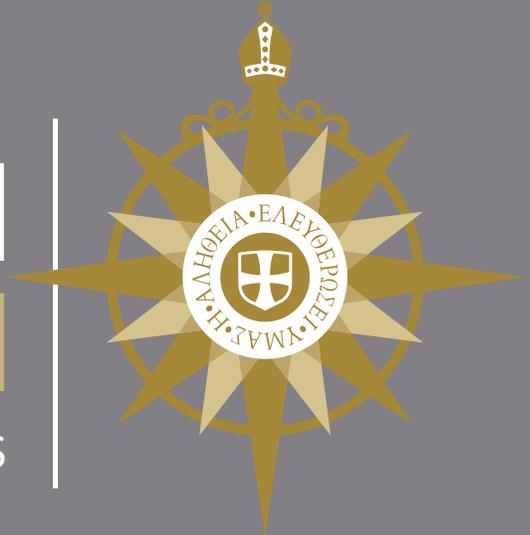


**THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION OFFICE  
AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ANGLICAN  
COMMUNION**

IN OVER 165 COUNTRIES



**THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE  
STATUS OF WOMEN 62<sup>nd</sup> SESSION**

**NEW YORK CITY  
MARCH 2018**

**“REPORTS AND REFLECTIONS”**

Contributors:  
Anglican Provincial Delegates  
Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations Staff & Volunteers

The priority theme for the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW62) was “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.”

The review theme was “Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women.”

**This booklet is dedicated**

To all women and girls in rural areas who regularly face the debilitating effects of climate change, limited infrastructure, and insufficient education and medical facilities.





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## **WORDS OF GRATITUDE AND FAREWELL**

For many years the work of the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN), including the core costs of our delegation and participation in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW), has been generously funded through grants from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Anglican Communion Fund. On behalf of this office, the UNCSW Anglican delegates, and the women and girls around the globe, we express deep and abiding appreciation to the Anglican Communion Fund for such commitment to the quest for gender equality.

During the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations led a distinctive delegation of women from 17 of the 39 provinces of the Anglican Communion (see page six). For two weeks these well-prepared delegates engaged in relevant discussion on the priority theme and their personal experience as rural women.

Many events were centered on the topic of climate change, as it is tied to the difficulties women and girls in rural areas experience in their daily lives. The Priority theme examined the "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls." The Review theme focused on "The participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

The staff of this office express sincere gratitude to our special guest, Sameena Nazir, founder and Executive Director of Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA) and President of Women's International Leagues for Peace and Freedom (WILF). Sameena spoke about the challenges rural women and girls face, including how they are adversely impacted by the effects of climate change, noting that women do most of the agricultural work but are not recognized as "farmers".

We also express our deep appreciation for the contribution of the delegate from the Church of England, Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson, who led a parallel event on "The Participation of Women in England's Rural Community Governance" and engaged in meaningful discussion with the delegates. Jill focused on the fact that women have a less prominent role in formal community governance structures and rarely have leadership and financial responsibilities in this sphere.

Among our Anglican Communion colleagues and friends, we thank the Revd Canon Terrie Robinson, the Anglican Communion's Director for Women in Church and Society, and to ACOUN's UNCSW Consultant, Beth Adamson. For years, both have served tirelessly to empower women and girls across the globe.

Terrie encouraged members of the Anglican Communion delegation to join the International Anglican Women's Network, which serves as a global voice of Anglican women. One of the network's priorities is promoting equality and the participation of women in all levels of decision-making through the Anglican Communion. Beth Adamson has served as a volunteer consultant to ACOUN for over 10 years and has earned the Award for Global Service for her dedicated work to strengthen the Anglican women's presence at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

We are also grateful for the support and hospitality of the Episcopal Church, particularly the Presiding Bishop, the Most Revd Michael B. Curry, who led the Opening Worship for the Anglican and Episcopal delegates. Throughout his ministry, the Presiding Bishop has been active in issues of social justice, speaking out on immigration and racial inequality.

We extend our gratitude to Lynnaia Main, Episcopal Church Representative to the United Nations, for organizing the venues we were privileged to use, and the Revd Canon Charles C. K. Robertson, Ph.D., Canon for Ministry Beyond the Episcopal Church. We include our thanks to The Episcopal Church Center's building services.

Our special thanks to Father Carl Turner, Rector of St Thomas Church, for his interest and support of the Anglican delegations to the United Nations over the years. Our delegation along with our Episcopalian sisters attended the Sunday Evensong orchestrated by St Thomas' Men and Boys Choir. Later we attended a special reception, followed by a sit-down dinner in Andrew Hall. Father Carl and his wife, the Revd Alison J. Turner, mingled with our delegation in a candlelit ambiance that reflected upon the beautiful stained glass windows in this 105-year-old elegant French High Gothic architectural design.

The worship, particularly the sermon given by the Revd Ezgi Saribay Perkins of the Cathedral Church of St Paul in Wisconsin, was enlightening. She spoke of Martha and Mary - a reminder of the importance of our priorities. The presence and support of Bishop Andrew Dietsche, Bishop of the Diocese of New York, was greatly appreciated.

Marnie Dawson Carr, who has played a huge role in the creation and maintenance of the Anglican Communion's presence at the United Nations over many years, has dedicated time and energy to promoting and fundraising for this office. Her gifts have, amongst many other things, assisted in sponsoring several delegates over the years.

It has been a privilege to serve this Office in the rewarding work toward lifting up women throughout the Anglican Communion, and I feel honored to have played a part in the effort towards gender equity. From the day I arrived at the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations, I knew I had landed onto a path that would unwind with a leap of faith. Now I look forward to a new chapter in my life.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to Rachel Elaine Jimenez and Ashley Lopez Olijnyk, Program Assistants to this Office. They held me up all the way.



## OVERVIEW

'Different countries, different languages, under one God' read the comment on a photograph of five of the delegates in a WhatsApp conversation. This represents the nature of the delegation that formed this year: faithful to God, knowledgeable, caring for each other, and passionate about the future for women and girls who live in rural areas.

As delegates, we are 18 intergenerational women from 17 countries. We are lay women, youth workers, clergy, students, entrepreneurs, ministry developers, lawyers, government officials, and health care providers. We are strong Christian women, activists and feminists who have come together, in faith, to learn how we might best respond to the challenges of rural women and girls. As a delegation, we are here as witnesses to God as the body of Christ. We do this collectively and individually, seeking to serve the common good as we do so.

Working within the realities of patriarchal societies, the UN considers religious organisations to be crucial partners in championing human rights through the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality. Women and girls are already being left behind in the implementation of the SDGs, hence the creation of the phrase 'leave no one behind'. All people of faith should be concerned by the disturbing trend that the progress towards gender equality is slowing and in some cases reversing.

On the priority theme of Empowering Rural Women and Girls, several areas of concern have been raised by the delegates, which include:

- Climate change, agriculture, and food sovereignty – to acknowledge the disproportionate effect on rural women and girls of environmental degradation, the destruction of sustainable food systems and climate change
- Access to quality education – to support the full contribution to society through universal and affordable access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education
- Transportation and access to resources – to challenge laws and practices that prevent women from owning land, inheriting property, and having equal access to markets and resources, especially for unmarried or widowed women
- Access to medical care, sexual and reproductive health and rights – to enable all women and girls to have access to gender-specific healthcare and education, and to challenge existing harmful practices
- Women's empowerment in governance – to ensure gender parity in all levels of decision-making bodies through quotas, leadership training, and confidence building.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to come together as diverse but unified delegation from across the Communion. It will be our privilege through this experience to support and encourage the human flourishing of all God's people as we return to our Provinces, thereby living out the Five Marks of Mission.

Thanks to Rachel Chardon, Beth Adamson, Rachel Jimenez, and Ashley Olijnyk for their months of enthusiastic planning to ensure this event's success.

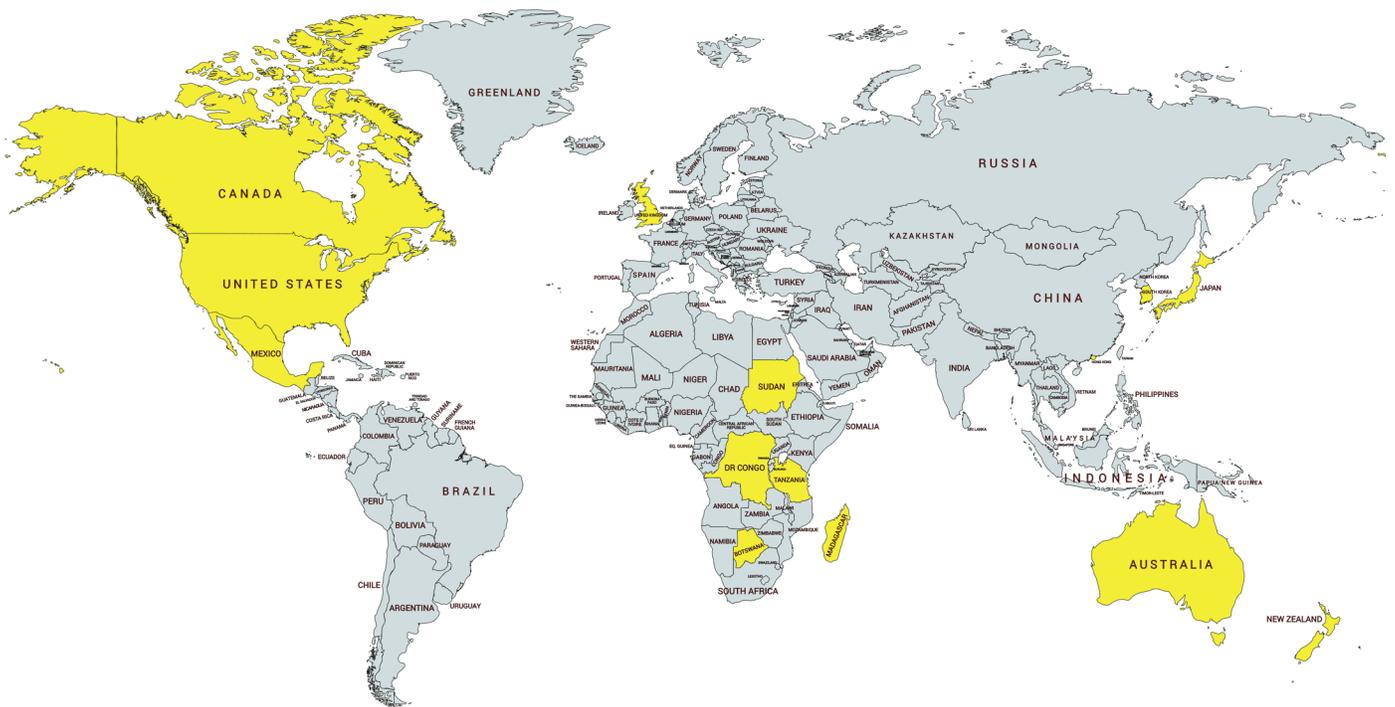
Thanks to the Anglican Consultative Council for their ongoing investment in supporting the present and future unity, healthy discourse, and sisterhood of the Communion through participation at UNCSW.



