy Kwaje Eluzai and Harriet Baka Nathan from the Anglican Church of South Sudan, who



Harriet Baka Nathan and Joy Kwaje Eluzai from South Sudan

spoke about: 'South Sudan: Women of faith building peace and economic empowerment'.

There were moments of inspiration and reflection as they spoke about faith, struggle, the Anglican Church, women's economic empowerment. They shared their experiences of struggle as Christian and Anglican women. Harriet is a tireless advocate for peace and fights against poverty. Over the years, she has worked closely with church and community leaders across the country to promote peace and economic development, especially among women and vulnerable groups. In South Sudan, women and children suffer the most, because in practice there is no peace, and violence against women and the vulnerable is widespread.

Joy Kwaje Eluzai asked that, as women all over the world, we could do more in our countries to help them. They stressed that in South Sudan women are raped and suffer many forms of violence. Few women study, get trained as Lawyers or other professions, because they are afraid of violence. There is geographical discrimination; women are considered ignorant and constantly disrespected. But they don't give up and continue to fight for the women of their country and give an example of courage and hope. The existing conflicts have devastated the country and caused



the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Harriet reported that bringing peace - and food - was a unifying factor among women. She spoke of the importance of literacy projects for women, of income generation and how a better education gave them the confidence to participate more fully in society. With this, women felt inspired and economically educated.

They said that the struggle for rights is a challenge, but that in spite everything that happened they keep fighting and trying to change their reality. The economic empowerment of women benefits society, the family, the Church. That is change, that is Gospel. We are all invited to reflect on what needs to happen in each context in order that more religious leaders become advocates for gender justice. All these statements indicate that it is necessary to empower the women, and to fight for more spaces of equality. Women needs to study, and men needs to participate in moments of speech about gender, justice and equity. We need more Biblical Studies aimed at valuing women, with a hermeneutic 'from' and 'for' women. As a Church we must participate actively, envisioning a world where all, women and men, boys and girls, are valued equally.

Khushbakht Peters, Church of Pakistan

When I was selected as a delegate to the 61st session of UNCSW, I was much excited. But, as time went on, I also became quite nervous. I thought the women who are coming to this conference are bringing a wealth of experience; compared to them 'I am just ordinary'. How and what will I contribute?

The conference started and, as time went on, I realized just how little people knew about my region, and the misconceptions that they had. Some didn't even know if Christians exist in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Most of the time, I realized that I was the only Christian from an Islamic country attending the sessions.

As the days went on I found myself speaking not only for the Christians of our country but, for the rest of Pakistanis as well, covering topics such as child marriages, violence against women, women empowerment and drone attacks. At the end of the two weeks, I realized that in my humble capacity I, had actually contributed a little more than I expected.



Rachael Fraser from Scotland with Lungelwa Makgoba, Maupi Letsoalo, Pumla Titus and Nomfuzo Mangisa from South Africa



Wendy Lee from Hong Kong

Now, I realize even if you are just an 'ordinary' person, you can play an important role in events like these, because it is you who knows your region and your culture better than anyone else. 'Our heartfelt experiences presented in a simple way carry an astounding strength'. This is my message to all, especially to the women from developing countries like mine.

Isadora Betham, Samoa, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia

Wow, it has been such a phenomenal experience for me as a first timer! I knew it would be big but the reality of it was overwhelming with the diverse cultures, events organised, and issues discussed at each session. It was such a privilege to be among academics, women from around the world sharing their advocacy work, and panellists and delegates sharing their stories, as well as meeting the faces behind various international organisations advocating and helping women and girls for a better tomorrow. This rare opportunity, being here at this platform, exposed me to challenging issues in 'the economic empowerment of women and girls in the changing world of work'. It was an eye opener. The scale of problems vary from country to country, as do the values and traditions of our cultures. However, at the end of the day, we are connected and on the common ground in our struggles and roles as women; it has nothing to do with our ethnicity or the colour our skin.

My experience has lighted a fire. There is much work to do in terms of equipping and encouraging our women and girls to have a voice, despite the norms and cultural barriers. I would like to see more opportunities like this to expose our women and young girls to be part of the conversation.

Our provincial representation at CSW is on a rotation basis for our three tikanga - Maori, Pakeha (European), and Pasifika. It would be more effective and beneficial for our Pacific Island people to have our own representative each time in order to be truly "inclusive and leaving no one behind", as our voices beat to a different drum than that of New Zealand. I went to CSW as a 'clueless individual' and left empowered with information and inspired by the work of warrior women and men across the globe. I take with me collective voices, network connections and friendships with women across the world especially our own Anglican Communion women.

More Anglican Voices at CSW61

The members of the Anglican Communion delegation were not the only Anglicans in New York for CSW61.

Lynnaia Main, IAWN's Provincial Link for The Episcopal Church writes more:

Nearly 100 Anglican women gathered in New York to attend UNCSW and consider this year's priority theme, 'Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work'.

The Episcopal Church Center welcomed accredited delegations from the Anglican Communion and The Episcopal Church, as well as groups from the Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican Women's Empowerment, Episcopal Church Women, Episcopal Relief & Development, the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN), the Mothers' Union, St George's Episcopal Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and members and groups from the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

These participants gathered to share in worship, prayer, learning and fellowship over several days at the Episcopal Church Center, including an orientation for newcomers, UNCSW Opening and Closing Eucharists, Anglican Communion parallel events, and a special UNCSW Eucharist and conversation with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and President of the House of Deputies Gay Clark Jennings.