## **ANGLICAN PROVINCIAL DELEGATES TO THE UNCSW62**

The United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW62) will undertake a review and appraisal of the progress made in the participation and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Province</b>
Ms Ruth Brigden	Australia
Revd Laura Marie Piotrowicz	Canada
Mrs Thapelo Beleme	Central Africa (Botswana)
Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson	England
Mrs Vira Mamboyabo Marthe	Congo (DRC)
Revd Dr Deborah Jackson	The Episcopal Church
Ms Cheang Sao Lin	Hong Kong (Macao)
Ms Tam Yeuk Ming	Hong Kong
Ms Nolavy Remamy Osoro	Indian Ocean (Madagascar)
Ms Kaori Nakamura	Japan
Ms Tae Yasumura	Japan
Ms Heather Hye-Kyun Noh	Korea
Revd Maria Elena Cristerna	Mexico
Revd Ellen Berstein	Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia
Mrs Lottie White	Scotland
Mrs Sadiya Butros Tia Dent	Sudan
Revd Rose Mpango	Tanzania
Miss Laura Miriam Lloyd Williams	Wales





# **BIOGRAPHICALS AND COUNTRY REPORTS BY UNCSW62 DELEGATES**



## **MS RUTH BRIGDEN**



Ms Ruth Brigden of Australia holds a Bachelor of Theology and is a key member of the Ministry Development Team for the Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory. In this role she regularly visits remote Aboriginal communities to deliver mentoring, pastoral care and training to female Indigenous church leaders. She has worked as a missionary with the Church Missionary Society in the remote Indigenous community of Numbulwar, where she provided spiritual support to people encountering a wide range of social issues, including addiction, unemployment, family violence, self-harm and suicide.

Ruth has a Master's degree in Criminology, and worked on the 2016 Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, which was called by Australia's Prime Minister in response to shocking revelations of abuse in the juvenile justice system. As a policy officer for the Royal Commission, Ruth researched and wrote for the final report and recommendations submitted to the federal government. She has previously worked for the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, the largest criminal law practice in the Northern Territory and for the Privacy Commissioner in Sydney as a conciliator in an Alternative Dispute Resolution framework. Ruth serves at St Peter's Anglican Church in Darwin, where she leads services, a weekly Bible Study, and chairs the Indigenous ministry committee.

# AUSTRALIA

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

### Introduction

Australia comprises the mainland of the Australian continent, the island of Tasmania, and numerous smaller islands. It is the largest country in Oceania and the world's sixth-largest country by total area. Its neighbouring countries are Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and East Timor to the north; the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to the north-east; and New Zealand to the south-east. Australia's capital is Canberra, and its largest city is Sydney. Australia has a very low population density of two people per square kilometre.

Australia has a population of 24,830,000. The gender ratio of male to female of the total population is 98.5 males per 100 females.<sup>i</sup> Australia, like other developed countries, has sustained low fertility and increasing life expectancy, meaning its population is ageing. Australia has the world's 13th largest economy and 10th highest income per capita. In 2016, more than two-thirds of Australians lived in a capital city<sup>ii</sup> and approximately 6,460,000 people lived in regional areas.

### Key Concerns

According to the Office for Women, current Government programs are prioritizing efforts to end violence against women and girls, advance women's economic empowerment, and strengthen women's participation in leadership and decision-making.<sup>iii</sup> Currently the gender pay gap remains at 15.3%, meaning that women earn \$251.20 AUD less than men per week.<sup>iv</sup>

Other challenges facing Australian women include occupational segregation; and a lack of empowerment strategies for diverse peoples.<sup>v</sup> Sexual and physical violence against women and girls is an issue that has grown tremendously in people's consciousness in Australia over the past decade.

### Government Programs

The Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory was a federal government inquiry in 2016 and 2017 which examined the treatment of children in the statutory child protection system and the youth criminal justice system.<sup>vi</sup> Ninety-seven percent of children in the Northern Territory youth justice system are Aboriginal, and 89% of children who reside in out of home care (that is, children who have been removed from their families and placed in state care) are Aboriginal.<sup>vii</sup> Many of these children are from remote areas of the Northern Territory where strong connections to land, language, and traditional law are found. The Commission heard evidence that the removal of children from their homelands to residential facilities or detention centres in the Northern Territory's capital city of Darwin had devastating consequences on the health and social outcomes of these young people.

### Anglican Provincial Response

In September 2017, the synod of the Anglican Church of Australia formally condemned domestic violence and offered "a heartfelt apology"<sup>viii</sup> for failures in teaching, in the pastoral care of victims and in holding perpetrators to account. The apology stated that abuse of power was at the heart of many relationship problems in the church and community.<sup>ix</sup>

The Anglican Church is also responding to recommendations made by the five-year-long Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.<sup>x</sup> This enquiry found that the Anglican Church had failed victims of child sexual abuse perpetrated by congregation members, clergy and lay ministers.

<sup>i</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. 3235.0 - Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 2016. Available at <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3235.0>>.

<sup>ii</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016 Census: National Capital Cities, Media Release 27 June 2017. Available at <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/A42AA95414E2A89FCA2581480009B6F2?OpenDocument>>.

<sup>iii</sup> Commonwealth of Australia 2017. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office for Women. Report of the Australian Government Delegation to the 61st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, p. 5. Available at <<https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/CSW61-Report-2017.pdf>>.

<sup>iv</sup> August 2017, Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics. Available at <<https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-pay-gap-statistics.pdf>>.

<sup>v</sup> Commonwealth of Australia 2017. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office for Women. Report of the Australian Government Delegation to the 61st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, p. 25. Available at <<https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/CSW61-Report-2017.pdf>>.

<sup>vi</sup> Commonwealth of Australia 2017. Report of the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory. Available at <[https://childdetentionnt.royalcommission.gov.au/Pages/Report.aspx#\\_Read](https://childdetentionnt.royalcommission.gov.au/Pages/Report.aspx#_Read)>.

<sup>vii</sup> Office of the Children's Commissioner Northern Territory Government 2016. The Children's Commissioner Northern Territory Annual Report 2015-16, p. 37. Available at <[https://occ.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/440824/occnt-annual-report-2015-16-web.pdf](https://occ.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/440824/occnt-annual-report-2015-16-web.pdf)>.

<sup>viii</sup> Anglican Church of Australia General Synod, Media Release 7 September 2017 Anglicans to study family violence inside the church. Available at <[https://www.anglican.org.au/data/GS17\\_News\\_Updates/GS17\\_Media\\_Release\\_4\\_-\\_family\\_violence.pdf](https://www.anglican.org.au/data/GS17_News_Updates/GS17_Media_Release_4_-_family_violence.pdf)>.

<sup>ix</sup> ABC News Anglican Church offers formal apology to victims of domestic violence. Available at <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-07/anglican-church-issues-formal-apology-domestic-violence/8882652>>.

<sup>x</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, 2017. Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Available at <<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/final-report>>.



## REVD LAURA MARIE PIOTROWICZ



Revd Laura Marie Piotrowicz of Canada is an Anglican priest and rector of a parish in Ontario, Canada, near Niagara Falls. She has a BA in politics, an MDiv (thesis in youth ministry, and specialization in ecological theology), a ThM in systematic theology, and is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry studying the correlation of prayer and burnout. Laura has served on the Board of Directors of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, on the National Executive of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, on several diocesan and provincial committees, and writes a weekly blog for the Anglican Church of Canada. Professionally, she has worked in volunteer management, youth ministry, as a university lecturer, and as a military chaplain. In her free time, Laura Marie loves to travel, explore the outdoors (especially canoeing), reading, museums, spending time with family and friends, and playing with her dogs.

# CANADA

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

### **Introduction**

With an area of 9.985 million km<sup>2</sup>, Canada borders the USA, Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans. Its approximate population is 36 million people, with 82% living within 100 miles of the southern border, mostly in large urban centers. 18% of Canadian women live in rural and remote communities, and 45% of the rural and remote labor force is women (48% in urban settings). The greatest gender gap is seen in rural areas, where the participation rate of women is 11.6% lower than the rate for men.

The population disaggregates overall to 49% male, 51% female, and by age demographic to: 0-14 years 17% (51% M, 49% F); 15-65 years 68% (49.5% M, 50.5% F); 65+ years 15% (44% M, 56% F). The average life expectancy is 81.5 years (79 M, 84 F), and the median age is 40.5 (40 M, 41.5 F). Infant mortality is 4.6 deaths per 1000 live births, and maternal mortality is 12 deaths per 100,000 live births. Main ethnic origins are 77% European, 14% Asian, and 4.3% indigenous. The official languages are English and French, spoken by 98% of the population; less than 1% of the population speaks indigenous languages.

### **Key Concerns**

Gender equality and indigenous relations are identified as key concerns by the Prime Minister. While some progress has been noted (i.e. an Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women), additional work is needed, especially in areas of disproportionate gender-based violence, incarceration, (especially amongst indigenous communities and people of color), indigenous youth suicide, and human trafficking.

Canada's tumultuous history with indigenous populations included forced integrations and relocations. Current efforts demonstrate a desire to journey towards reconciliation (such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC]). Canadian indigenous women remain the lowest socio-economic cohort.

### **Government Response**

Status of Women Canada supports programs in areas of empowering women for stronger communities, political and community action. Women constitute 50% of federal government employees. Rural and remote women have lower labor force participation, employment rates, are over-represented in precarious employment and low-income situations, have higher incidents of gender-based violence, and have lower levels of education.

As of 2010 Canada was positively contributing to Millennium Development Goals 1, 3, 4, 6; and was falling short on goals 2, 5, 7, and 8. Areas for improvement include environment and foreign aid.

### **Anglican Provincial Response**

Two-thirds of Canadians identify as Christian (Anglicans make up only 5% of the population; RC 39%, United Church 6%, 24% self-identify as having no religion.) Many Anglican parishes are in rural and remote areas. The Anglican Church of Canada empowers locally trained clergy, holds rural ministry symposia, and supports the Centre for Rural Ministry and Community Development.

Additionally, the church maintains focus on indigenous ministries, and both the Primate and the General Synod uphold calls for gender equality and justice (ACC resolutions 16.02 & 16.03), and on matters of human trafficking (ACC resolution 15.10).



## **MRS THAPELO BELEME**



Mrs Thapelo Patricia Beleme of Botswana is an active member of the Mothers' Union and currently leads as a patron of all women in the Diocese of Botswana. She's also a former Mothers' Union Vice President in the Diocese of Matlosane where her husband served as a priest. Thapelo worked as a procurement officer in the Ministry of Health in the Government of Botswana, and she is also wife to the current Bishop of Botswana.

She has attended workshops where she has singled out the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) work on women's entrepreneurship in Kenya, 2015. Currently, Thapelo works with women groups in projects for orphans and vulnerable children, caring for the needy and juveniles within the Diocese of Botswana.

# CENTRAL AFRICA BOTSWANA

## THE DIOCESE OF BOTSWANA

### **Introduction**

Botswana is a landlocked country that shares borders with South Africa in the south and southeast, Namibia in the west and north, Zambia in the north and Zimbabwe in the north east. 70% of Botswana's land surface is covered by the Kalahari Desert. Botswana has a population of 2,000,000, of which 52% are women and 48% men. The population is concentrated in the eastern part of the country where the rainfall is better than in the other parts of the country.

### **Key Concerns**

Challenges: access to information, distance from information centers, transport (the road network is not good to some rural areas), language, illiteracy, multiple roles of women and girls, feminization of poverty, patriarchy, dependence on men, religion, power (electricity and solar not available in some rural areas), cultural issues that sometimes limit rural women and girls from doing what would improve their livelihoods, teenage pregnancy, violence, Botswana's ranking as a middle income country which resulted in loss of funding for women's projects that were funded by International NGOs, the masculinity crisis, patriarchy, threats posed by the HIV and AIDS pandemic and property grabbing.

Opportunities: centers have been built in rural areas where rural women and girls can get information and where they can learn as well as acquire skills, improvement in road networks, the introduction of the Poverty Eradication/Alleviation Programme which targets 80-100% women and girls, especially those who live in rural areas, funding for women projects by the Gender Affairs Department, literacy classes conducted in rural areas, violence perpetrators punished by law, communication networks improved in rural areas, the introduction of the Readmission Policy for girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy, the introduction of gender mainstreaming in government ministries, parastatal organizations, the private sector and NGOs, some of which work closely with women and girls who live in rural areas, a high percentage of violence cases reported to law enforcement officers and, once cases of violence have been reported, they cannot be withdrawn.

### **Government Programs**

Botswana has acceded to the following pieces of legislation and international agreements: – the Policy of Women in Development which was later elevated to the Gender and Development Policy, the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), the SADC (Southern African Development Community) Declaration, the SADC Gender Protocol, the African Union Gender Policy, adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Commonwealth Plan of Action 2015, the Solemn Declaration on Gender and Development, and the African Union Agenda 2016. Botswana continuously reviews legislation and administration reforms.

### **Anglican Provincial Response**

The Anglican Church has organized workshops on some of the Gender and Development topics/issues, in conjunction with the Gender Machinery and the Botswana Christian Council, in the dissemination of information on some topics on gender and development such as the Abolition of Marital Power Act of 2004 and the Domestic Violence Act of 2008 and has conducted workshops on the 16 Days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children. The Diocese has appointed a Gender Focal Point for the Diocese of Botswana who will be responsible for disseminating information on gender and development, gender training, and collaboration with other partners on gender and development, etc.



## **CANON DR JILL HOPKINSON**



Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson of the Church of England has been the National Rural Officer since 2004, a post that involves both resourcing and supporting mission and public policy work. She is a staff member of the Mission and Public Affairs Division of the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England. She offers consultancy to Anglican dioceses, supports and resources rural churches, through published and online resources, and trains rural clergy and lay people for mission and ministry in rural communities.

An agricultural scientist by original training, she advises on public policy and legislation in the areas of agriculture, food, rural community development, environment, housing, planning and local government. Jill is based at Germinate: Arthur Rank Centre (the ecumenical churches rural resources centre) at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, whose new Germinate programme of training and resourcing aims to work with rural multi-church groups to enable rural churches to flourish.

She is the author of numerous research reports and publications on the rural church and has edited three collections of essays on rural society, church mission and growth. Her research interests include the contribution of the common good to mission in rural communities, rural social capital and the place of women in contemporary rural society.

Jill is an Honorary Lay Canon of Worcester Cathedral. She is an active member of a small rural church in her home village, co-leading Messy Church and contributing regularly to worship and children's activities.

# ENGLAND

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

### Introduction

England, the largest part of the United Kingdom, (130,200km<sup>2</sup>), has very diverse rural areas from uplands, ex-industrial communities, to lowlands with commuter villages. The population of rural England is 9.4 million (17.0% of England's population), of which 0.5 million live in sparsely populated (remote) rural areas. The rural population is increasing annually as rural England is an attractive place to live. As a result, the cost of housing is high and often out of reach for many households. The population of rural England is older, with 30% of the population aged over 60 compared to 20% in urban areas. There are similar proportions of children younger than 15 years old in rural as in urban areas but far fewer young people aged 15-29 in rural areas (14% vs. 20% respectively). The sex ratio for the UK is 0.99 male to female, with no indications that this is different in rural parts of England.

### Key Concerns

The challenges for women in rural areas are similar to those in urban areas, but with the added complexity of often limited provision of services, increased distance and travel times, isolation and loneliness. This particularly affects access to employment, childcare, education and health care for women and their children. Many rural residents, including women, commute to higher paid jobs in nearby urban areas, because many jobs in rural areas are minimum wage, seasonal or temporary. Opportunities for local employment for women are often limited, but entrepreneurship is much higher in rural communities with women responsible for a growing number of small businesses generating income for the household and employment for others. The Gender Pay Gap remains with men paid on average £1.32 more per hour than women in 2017, a pay gap of 9.1%. Rural women are often found in leadership roles in organisations for children, older people, schools or the church. Women are less likely to have roles that include community governance or financial responsibilities, leadership of rural or agriculture representative groups, with the exception of the Women's Institute.

Violence against women and girls remains a hidden problem and is not widely recognised or openly discussed in rural communities. Rural and urban women are just as likely to experience violence and abuse, but 26% of women using specialist domestic violence services are from rural areas. Pernicious sexism exists in all parts of public and private life, often as a result of a remaining 'boys' club' attitude. The #MeToo campaign has done a lot to raise awareness for every day sexism and the one in five women who have experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16, but changing social norms is a long term commitment. Substantial spending cuts and changes in funding for housing since 2008 have reduced the number of refuge places and other forms of support available from both the voluntary and statutory sectors, despite the Government's Strategy for Ending Violence against Women and Girls 2016 – 2020, which pledged to increase residential places and secure further funding.

### Government Programs

Tuesday 6 February 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act, which gave the right to vote to all married or property owning women over the age of 30 (the franchise was not extended to all women until 1928). Events to mark this include celebrating the work of suffragists as well as suffragettes, noting that there are currently over 200 female Members of Parliament (still only one third of the total) and recognising that the campaign for women's equality still has much more to do. In 2015 the Women's Equality Party was founded with the objectives of obtaining equal representation, pay and opportunity at work, parenting and care giving, education, treatment in the media, and putting an end to violence against women. They are a small scale but activist presence, with high quality regionally based networks, although the party is yet to have a large impact on the national political agenda or public discourse.

Women in public life are subjected to disproportionate abuse and bullying particularly via social media, which far exceeds that experienced by men. Threats made against female MPs and campaigners include murder, rape and kidnap as well as libellous statements, lies and objectifying comments. Women from BAME communities suffer even more, as do members of the LGBT+ community. This harassment is a contravention of a woman's human rights to safety, freedom of thought and expression, and reduces the numbers willing to participate in any form of public debate. This is a major threat to democracy and although the problem has been recognised by the Prime Minister and a review of relevant legislation was announced, UK law does not currently include gender in its definition of hate crime. This issue needs to be addressed urgently.

### Anglican Provincial Response

The Church of England has developed the Clewer Initiative on Modern Slavery to help churches work with others to develop strategies for detecting modern slavery in their communities and help provide victim support and care. There are estimated to be 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK. Women are particularly at risk from sexual exploitation which makes up the largest reason for human trafficking into the UK. However, victims are also present in rural areas in a wide range of labour roles including social care, food production and cleaning.

### Conclusion

Women in rural England make important contributions to the rural economy through external employment and entrepreneurial activity. Women contribute significantly to the quality of community life for all rural residents, including children and older people, but are often absent from direct civil governance roles. However, provision of public services in rural areas remains problematic, particularly for women without access to transportation, or who are isolated through poverty, domestic violence or lack of support networks.



## **MRS VIRA MAMBOYABO MARTHE**



Vira Mamboyabo Marthe of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is Congolese by nationality, she is saved, she is a nurse by profession, she is married, and she is a Mothers' Union member, also serving as Mothers' Union Provincial Development Coordinator. She worked with an HIV and SGBV program in the provincial health department. Vira was in charge of mitigating the impact of stigma around people who live with HIV/AIDS and was a trained peer group counselor. She trains people in many practical skills, such as hand crafts, at the church and decorates various functions. She is a gender champion/facilitator of community dialogue held among couples in hope of reducing violence between partners and encouraging family planning. Vira is looking forward to being an ambassador of peace and reconciliation of Christ's ministry. She is fighting poverty amongst women by saving money through church groups and is speaking out against social norms, which is the main cause of violence in the society.

# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CONGO

### **Introduction**

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the fourth most-populated nation in Africa with 57% of its population living in rural areas. Rural women and girls face significant inequalities in society. Many social norms prevent women and girls from enjoying equality, and women are regarded as less than men and do not have the same opportunities in society.

The inequality comes from our own views in humanity when women and girls are undervalued by men and boys. In rural areas, men and boys do not help in the kitchen, do not wash clothes or dishes, and do not fetch water because they still follow social norms that project negative masculinity.

### **Key Concerns**

Gender inequality in society impacts illiteracy; therefore, women do not hold office positions. Illiteracy is the main challenge for rural women and girls, and lack of education is a big problem in the DRC. There is favoritism for boys going to school and achieving their dreams. Girls typically withdraw earlier from school due to earlier marriages, pregnancy, culture, social norms, and income, among other reasons. This makes women feel powerless and have a lower status, leaving them unable to raise their voices in society. Rural women and girls are stigmatized in society due to their status, especially if they are uneducated. On the other hand, in big cities, women and girls occupy a big place in society, in enterprise, and in government, and they are taking on decisions with men and boys.

There is an internal displacement situation in the provinces, with approximately 50,000 displaced people in Kananga. Women and girls suffer the consequences of this tragedy. The Kamuena Nsapu rebellion is in two Kasai provinces and the eastern part of Congo and Beni territory, Kasongo, Kamango, Masisi, Kainama, Mai Mai, Mazembe, Allied Democratic Forces, and Nalu. Due to their gender, women are facing bad conditions of inequality, domination, and are faced with all kinds of violence, rape, and kidnapping. In Kasai, there have been 800 cases of violence, with 98% of victims being females and 2% being males. 41% are young girls, 28% aged between 25-35 years, and the rest are 35 years and older.

Women and girls are not only vulnerable because of their gender identity but also because of the high level of poverty, corruption, poor governance in the country, lack of information sharing, and the lack of media involvement as an instrument of advocacy.

Now is time to speak out on behalf of marginalized women and girls, by listening, observing, and acting as we can. Being a woman or girl, especially in rural areas, does not mean staying under the command of men or boys. They will have the same chances and opportunities, and if they are empowered they will achieve gender equality in society.

### **Anglican Provincial Response**

In the Anglican Church of the Congo, Mothers' Union is involved in advocacy, speaking out through the new approach of MULO (Mothers Union, Listening, Observing and Acting). This is a way to reach out and connected to marginalized people (girls, women, prisoners, orphans, widows) and the aim of this is to achieve our objectives through our actions.