The Episcopal Church was represented at UNCSW by an official delegation with 20 accredited delegates, each named by the Presiding Bishop, from the Dioceses of

California, Central Florida, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Kansas, Los Angeles, Michigan, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Pittsburgh, Puerto Rico, Southeast Florida, Venezuela, Virginia, Washington and Western Kansas. Members of the Presiding Bishop's staff guided and accompanied the delegates. Together, delegates took turns in observing the official UNCSW plenaries and attended parallel events.

While at the UN, they shared copies of the Presiding Bishop's written statement submitted to UNCSW, with its three priorities of promoting women's and girls' access to education and gender equality education for all, expanding socio-economic benefits that support women's contributions at work and prioritizing resources and programs for marginalized groups of women and girls.

From informal networking encounters with key UNCSW and UN Women staff and representatives of member states, to organized mission visits with Haiti, Guatemala, Ghana and other countries, Episcopal delegates were able to spread the good news of our Church's active commitment to women's and girls' empowerment as part of this important global dialogue.

Each evening, they met for a debrief of the day's activities and to consider how to strategize to amplify our voice and message at UNCSW. The delegation also took active part in analyzing and submitting comments on the draft Agreed Conclusions (the outcome document of CSW) as the negotiations continued.

During the second week, the delegation took part in two workshops on taking the experience back home, through national-level advocacy with the Office of Government Relations and by engaging with General Convention.



Watch the video 'Anglican campaigners at UN women's conference' at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9Gd9Wapiyl>

Below: Laura Marie Piotrowicz from Canada



Faith, gender justice and ending gender-based violence

What are we teaching? Please help us find out.

Over the next two to three years, the International Anglican Women's Network steering group will be convening a small international group of Anglican theological educators who will develop a teaching framework on gender equality and on ending and preventing gender-based violence.

The group will be significantly helped in their work if they know what courses and resources for such teaching already exist around the Communion.

We are contacting Anglican theological colleges and schools around the Communion, and also multi-denominational colleges, to find out if they already offer any courses or workshops, on a regular or occasional basis, on biblical

theology relating to gender equality and the ending and preventing of gender-based violence. And if so, what form these take and which resources are found most useful.

We are receiving some replies but it would be really helpful if IAWN members could get involved, especially where you are familiar with courses and resources in your own region.

Please get in touch with Terrie Robinson, Director for Women in Church & Society at the Anglican Communion Office if you think you could help us build up a picture of what is on offer in our theological schools and colleges, and which existing resources and materials we should be signposting.

Email terrie.robinson@anglicancommunion.org.

"This is the day that God has given"

Alice Medcof, Anglican Church of Canada, former convener of IAWN (2003 to 2006), looks back on her family history—a tale of flight, sanctuary and survival.



This year I will go to my father's birth town of Bratislava in present-day Slovakia. Just before my father died he told us this bit of history: During World War One, German soldiers entered his home and killed his parents. His sister (my aunt Maria then 16) took my father (10), by the hand and ran from the house. They must have been expecting an invasion because Maria had their birth certificates in her pocket. The last words they heard were, "Don't kill them, they are just children".

They ran for six years and ended up in Timosuara, Romania, where my aunt fell in love and married. My father quickly realised that this was no place for a young brother so went into the forest, built a still, and made gin from Juniper berries which he sold on the black market. With the proceeds he booked passage to Halifax, Canada.

Immigration officers challenged him to prove that he was displaced. My father produced his birth certificate and his point of embarkation. The immigration official said, "You are indeed displaced. Welcome to Canada!"

He was sent west, to a farmer in Saskatchewan to be an indentured labourer for one year. Each Saturday the farm hands went to the local pub. My Dad did not go, rather he



would ask for the night off once a week to go to the movies. This was his 'English as a second language' course.

A year later he left for Toronto with cash enough to last for four days. This was in 1929: the Depression. He walked along the first street north of the rail tracks looking for work. On day two he walked along the next street north, on day three the same, on day four he asked for work at a plumbing and heating company and he was taken on. The first year he earned his apprentice licence, the second year his journeyman's licence, the third year his master's licence. He saved enough money to buy a second hand truck and left his employer to set himself up in business as a plumbing and heating company. In 1934 he married my mother and in 1935, I was born.

By the mid-40s his business was much in demand. He could speak seven languages and so had a mini United Nations working for him. His life had not been easy. He developed cancer of the stomach and died at age 63. My mother died age 69, also with cancer, a common disease in the female line of my family.

I am astonished that I am still alive. Each morning I look out the kitchen window at my garden and say "This is the day that God has given, let us rejoice and be glad in it".

The Anglican Communion delegation at CSW61:

South America: Mariana Lang; Australia: Lesley Lewis; Brazil: Odete Lieber; Burundi: Mathilde Nkwirikiye; Canada: Laura Marie Piotrowicz; Central Africa: Noreen Njovu; Hong Kong: Wendy Lee; Tam Yeuk Ming; Japan: Miki Hamai; Maya Kobayashi; Korea: Okkyung Lee; Myanmar: Sar Kabaw Htoo; Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia: Isadora Betham; Pakistan: Khushbakht Peters; Rwanda: Immaculee Nyiransengimana; Scotland: Rachael Fraser; Southern Africa: Lungelwa Makgoba; Maupi Letsoalo; Pumla Titus; Nomfuzo Mangisa; South Sudan: Harriet Baka Nathan; Joy Kwaje Eluzai; The Episcopal Church: Erin Morey