Last year, during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, Mothers' Union focused on talking about the stigma surrounding gender inequality and how that silence can be broken. We ran group sessions to craft solutions on how to empower women and girls to achieve gender equality. Throughout these two weeks, we led community dialogues between new couples, new parents, and fiancés to discuss how men can have a positive impact, and change bad social norms to promote the equity between men and women, boys and girls.

Churches in the DRC are playing a main role in claiming the right of humanity, and are speaking out by denouncing inequalities in society through organizing conferences, seminars, debates, mobilizing churches, marches, and protests against gender inequality.

### **Key Challenges**

- Leadership
- Lack of education, unawareness
- Faith, myths, culture, social norms in society
- Gender abuse, gender violence
- Poverty, corruption, fear of denunciation

**Conclusion**

The government must promote rural women and girls in remote areas and involve them in decision-making processes in society. Our recommendations for the government to improve the status of women include: increasing the chances and opportunities of rural women and girls as local community leaders, raising the awareness, and empowering them to pursue good leadership. The government should consider the decisions of women and girls in meetings and involve them in what the community is undergoing. Finally, the government should provide rural women and girls with access to media, information, and communication technologies, as well as use them as an instrument of advocacy in the society.

Additionally, Mothers' Union seeks to end all forms of inequality among women and girls, and the Church should encourage communities to talk about raising awareness of gender equality among rural women and girls in order to break the silence and tackle the root causes.



## REVD DR DEBORAH JACKSON



Revd Dr Deborah Jackson of the United States is an Episcopal priest, who currently works at the School of Theology at the University of the South (Sewanee, TN) as the Dean for community life, admissions and recruitment. Prior to attending seminary, Deborah was an active lay leader in the Episcopal Church, and she also had a career in the insurance industry. She was ordained in 2007 and has served as a priest in churches in Florida, before becoming a seminary administrator. Deborah has a Bachelor's Degree in Behavioral Science, two Master's Degrees (a Master's in Business Administration, and a Master's in Divinity). She earned her Doctor of Ministry degree in Transformative Leadership. In addition to her current work at the seminary at the University of the South, Deborah serves as the National Chaplain for the junior Daughters of the King. She attended UNCSW60, and is passionate about the empowerment of women and girls.

# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## Introduction

The Episcopal Church (TEC) is the United States-based member church of the worldwide Anglican Communion. It is a Christian church divided into nine provinces and has dioceses in the United States, Taiwan, Micronesia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and the Navajoland Area Mission. <sup>1</sup>

In 2015, the Episcopal Church had 1,917,182 active baptized members, of whom 1,779,335 were members located in the United States. Pew Research estimated that 1.2 percent of the adult population in the United States in 2015, self-identified as Episcopalians/Anglicans. <sup>2</sup>

The United States of America (USA) is comprised of 50 states, and more than 325 million people. The capital is Washington, D.C. and the largest city in terms of population is New York City. European colonization began in the 16th century. The United States emerged from thirteen British colonies that established along the East Coast, and subsequently throughout the 19th century, the nation continued to expand and admit new states, displacing Native American tribes along the way. During the second half of the 19th century, a Civil War led to the abolition of slavery. The United States is a highly developed country, ranking among the top countries in the world by many measures. <sup>3</sup>

## Key Concerns

As of 2016, the US population was 51% female and 49% male <sup>4</sup>. However, women disproportionately have greater challenges in society than men. Five critical concerns women in America face are as follows:

1. Women are at higher risk of poverty
2. Women in need of greater education often can't afford it
3. Women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence
4. Women are underrepresented in politics
5. Women rape victims are still seeking justice <sup>5</sup>

Rural women in the United States have many of the same challenges as rural women anywhere: poverty, lack of good education, young marriage ages, lack of health care options, and prevalence of domestic violence. <sup>6</sup>

## Government Programs

The USA has a number of programs to assist the poor, both male and female. For example: housing assistance, food assistance, unemployment benefits for those who have lost a job and/or unable to work due to disability, programs and benefits for active military personnel, <sup>7</sup> and others that address a variety of humanitarian concerns.

While significant advancements have been made towards greater equality between men and women in the USA, inequality continues to persist in many forms. The following government policies have been implemented over the years primarily to help women:

- President's Commission on the Status of Women (1961) – to help with workplace discrimination
- Equal Pay Act (1963) – made it illegal for a woman to be paid less than a man with the same job
- Civil Rights Act (1964) – made discriminatory hiring on the basis of gender illegal
- Roe v. Wade (1973) – Supreme Court ruling establishing women's right to safe & legal abortions
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1973) – allowed women to apply for jobs previously restricted for male candidates only
- Title IX of Education Amendments (1972) – no one can be excluded based on gender from any program receiving federal assistance
- Family Medical Leave Act (1993) – guarantees new parents 12 weeks of leave after the birth of a child
- Violence Against Women Act (1994) – provided legal protection for victims of rape, and domestic violence

## **Anglican Provincial Response**

The Most Revd Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, strongly supports women and girls, and calls upon the church he leads to acknowledge and act on our belief as Christians, that all human beings are created equal in God's image. The Episcopal Church also supports rural women and girls through resolutions of General Convention, its governing body. The Church's mission and the work of rural congregations and networks, including many indigenous communities, provide rural women and girls with spiritual care, socio-economic development, ministries to farmers, migrant workers and women, domestic poverty and asset-based community development programs, and international development programs through Episcopal Relief & Development.

In the Episcopal Church, women are empowered by working collaboratively with women's organizations, program and ministry groups within and outside the Church, as well as with global and local networks working for gender justice, and individual women compelled to risk transformation – of the world, the church, and their own lives in Christ.

1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal\\_Church\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal_Church_(United_States))

2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal\\_Church\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal_Church_(United_States))

3 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States)

4 <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-gender/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

5 <http://yourdream.liveyourdream.org/2016/12/5-problems-women-still-face-2017/>

6 <https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/06/the-particular-struggles-of-rural-women/276803/>

7 <https://www.usa.gov/topics>



## **MS CHEANG SAO LIN**



Ms Sao Lin Cheang of Macao is a member of the Sheng Kung Hui Saint Paul Church (Macao Anglican Church), located in Macao, China. She has been a follower of the Lord and part of the church community for almost 18 years. Currently, she serves as the Treasurer and Chairlady of the Women's League of Macao Missionary Area, managing the women and youth ministry. Aside from her service to the church community, Sao Lin Cheang works for the Macao government in the department of Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau. She has been working there for 17 years. She is responsible of managing a team of people in charge of improving and maintaining the city's urban planning, food safety, environment and public relations.



## **MS TAM YEUK MING**



Ms Tam Yeuk Ming of Hong Kong is a registered nurse working in Hong Kong Baptist Hospital. She has worked as a renal nurse for more than twenty years. Tam is the Council Member of Hong Kong Association of Renal Nurses. She is also a Christian who has been with the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Calvary Church (Hong Kong Anglican Church) for more than thirty years. Tam is the Chairlady of the Women's League of Diocese of Eastern Kowloon Hong Kong Sheung Kung Hui.

# HONG KONG/MACAO

## HONG KONG SHENG KUNG HUI

### Introduction

The Macao Special Administrative Region is an inseparable part of the People's Republic of China. The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China authorizes the Macao Special Administrative Region to exercise a high degree of autonomy and enjoy administrative and legislative power, independent judicial power, and final adjudication right in accordance with the provisions of this law.

Macao SAR has a total area of 30.5 km<sup>2</sup> and its total population was about 644,900 in 2016, among which 339,400 were female and 305,500 were male.

### Key Concerns

- In Macao the term of “sexual harassment” is not specifically defined, so such incidents were difficult to identify and handle. More advocacy work has to be done to facilitate victims seeking help.
- In the younger generation, unwed pregnancy among girls is found but relevant service is not sufficient. Specific service programs have to provide for girls and their parents, which may lead to the discussion of abortion. The cultural and religious background of Macao makes this kind of service sensitive.
- About one fourth of households in Macao have members working in the gambling industry.

### Government Programs

#### *Establishment of Women and Children's Commission*

The Macao SAR Government established the “Women's Affairs Advisory Committee” in 2005. After many years of practical experience, we revised the administrative regulations of the Commission in 2012 to adjust its composition and operation and rename it as “Women's Commission”.

#### *Macao Special Administrative Region to Protect Family Legislation Policy*

The Special Protection of Minors: Based on Macao criminal law, those who are older than 14 but younger than 18 years old are defined as minors and those under 14 years old are defined as children. Special protections are offered against sexual crimes.

Macao has set a new set of laws to further fight against human trafficking in 2008.

In Macao, the Law for Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence (Lei de prevenção e combate à violência doméstica) was effective on 5 October 2016. The Macao government legislated to combat domestic violence so as to ensure that women are treated properly in the family.

### Anglican Provincial Response

The Sheng Kung Hui Social Service Coordination Office has launched the following service in Macao in the past few years:

- A 24-hour hotline for “Combating Sexual Assault” was launched in 2016 as were a series of community education programs meant to encourage the victims to seek help.
- For sex education services available to girls, our youth service social workers work on cases, with small groups, and with teachers to educate the community. These services also cover the influence of the Internet and social media.
- Regarding domestic violence cases, we worked closely with the government department, schools, and other NGOs to serve the victims. We also provide service for abusers and affected males.

*Government of Macao Special Administrative Region YearBook of Statistics 2016 P.30*

*Government of Macao Special Administrative Region YearBook of Statistics 2016 P.45*

*Government of Macao Special Administrative Region YearBook of Statistics 2016 P.72*

*Instituto De Accao Social “Women's Commission”.*

*Instituto De Accao Social“ Macao Special Administrative Region to Protect Family Legislation Policy”*



## **MRS NOLAVY REMAMY OSORO**



Mrs. Remamy Arisoa Nolavy of Seychelles is a wife, a mother of two, and a children's evangelist. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Divinity from St.Paul's University Limuru-Kenya. She currently serves as the children coordinator in the Diocese of Toliara in the Anglican Church of the Indian Ocean. She is among the very first women to obtain a degree in Theology in Madagascar; she is also the women's ministry coordinator in the parish and is involved in counseling, advising, and empowerment of women.

# INDIAN OCEAN (MADAGASCAR)

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

### Introduction

Madagascar is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, east of Mozambique with a surface area of 587,040 km<sup>2</sup>. The current population is around 26 million. The rural population of Madagascar is 64.26%. In general, 50.1% of the total population is female while men make up 49.9%.

### Key Concerns

There is no vision for young girls or women who live in society to have an impact in society. Most of the young girls in the rural areas only hope to get married for the man to take care of them. Girls are prepared to be wife material, so parents would rather not waste time and resources educating girls as men will take care of them when they get married. Parents will want them to marry off at a tender age because of the cost of providing for her. Most girls do not have equal educational opportunities. Most pregnant girls will be discontinued from their studies, but the boys responsible will continue their studies without interruption. Girls spend 4-5 days each month missing class due to periods (mostly because most cannot afford sanitary pads) which translates to a total of 60 days per year out of class, while the boys are mostly present, yet they have to sit for the same exams.

Due to high level of poverty, some parents send their daughters to engage in prostitution in order to help fend for daily food and rent their own property. The cattle market is a popular hangout. Some girls and women uphold so tightly to the culture that they do not realize that it is preventing them to develop. Most of these women have their decisions made by men or parents. One young lady (age 15) was sold into marriage to a man who was 40 years old. In the public arena, it is only the men who can speak on behalf of the women. If a woman has a good idea she will have to share it with her husband who will then say it on her behalf. Church tradition has sidelined women in the ordained ministry. This has been so difficult for women whose call is clearly to serve as deacons and priests. Those who serve in the ordained ministry find it difficult to work with some male priests. During church committee elections, most people prefer men to be leaders and will only elect a woman if there are no other options.

### Government Programs

On the 8th of March every year there is a special event that brings women together to discuss the issues affecting them and offer opportunities like having regular contributions that will help women in business. In the Madagascar Constitution, Article 6 calls for equal participation of women and men in public, economic, and social life. Centers have been set up throughout the country where women can run to in case they are mistreated by men and they will be protected. Most likely, the men will be punished if found guilty. Government has signed and ratified many international and regional conventions and protocols regarding women's right and gender equity, namely the convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the Beijing Declaration, and the Southern African Development Community protocol on gender and development. UNESCO is involved in educating the population on women rights through partnering with teachers to train women on their rights and to sensitize women on gender issues, prevention of violence, and their role on politics.

### Anglican Provincial Response

The Anglican Church is involved in setting up projects that create jobs for women to empower them economically. They are taught about the production and business skills on coffee and honey project. There is also a handicraft project, created by women, where the crafts are made from waste paper, collected and bought by the Women's center. This project creates income for the women to avoid prostitution and early marriages. The women are taught and trained to be modest, hardworking, and the project stresses the importance of educating the girls. The church is slowly but surely opening up more opportunities for qualified women to take on leadership tasks, positions in the church, and to sit in on decision-making boards. On the flip side, men are taught the importance of giving women a leveled playing field in all spheres of life. The Mother's Union has also been actively campaigning against gender-based violence, because we have 24% of women living in violence.

<https://tradingeconomics.com>  
[www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2016/03/15/gender-equity-madagascar](http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2016/03/15/gender-equity-madagascar)  
<https://en.unesco.org/node/265103>  
[www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2016/03/15/gender-equity-madagascar](http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2016/03/15/gender-equity-madagascar)



## MS KAORI NAKAMURA



Ms Kaori Nakamura of Japan: When Ms Kaori Nakamura was a junior in high school, her family moved to Kobe and experienced the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995. She married a Korean partner and spent 8 years in Korea. Due to her delicate health, she was interested in Korean Oriental Medicine, through which she learned that one's body is made with what one eats.

Therefore, she moved to the countryside in Korea and engaged in farming. She tried some styles of natural farming, such as the Fukuoka method, Kimura's Natural Art Agriculture (both are Japanese), and Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic agriculture, but she couldn't get products easily, so she eagerly looked for edible wild plants. After that, she and her husband spent two years in Japan. Now they live separately in Japan and Korea, so as to realize what each of them wants to do.

In 2016, strong earthquakes struck Kumamoto Prefecture and Kaori volunteered with Kyushu diocese's programs to assist victims for a year, wishing to return the favors she received at the Hanshin-Awaji earthquake. She then moved to Kumamoto, and her current job is demolishing damaged houses in disaster areas. She belongs to St. Michael's Church, Kobe.



## MS TAE YASUMURA



Ms Tae Yasumura of Japan is a member of Nogata Christ Church, the Kyushu Diocese of the Anglican-Episcopal Church in Japan. As for works with the diocese, she was a member of several committees such as standing committee, harassment prevention, 'Action for Our Church Dreams in 5 years', which is a planning group of the cathedral reconstruction, and now is a member of general affairs. She also participates in supporting actions by the diocese for Kumamoto earthquake victims, which occurred in 2016.

Tae was brought up in an Anglican pastor's family, graduated from Kyoto University, was faculty of Agriculture in 1981, worked in Malawi as a Science & Math teacher at a secondary school sent by a Japanese governmental volunteer program (1982-84). She then joined an NGO, Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), worked with a relief project for drought affected people in Ethiopia, and worked with community rehabilitation programs in these areas (1985-88). She moved to Kyushu when she got married, and started a volunteer group, JVC Kyushu Network in 1991, which supports JVC's programs and local NGOs. Now the group supports JVC Cambodia's community's sustainable development program, including empowerments of rural women.

Tae is also an occupational therapist who works with a home nursing station for elderly people and patients. She has worked there for 15 years. She is a mother of four children, two of which are now working in Africa as community development volunteers.

# JAPAN

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF JAPAN

### Introduction

Japan is an island nation located in northeastern Asia, with a land area of 378,000 km<sup>2</sup>, 70% of which is mountainous. Most of it is in the humid, temperate climate. As of 2015, its population was 127million with a female-to-male ratio of 51%: 49%. 12.6% were under age 15 (lowest in the world) with girl-to-boy ratio of 49%: 51%. 26.6% were over age 65 (highest in the world). 32% lived in rural areas and 68% in urban areas. 3.8% of people over 15 years old were involved in primary industry, which produced 1.2% of GDP and supplied 38% of Japanese food demand on calorie base.

### Key Concerns

In Japan, farms have been generally small and run by families whose male members have other jobs on the side. Rural women have therefore played an important role in agriculture, helping farms while managing their homes. But they have been considered only as mere wives of famers and have not had initiatives. As industrialization progressed, mechanization lightened farm works, but the primary industry and rural population saw a steep decline. In the 1990's, women started to be considered as 'producers' and 'community members', and over the past 20 years, the role of rural women has also been changing, especially in economic aspects. However, more participation of women in policy-making is still necessary.

- **Business:** Rural women are now active in direct sales of their produce, in making products with local produce, in operating farmers' restaurants, and in green tourism. The spread of the Internet has also made it easier for them to start businesses. There were about 10,000 rural women's business entities in 2015, half of which were small in sales (less than three million Yen a year). They have become more self-reliant, but busier. Not many join the farmers' pension, nor own farm lands, which are usually held by men.
- **Decision-making:** Women's participation in policy-making has been increasing, though it is still not high. In 2015, women headed only six towns and villages out of about 1000, and female members accounted for less than 10% in rural town councils, agricultural committees, and agricultural cooperative boards. The government has encouraged change in women's roles and perception through 'family management agreements' (re. wage, holiday, farming policy etc.). These attempts tend to be top-down. Bottom-up actions should take place simultaneously.
- **Gender roles:** Gradually changing, traditional gender norms remain in rural society. For instance, in many festivals only men participate and women just prepare food. Only male householders are allowed to attend community assemblies.
- **Networking:** NGO 'Rural Heroines' was started by female farmers in 1994. Empowered by peers, some became local assembly members, some held 'the 100 stockholder movement' seeking to build alternative relations between producers and big food corporations. Consumers' cooperatives, seeking safe foods and sustainable environments, have also promoted rural-urban relationships.
- **Other recent trends:** Agricultural corporations are growing by obtaining abandoned farms (3% growth in 2017), providing opportunities for young women. An official collaboration between female farmers and companies (the Women Farmers' Project) has been started. As a result, tractors with sunshades, outdoor toilets for women and other initiatives were introduced.
- **Globalization:** While globalization in agriculture (e.g. the Trans-Pacific Partnership) may give opportunities for Japanese agribusiness to expand abroad, small farmers are afraid of facing severe competition with imported products. Marriage immigrant from other parts of Asia to Japanese rural areas are another agenda to be considered. These women tend to be isolated in unfamiliar settings.
- **Climate change and disaster:** Frequent disasters in Japan, like the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Plant Calamity (2011), the Kumamoto Earthquakes (2016), and the Northern Kyushu Heavy Rain Disaster (2017), have seriously affected rural women, and recovery is still underway. The nuclear plant disaster will have a devastating impact on local communities and their primary industry for generations. Due to the shortage of governmental assistance, volunteers and NGOs have played important roles.
- **Fishery and forestry:** The situation of women in fishery and forestry is more severe due to strict gender roles in productive activities and gender norms in these industries.

## **Government Programs**

The Japanese government promoted improvement of living and gender equality for rural women, but has shifted their focus on economical participation by rural women. They designated March 10th as 'Rural Women's Day' in 1987, and have promoted 'the family management agreement' since the 1990's (joined by 21% of farmer families as of 2017). The 4th Basic Plan for Gender-equal Society (2015) set a numerical target to raise the proportion of women in the agricultural committees from 8% in 2016 to 30%, and in the boards of the agricultural cooperatives from 7.5% in 2016 to 15% by 2020. Since 2013, the government has also engaged in 'the Women Farmers' Project, which supports women entrepreneurs, promotes rural women leaders, and presents women's agribusiness role models. In 2016, a 30% quota of female membership in the committee to formulate master plans for agriculture was set. Japan ratified the Paris Agreement in the same year, although the Optional Protocol to CEDAW is not yet ratified.

The Japanese government also promised to support rural women in developing countries through ODA, but there have been cases where big projects threatened women's subsistence farming. Though the Japanese ODA agency has set guidelines for environmental and social considerations, there have been protests from local farmers, including women's groups (e.g. the PROSAVANA project in Mozambique). Japanese NGOs are trying to cooperate with these local farmers but are facing difficulties.

## **Anglican Provincial Response**

The support activities in disaster-affected areas like the Tohoku region and Kumamoto have mainly targeted women and children (support of Asian wives and children, refresh programs for affected families in Fukushima, sales of local products thorough church network). Based on these experiences, NSKK (Anglican churches in Japan) declared to seek a world without nuclear plants in 2012. In Kumamoto, the Kyushu diocese carried out support programs to meet the needs of those affected. Much of our work has been centered on helping their farm work. NSKK started "202230 Movement", which aims to increase women's participation in decision-making in all Anglican churches in Japan to 30 % by 2022. Internationally, NSKK women's association has supported women and children in developing countries by a 'thanksgiving offertory box' movement. NSKK are mostly situated in urban areas, and haven't been able to do enough for rural women. However, there is a church in Hokkaido, which was built for rural mission, and women farmers there are active, contributing greatly to celebrations of seed blessings and harvests. We would like to build stronger ties with rural women nationwide in the future.











## **MS HEATHER HYE-KYUN NOH**



Ms Hyekeyun Noh of the Republic of Korea is a self-driven, year 4 student in the Bachelor of Social Science (Sociology) program at Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea. Her recent interest is Social Psychology and she aims to study further in that field. She believes in the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality and is a seeker of social justice. When she finishes her studies, she aims to work in fields sharing her passion in empowering individuals and cultivating human capital, as well as creating a change in society for a better future.

In her personal time, she continues working with volunteer programs providing education for children, has various part time jobs, and travels occasionally. She is currently a member of Sts. Mary & Nicholas' Anglican Cathedral, Seoul, Korea, and a member of GFS (Girls' Friendly Society). She has joined the 2017 GFS World Council in Perth, Australia as the youth delegate of South Korea.

# KOREA

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KOREA

### Introduction

Republic of Korea (ROK, South Korea)

Location: Korean Peninsula, East Asia

Total area: 100,210km<sup>2</sup> (38,690 sq mi, 107th)

Population

Total: 51,446,000 (2017 estimate, Korean National Census)

Men: 24,881,520/ Women: 24,974,276 (ratio: 99.6)

Population density: 513/km<sup>2</sup> (23rd in the world, UN “World Population Prospects 2017 Revision”, 2017)

	Age	2016						
		Total		Men		Women		Ratio
		(per)	(%)	(per)	(%)	(per)	(%)	(men/ women, %)
<b>Rural Areas</b>	<b>Total</b>	9,104,956		4,607,908		4,497,048		102.5
	<b>Under 15</b>	1,116,294	12.3	577,769	12.5	538,525	12.0	107.2
	<b>15~64</b>	6,029,730	66.2	3,228,711	70.1	2,801,019	62.3	115.2
	<b>Above 65</b>	1,958,932	21.5	801,428	17.4	1,157,504	25.7	69.2
<b>Urban Areas</b>	<b>Total</b>	40,750,840		20,273,612		20,477,228		99
	<b>Under 15</b>	5,652,044	13.9	2,912,597	14.4	2,739,447	13.4	106.3
	<b>15~64</b>	30,282,610	74.3	15,299,378	75.5	14,983,232	73.2	102.1
	<b>Above 65</b>	4,816,186	11.8	2,061,637	10.2	2,754,549	13.4	74.8

### Key Concerns

The Republic of Korea has developed significantly as an economic power, becoming the 29th member of OECD in 1996. However, socio-economic development has been unequally pursued within the country, leading to centralization of economic growth to big and industrialized cities. The rest remains substantially agricultural, in primary industry, or acts as suburban areas to accommodate the growing population in the urban areas. In rural areas where agriculture/primary industry is the predominant source of occupation, and where traditional beliefs of patriarchy are prevalent, the role of women has been very much neglected.

In continuance with past participation of UNCSW, Mothers’ Union in Daejeon parish conducted research to understand circumstances and the perception of rural church women in the area. Participants were asked about their concerns, challenges for rural women, and views on the future of rural communities. We were able to collect and understand diverse perspectives of rural women and the research has helped form guidelines to the key issues addressed in the report.

#### • Patriarchal Practices and Inequalities

- i. Land ownership and law – continued patriarchal practices and patriarchy influence law and prevents women from secure access and control over land. While 51.5% of all agricultural population is women, the percentage of women who are agricultural business owners is only 26.3% (434,722) out of the total of 1,651,235. Average income (in agriculture) compared to that of men has also dropped from 71.2% in 1975 to 66.2% in 2015. Although the role of rural women is increasing in importance and in economic maintenance, more than 80% of land/property ownership still belongs to men (mostly the spouse).
- ii. Unbalanced domestic work - due to patriarchal culture, women are largely subjected to domestic work and child parenting along with economic labor.
- iii. Conflicts – within community due to exclusion of women in decision-making.

#### • Infrastructure and Opportunities

- i. Health and Medical Welfare - rural areas suffer from a lack of medical infrastructure in comparison with large urban areas. Although most medical care is covered by the national health care system, accessibility and outdated infrastructure remains a large concern.
- ii. Education – is mainly centered on large city areas and is especially lacking for children in rural areas. Public schools have been closing due to lack of students and the standard of education tends to be higher in urban areas, adding to the trend of urbanization.
- iii. Work Opportunities and Gender Wage Gap - Although the percentage of women in tertiary education is 73.5% (7.2% more than that of men), the working opportunities for women is largely hindered by marriage, childbirth, domestic work, wage gender gap, and career disruption.
- iv. Lack of Social Infrastructure – healthcare, postal service, banking, etc.

- Aging Population and Health
  - i. Aging population and Poverty – rural areas are becoming largely aged as the younger population moves away due to urbanization. Especially for elderly women (over 64), loss of income source as they age becomes prevalent. Statistics show that 2.3 times more women are under National Basic Living Security Act compared to men in the same age group, with 286,000 women receiving minimum living cost from the government.
  - ii. Solitary death and Suicide – suicide rate of population over 65 is increasing and has become the second main cause of death in the age group. Although the suicide rate for women is lower in comparison to men, it is still higher than the OECD/ international average.
  - iii. Mental/Physical health – According to polls conducted by the government, health issues are the most prevalent problems regarding older women. Many are likely to undergo depression and mental difficulties without medical care or support, as social taboo exists in terms of psychological treatment.
- International Marriage and Cultural Diversity
  - i. International Marriage – in the 1980s, international marriage in rural area has been promoted to increase the inflow of younger working people and to increase the marriage rate of men in rural areas. The policy has been promoted by government and heavily criticized for increasing the trend in ‘feminization of migration’. The growth of marriage immigrants has decreased since 2010, however the percentage of multicultural families remain relatively high in suburban/ rural region.
- Gender Equality Awareness/Education
  - i. Lack of gender equality awareness – patriarchal culture remains substantial in the rural areas. Women are also active reproducers of the culture.
  - ii. Gender-equitable sustainable development must be addressed.

### **Government Programs**

- SDGs 2016~2035 – One of the national frameworks for Domestic Implementation targets for integrated and safe society including goals to reduce gender inequality and regional gaps in socio-economic structures. Some specific goals include:
  - Increasing the minimum wage
  - Expanding the supply of rental homes for the less affluent
  - Running specialized programs to support economic activities of youth and of women who interrupt their careers.
  - Encouraging companies to have nursery facilities to look after their employees’ children.
  - Enhancing the Value of Agriculture · Rural Communities by Activating the Sixth (Senary) Industry

However, the main focuses regarding the SDGs are on reducing gender gaps for working women in the labor force, leaving out women in rural areas where women are aged and working in primary industries such as agriculture.

- Growth of Local Government - government trends to expand local government and increase autonomy and economic self-reliability. This can lead to lowering the gap caused by urbanization and promote balanced growth among the different regions.
- Legislative/ Policy enforcement for Women in Agriculture
  - Confirming legal status of women in agriculture
  - Active participation of women in agriculture policy making, increase governance
  - Promoting education (professionalism, diversity)

However, policies are still in the early stages and lack effectiveness. The newly enforced laws also have limitations such as women farmers being acknowledged only when they own land, when in a lot of cases the ownership is under the husband or male member of the family. Effective policies such as “shared ownership of land/property” are being implemented now at the very early stage.

- Growth of organizations such as “Korean Women Peasant Association: KWPA” that work with women in rural settings.
- Growing interest in feminism as a society – especially among young, internet-based settings. However, proper education is still necessary to promote further awareness and change in action.

### **Anglican Provincial Response**

The number of Anglicans in Korea is still small, and Anglican Church in Korea is largely based within urban settings. Thus, social participation accordingly addresses urban socio-economic problems such as homeless, food banks, education and immigrant workers.

It is advisable to start building communities and ministries in rural areas. Also, redirecting attention towards rural women within the Anglican community would be necessary in requiring better understanding of the situations.



## REVD MARIA ELENA CRISTERNA



Revd Maria Elena Cristerna of Mexico is an Anglican priest ordained in 2006. She is an Assistant Rector of the two parishes (El Buen Pastor and The Resurrection) in Piedras Negras Coahuila. Maria Elena is a Chaplain for The Daughters of the King in the Dioceses of Northern Mexico. She has a Bachelor of Arts and a Master's degree in Education from Sul Ross State University in Alpine Texas. Maria Elena dedicated 30 years of service to the South West Texas Junior College in Eagle Pass Texas. In 2006 she was sworn in as a delegate of the Institute of Mexicans abroad at the presidential residence "Los Pinos" where she met the President of Mexico, Vicente Fox and later Felipe Calderon.

In June 2008, she received a proclamation on behalf of Maverick County for her outstanding academic leadership in education and social service. Maria Elena is exceptionally passionate about the empowerment of women.

# MEXICO

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF MEXICO

### **Introduction**

Mexico --- Official name is “United Mexican States”. (Estados Unidos Mexicanos)

Mexico has an area of 1,972,550 km<sup>2</sup> with 11,122 km of coastline on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It ranks 6th largest country in the Americas and 17th largest in the world.

With a total population of 130,016,027 for 2017, Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. Females account for 50.7 % of the population and males account for 49.3 %. 78.1 % of the population is urban (103,523,244 people) 21.9% rural (26,489,783 people). Approximately 12,500,000 females live in rural areas. 16,557,400 the number of rural poor Mexico’s population ranks 10th in the world.

Mexico is classified by the World Bank as an “upper middle income” country. It is considered a regional power, and is a member of global groups such as the G8+5 and the G20. According to Goldman Sachs, by 2050 Mexico will have the 5th largest economy in the world. Mexico has the 6th largest electronics industry in the world after China, USA, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Mexico produces the most automobiles of any North American nation

Mexico ranks 1st in the Americas and 7th in the world with the number of UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is 1st in the Americas and 4th in the world in biodiversity.

### **Key Concerns**

In the 20th century, Mexican women made strides towards a more equal legal and social status. In 1953 women in Mexico were granted the right to vote in national elections. Researcher Margarita Valdés notes that there are few inequities imposed by law or policy, but gender inequalities are perpetuated by social structures. Mexican cultural expectations have limited and restricted Mexican women. As of 2014, Mexico has the 16th highest female homicide rate in the world. There are vast differences in girls’ attainment of education in rural versus urban areas. Rural areas have more poverty, and lower health and education services, all of which contribute to the gender gap in education that begins at about age 11, completion of primary grades.

As agriculture becomes less essential to the economy, women in rural areas stay in school longer, equaling the education level of girls in urban areas.

### **Government Programs**

The Mexican National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity is focusing, encouraging, and supporting women and girls to participate in this program which shows people in rural areas how to use ecology wisely, such as through tourism, to support themselves, instead of indiscriminately cutting down the forests.

Mexico’s Department of Agriculture has announced its commitment in 2018 to concentrate on youth and women living in rural areas, teaching them how to best work with the agricultural process and products, to achieve economic independence.

Mexico reached its goal of universal health insurance coverage in 2012. Research indicates the poorest families in rural areas have benefited most from the program through reduced out-of-pocket expenses, based on income; health benefits are essentially free for all.

Pro-Mujer is an agency for rural women in Mexico and other Latin American countries. It supports and funds them to begin their own small businesses.

### **Anglican Provincial Response**

Women have no top roles in the Anglican Church in Mexico, because Anglicans represent a minority religion in Mexico, with men being assigned to leadership positions.

The National Institute of Statistics and Geography listed Roman Catholics as the main religious group, 83% of the population. 10% belong to other Christian denominations, with the largest being Evangelicals (5%). Anglicans represent less than 1% of the total population.



## REVD ELLEN BERNSTEIN



*The Most Revd Michael B Curry, The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, after Opening Eucharist*

Revd Ellen Bernstein of New Zealand is the Vicar of the Anglican Parish of Warkworth, a coastal region 60 kilometers north of Auckland, on New Zealand's North Island. Ellen trained for ministry at St John's College in Auckland, completing a Bachelor of Theology from Otago University majoring in Biblical Studies, and a postgraduate Diploma in Education from Massey University. She was ordained in 2012. Prior to her vocational training Ellen worked in a range of administrative and leadership roles, primary in New Zealand but also for two years in the north of England. Ellen is committed to learning te reo Māori, the language of the indigenous people of Aotearoa (New Zealand), and together with her husband, Noel, she enjoys music, motorcycling and bushwalks.

# **AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND, AND POLYNESIA**

## **ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AOTEAROA\*,**

## **NEW ZEALAND, AND POLYNESIA**

### **Introduction**

New Zealand, also called Aotearoa\* by many New Zealanders, has a population of around 4,854,700, a little over half of whom are female. Around a fifth of the population are children aged between 0 and 14. Life expectancy for women is around 83.5 years, and has been consistently rising for the last decade. New Zealand is a highly urbanized country. The proportion of the population living rurally is around 14%, and has been steadily (albeit gradually) declining for several decades. Women face many challenges particular to their sex, but boys and girls by contrast are statistically similar. Children of both sexes have the same access to education and health care as they grow. New Zealand ranks highly for literacy across all age groups.

### **Key Concerns**

Maternal mortality is low by international standards (11 deaths/100,000 live births), and infant mortality is also low at 4.4 deaths/1000 live births. However, these statistics are far worse for Māori women. The Māori infant mortality rate is 1.5 times higher than non-Māori. In general terms, the relationship between Māori (who make up approximately 15% of the population) and the other 85% of the population is strongly characterized by inequality. Māori women and girls (like Māori generally) are over-represented in statistics relating to ill-health, limited progress through higher education, rates of incarceration (58% of women in prison are Māori), and many other markers.

In general, women's ethnicity makes a marked difference to their wellbeing in Aotearoa. Only 5% of European females (a loosely-defined term for all resident New Zealanders who are neither Māori nor Polynesian) live in an extended family, compared with 20% of Māori females. Māori women are over-represented in North Island rural communities, generally in areas where Māori have traditionally lived. Where non-Māori women live rurally, they are more likely to be associated with the farming and agricultural sector and will contribute actively to a family business while also attending to traditional care-giver roles. Where Māori women live rurally, by contrast, they are counted among the most severely deprived sectors of the population.

Nationally, around 65% of women are in paid work of some kind (compared to 75% of men), and while the gender pay gap is one of the lowest in the world, it was recorded as 12% in 2016. Women do twice the amount of unpaid work that men undertake. Advocating successfully for rural women is correspondingly beneficial for their daughters and sons. Central government is frequently challenged to address rural-dwellers' access to technology, equity of access to medical care (especially cancer screening), a reliable and price-stable electricity supply, road repairs (particularly following the series of earthquakes across the South Island in recent years), and access to education for women and their families.

Safety is another big challenge. Rural women are more easily able to be isolated from access to health care providers, child care, paid work, law enforcement, neighbors, family and friends. As a result, 39% of rural women will experience family violence, compared to 33% of urban women. Suicide also affects rural families disproportionately to urban families. Government funded early-childhood education is more difficult for rural families to access, and small country schools continue to be closed.

### **Anglican Provincial Response**

The Anglican Church in the province of New Zealand, Aotearoa, and Polynesia is politically engaged. Especially at episcopal level, Anglican leaders meet frequently with government ministers to express the church's concerns. Since Anglican churches remain active and engaged in most rural areas, the church is uniquely well-placed to continue to advocate strongly for rural women and their children from the places where they seek to live well.

### **Conclusion**

New Zealand has much to celebrate, but for rural women especially, too many issues remain for the church or the government to become complacent. The church has more work to do to focus the nation's attention on rural areas of severe deprivation, especially on the North Island's East Coast and in the Far North. The systematic inequity of services to Māori generally remains a source of national shame.

*\*New Zealand is also called Aotearoa by many New Zealanders; using this name is a mark of respect for the Māori language.*



## **MRS LOTTIE WHITE**



Mrs Lottie White of Scotland is 21 years old and grew up in the rural Scottish North. She graduated with an L.L.B. from the University of Dundee in both Scots and English Law in 2012. She is currently undertaking the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice at her alma mater and will begin training as a solicitor in 2018.

Throughout her time at university, Lottie has been an advocate for access to justice and gender equality through her participation in various university societies. Having taken an interest in the United Nations through Model United Nations at high school, Lottie now runs the Dundee Model United Nations Society and attends both national and international conferences and coordinates the Dundee delegation.

Lottie has been part of the Scottish Episcopal Church since she was 13 and has been a congregant in several rural churches. She has been involved in the Scottish Episcopal Church summer youth camp 'Glen' as a leader which fuelled her desire to continue working with young people in a faith orientated setting. At present, Lottie is the Youth Ministry Coordinator for St Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Dundee city centre.

Alongside her studies, Lottie has worked in the social services industry, working with children aged 8-18 in a rural residential setting and now works for the body which regulates Scottish social services workers in the Corporate Governance and Hearings department whose recent projects include analysing and commenting on the Gender Representation on Public Boards Bill that is currently before the Scottish Government.

# SCOTLAND

## THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

### Introduction

Scotland is a small country (77,933 km<sup>2</sup>) in the United Kingdom. Scotland's nominal GDP is estimated to be \$245.267 billion or \$45,904 per capita. Its population is estimated to be 5.5 million with 51% of that population being female. According to the 2011 census, 54% of the population identified as Christian, an 11% decrease from the last census. Regarding ethnicity, the majority of people in Scotland are white (96%). The next closest ethnic demographic is Asian, representing 2.7% of the population. Most of the population identify as Scottish, rather than British.

Scotland is mainly a rural country with 94% of its landmass being classified as either "remote rural" or "accessible rural". However, only 18% of Scotland's population resides in these areas despite comprising most of the country.

### Key Concerns

One of the most prevalent issues for women in rural Scotland is employability. Although some of the counties with the highest rates of employment for women are predominantly rural, this is not consistent across the entire country.<sup>1</sup> Although many women are employed, the extent of this employment in rural areas has not been categorized. Across Scotland generally, fewer women are in full time employment than men (25.7% to 38.3% respectively) and significantly more women are employed on a part time basis compared to men (18.3% to 5.1%). These figures are not surprising as in rural Scotland stereotypes persist more strongly and women are generally expected to play a traditional role in family life. In keeping up with such a traditional approach, women are more likely to be given career advice that encourages them to work in either hospitality or the care sector; generally lower paid sectors.<sup>2</sup> Although the Equality Act 2010 has made it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees or prospective employees based on gender, the practicalities for families with children and the influence and expectations of local communities still cause rural women to be underrepresented and underpaid in the rural work force.

Whilst rural women in Scotland are generally healthier than urban and male counterparts, the centralization of healthcare in rural areas has had a large impact on women who are more likely to access the facilities for their children, another result of prevalent gender stereotyping. In addition, women suffering from post-natal depression or domestic violence may not be readily able to access facilities safely, owing to the cost, time and practicalities of travelling to centralised services.

Furthermore, in 2009 the Scottish Government listed women living in rural areas as one of the demographics most at risk of poverty. Both pensioners and lone parents living in rural areas are at an increased risk of falling below the poverty line. Both groups are predominately female. 65% of rural households are on income of less than £200 per week, 10% more than the British average, with 49% of households in rural Scotland living on less than £150pw. Not only are household incomes lower on average, rural households spend more on fuel and heating, and the cost of living is higher in rural areas than in urban areas.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond the identification of rural lone pensioners and single mothers as being at risk of poverty, the government has previously admitted that further study is needed to understand the role that gender plays in poverty better. Despite women led households being overrepresented in the category of rural poverty, it has not been a focus in mainstream research.<sup>4</sup> Until such research is carried out and the links between gender, rurality and poverty are better understood, change cannot begin to occur.



### Government Programs

At present there are no government schemes to address these issues specifically. Whilst the Scotland Rural Development Programme exists, its main aim is sustainable rural development and, whilst it recognises that issues for rural women exist, it focuses mainly on women's economic contribution. It does not view solving issues for rural women as an end in itself. Gender equality programmes and legislation only address gender equality in its entirety and do not focus on rural issues.

### Anglican Provincial Response

Regarding the Anglican Provincial Response from the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC), whilst the SEC aims to resolve gender inequality as highlighted in its Gender Equality Audit, it does not address the specific issues that women in rural areas face despite the audit highlighting that rural congregations have a higher proportion of women.

<sup>1</sup> Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands had female employment rates of 80.5% and 79.4% respectively, whilst North Ayrshire had the lowest at 57.2%. It is also important to note that both Shetland and Orkney are island communities and as such are culturally distinct from the rest of rural of Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Women's Convention 2012.

<sup>3</sup> "A Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland" - Donald Hirsch, Amanda Bryan, Abigail Davis and Noel Smith, with contributions from Jo Ellen and Matt Padley

<sup>4</sup> "Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas – Annex 1, Scotland" Philomena de Lima, European Commission.



## **MRS SADIYA BUTROS TIA DENT**



Mrs Sadiya Butros Tia Dent of Sudan is qualified as a lawyer in Sudan, and also has a Master's degree in Human Rights from York University, UK. In addition, she has a specialized diploma from Siracusa Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights in Italy in International Defense and International and Financial Crimes. Through her legal practice, and as a commissioner for oaths and as an arbitrator, she serves companies, NGOs, churches and community-based organisations. Together with her husband, Ian Dent, she provides audit, advisory and training services in Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and South Sudan.

Sadiya's father, Butros Tia Shokai, was a Bishop responsible for the Episcopal Church of Sudan covering North, East and West Sudan, while her mother, Roda Shokai, was a Mothers' Union leader in Sudan.

Sadiya is a graduate of Shokai Bible School and a member of the Mothers' Union in Sudan. She is actively involved in church activities, with mothers, youth and elders in spiritual and charity work. In addition, she is an Executive Committee Member and Legal Advisor of a Sudanese national NGO: Peace Star Organization for development, which is involved in the promotion of peace and development in both urban and rural areas of Sudan.

Using Sadiya's professional experience and spiritual beliefs, she has enhanced the conditions of women, children and elders through training and workshops, and encouraging them with advice on setting up businesses, provision of legal aid services, guiding on available finance, and promoting the involvement of women in business, social, church and community based activities in Sudan.

# SUDAN

## PROVINCE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SUDAN

### **Introduction**

The Republic of the Sudan, also known as North Sudan since South Sudan's separation and independence in 2011, is in North Africa. It is bordered by Egypt, the Red Sea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Chad and Libya. It is the third largest country in Africa, and covers one million square miles. The White and Blue Niles flow through the country before coming together in its capital city of Khartoum, and flowing north to the Mediterranean through Egypt.

Population: 41,500,000

Urban: 13,800,000 (33.2%);

Rural: 27,700,000 (66.8%)

Adults (over 15 years): 24,500,000 (59%)

Children (under 15 years): 17,000,000 (41%)

Sudan is almost entirely Muslim with most citizens speaking Sudanese Arabic. Christians represent only a small minority of the population, since the separation of the mainly Christian South Sudan. Furthermore, most Christians have very limited financial resources.

### **Key Concerns**

Sudan is a developing nation that faces many challenges with regard to gender inequality.

- The legal system of Sudan is pluralistic, comprising Sharia (Islamic religious law), civil, and customary laws. Religion is very influential on the culture of Sudan with the vast majority of the population adhering to Islam. Since religion is so influential in society it provides the structure of gender roles.
- Female Genital Mutilation is widespread, with a UNICEF report estimating that 87% of Sudanese women and girls aged between 15 and 49 have been cut, and some women from minority groups say they had agreed to FGM because of pressure from their husbands.
- Those in rural areas do not have the same access to healthcare as those in urban areas.
- The difference in education between boys and girls is one of the most obvious and critical inequalities in Sudan. The female population with at least a secondary education was 12.8% for females compared to 18.2% for males, although this may have increased over recent years. Although both of these are very low, males have a statistically more significant opportunity of obtaining a secondary education. Also, girls enter into marriage at a much earlier age to the detriment of their education.
- The economy of Sudan is composed of a mostly male workforce. The majority of women participate in agricultural activities, and most of them are making an "unrecognizable" contribution. Subsistence (family labor) farming is primarily unpaid labor that limits the economic participation of the worker. The majority of family labor is performed by women and children.
- There have been positive changes in regard to gender equality in Sudan. As of 2012, women embodied 24.1% of the National Assembly of Sudan.

The greatest challenges are cultural, and ensuring the benefits are received by those in greatest need, i.e. in the rural communities and in the female population.

Improvements have been made over recent years, through UN agencies, international and national NGOs in health and education and through dissemination of information by the government, but opportunities for advocacy are often curtailed by the government.

Public morality crimes discriminate against women in Sudan, proscribing their manner of dress, limiting their movement and role in public life, and imposing humiliating corporal punishments of lashing and stoning.

### **Government Programs**

Sudan launched the National Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016, with UN being a committed partner, through UNDP to support the Sudanese government.

### **Anglican Provincial Response**

The Episcopal Church in Sudan promotes workshops and training in Sudan for young families and children, with trainers attending conferences and courses to gain the necessary knowledge and experience. The workshops are supported by the local churches and Mothers' Union. The opportunities are limited, however, by a lack of financial resources within the church and a small percentage of Christians in the country since the separation of South Sudan.



## REVD ROSE MPANGO



Revd Deacon Rose Mpango of Tanzania was ordained as a deacon in the Diocese of Central Tanganyika in the Anglican Church of Tanzania on August 20th 2017. She is one of the youngest female priests ordained in the Anglican Church of Tanzania.

Before receiving a call to priesthood, Revd Rose studied Business Administration at Nyack College in New York, in the hope of starting small businesses to support women in rural areas. She went on to gain an MBA with an emphasis on microfinance banking.

After struggling with a call to ministry for five years, Revd Rose accepted her call and went on to obtain a Master's of Arts in Theological Studies from Virginia Seminary. Revd Rose desires to end the poverty cycle among women and girls. She believes that the education of women and girls in rural areas is a way to fight poverty. She is currently serving at a parish in Washington DC. Her life experiences and education has allowed her to live in Kenya, New York, Tanzania, Virginia and Washington DC and has given her cross-cultural experience which has broadened her worldview.

# TANZANIA

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF TANZANIA

### Introduction

Location: Tanzania is in East Africa, south of the equator; bordered by Kenya to the north and Mozambique to the south, and six other countries. It also borders the Indian Ocean in the east and has a shoreline of three of the largest lakes in Africa. (Nyasa, Victoria, Tanganyika).

Size: 945,087 km<sup>2</sup> (364,900 sq. miles)

Population: Estimated at 55.57 million. Female (50.56%) Male population (49.44%) 2016

- Girls and boys between the age of 0-14 account for 43% of the population with (male at 11,921,393 and female 11,678,536).
- Urban population 30%; Rural population 70%

### Key Concerns

An education system based on incentives that does not address the challenges/opportunities of people living in poverty i.e. the government does not allow students who fail the primary school exam to continue.

Inequalities in educational treatment for girls due to cultural stigma, i.e. pregnant teens are not allowed back in school while males do not face any consequences.

Physical abuse/Gender violence (research shows that 3 out of 10 young girls reported experiencing sexual abuse as their first sexual experience).

Inequality in rural labor force and service delivery – 70% of the population lives in rural areas. Women are the biggest contributors to rural economies but their labor overlooked.

Gender stereotypes resulting in their work being underreported and regarded as housework.

Violence and discrimination in obtaining employment, decision making, land ownership.

Ranked at 125 out of 155 countries in the Gender Inequality Index

Access to microcredit/microfinance has improved the livelihood of women.

Rural women can be agents of change in climate change for their expertise working on land.

### Government Programs

Sustainable Development Goals Programs in response to challenge

- Kigoma Joint Programme - an area based UN program for refugees and their host countries.
- TWCC (Tanzania Women's Chamber's).

### Anglican Provincial Response

Most programs are top down and do not address the reality faced by people in rural communities. The Church is more effective as it represents a bottom up approach, but women's ordination is still an issue (4 out of 26 dioceses with female priests).

IAWN (International Anglican's Women's Network) – Good mission but no representatives from Tanzania.

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation.” Education is the only way to empower girls in rural areas, even if it is through an informal education system that focuses on developing individual skills such as after school programs or summer camps, rather than a formal education. Twaweza, “we make it happen” in Swahili.



## **MS LAURA MIRIAM LLOYD-WILLIAMS**



Miss Laura Lloyd-Williams of Wales is 18 years old. She is currently studying A-Levels whilst applying to medical school in the UK. Laura has always had a keen interest in the empowerment of women and girls and the fight for gender equality. Feminism has been of interest to her and in particular the gender pay gap. Laura has been a Christian since she was a child and has attended her local church regularly. She then went on to join the Diocesan Youth Forum at age 14.

In this capacity, Laura has advocated for change in the Church in Wales by addressing various groups, including the Governing Body. Also, she volunteers for GirlGuiding UK and ChildLine, which is a helpline for young people. Laura is particularly looking forward to this year's UNCSW62 as the theme is Rural Women and she herself comes from a rural area.

# WALES

## THE CHURCH OF WALES

### Introduction

Wales is a country in the United Kingdom, bordered to the east by England. It has a landmass of 20,735 km<sup>2</sup> and has more than 1680 miles of coastline. There are no definitive population statistics for 2018, but predictions have been produced. There is an overall projected population of 3,129,855. It is predicted that there are 287,295 boys (under 15) and 273,332 girls (under 15). It is also predicted that there are 1,311,280 women over the age of 16 and 1,257,984 men over 16 years of age. The ethnicity of Wales is limited; 95.6% of usual residents class themselves as White, 2.3% as Asian or Asian British, 0.6% as Black or Black British, 1.0% as British Mixed and 0.5% as other ethnic group.

Religion in Wales is varied, as 57.6% of residents are Christian, 1.5% is Muslim, 0.3% is Hindu, 0.3% is Buddhist, 0.1% is Sikh, 0.1% is Jewish, 0.4% belongs to another religion and 32.1% do not identify with any religion.

Wales has its own language, Welsh (Cymraeg), spoken by 26.7% of the population. There are currently 397 Syrian refugees settled in Wales through the United Kingdom Syrian Resettlement Programme. Wales is a devolved nation from the United Kingdom with our own Government. Out of 60 members in the Senedd (Parliament) 25 are female. In the Westminster Government, 11 out of the 40 MPs (28%) are women. The Anglican Church in Wales was disestablished in 1920 from the Church of England under the Welsh Church Act of 1914. It is made up of 6 dioceses, 2 of them being females.

### Key Concerns

The United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in 2016. In Wales, 52.5% of the voting population voted to leave. The European Union has contributed to the Welsh economy through grants for agriculture, infrastructure and industry. Welsh Government, through the Parliament in Westminster, is attempting to negotiate alternative trade deals with world partners for Wales.

Seventy-one percent of Welsh mothers reported negative or discriminatory experiences regarding pregnancy within their workplace. Forty-six percent of mothers surveyed in Wales reported pregnancy having a negative impact on their career opportunities, status or job security. Shockingly, 36% of women would have liked a flexible working pattern but were too scared to ask their employers for it for fear it would ruin their career prospects.

In rural areas, women are more likely to have to travel to find work. Many people cannot commute due to poor transport connections and cost associated with travel. This can discourage women from working at a variety of levels and can limit job opportunities. Often, there is a lack of services in rural areas, such as family planning clinics, primary health services, shops, and social outreach. Women are forced to travel to larger towns and cities to access these basic of services, and it is difficult to provide services for a large rural area.

### Government Programs

The Welsh Government Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 is an investment program supporting a wide range of activities relating to rural communities. The aim is to improve investment into programs that support rural communities and agricultural ventures.

Mothers' Union, Merched y Wawr, Women's Institute and GirlGuiding are organizations that encourage and develop relationships between rural women, creating a sense of community.

Our Squad is a Welsh Government initiative to encourage women and girls to join in sports they have never tried before. There is a current initiative in Wales to involve more women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) fields. Welsh Government commissioned a report which makes three main points: to recruit women into STEM, to retain them in these roles, and to encourage them to take on leadership and managerial roles. Chwarae Teg (Fair Play) is a scheme which aims to encourage gender equality throughout workplaces and public services.

### Anglican Provincial Response

The Church in Wales has been courageous in discussing and debating gender equality and in recent years has referred matters to its own governing body for transparent debate. It has also been supportive and considerate of the challenges and needs of its rural communities.

In 1997, women were able to be ordained in Wales, and in 2013, Governing Body voted to allow women bishops to sit on the Episcopate. In response to this there are now two female Bishops within the Province. MAE Cymru is an organisation that stands for Women and the Church, Ministry and Equality. This organisation works to promote gender equality throughout the church and to dispel prejudice and misconceptions.

### Conclusion

Due to its demographic, social, political and economic factors, Wales has strengths and weaknesses. In urban conurbations, a variety of opportunities exist. However, in rural areas, there are still barriers to women's ability to attain their potential. Breaking down these barriers will create opportunities in employment, transport, and infrastructure, and will enable and empower rural women to achieve their full potential.



# APPENDICES



## **STATEMENT TO THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL FROM THE ANGLICAN DELEGATION TO THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, MARCH 2018.**

### **Introductory Comments**

The Anglican Communion delegation to the UNCSW 62 was God chosen. We comprise 18 women from 17 countries/regions (Australia, Botswana, Canada, Democratic Republic of the Congo, England, Hong Kong, the Indian Ocean, Japan, Korea, Macao, Mexico, New Zealand, USA, Scotland, Sudan, Tanzania, and Wales). We are grateful to the staff and volunteers for their tremendous efforts in coordinating and leading.

The delegation is enriched by its diversity and ability to make coherent and informed contributions to the work of the commission. As delegates, we worked cooperatively, carrying our diverse, enthusiastic, and inspiring voices as one.

This is an incredible experience to support and strengthen the Communion; UNCSW62 is a wonderful and rare opportunity to meet sisters, and also brothers, in faith from all over the world with diversity.

We come with a variety of definitions and experiences of what “rural” means to our particular contexts. We have overcome most challenges of language accessibility and funding to ensure important voices are heard.

### **ISSUES ARISING**

Though of differing opinions, delegates respectfully acknowledge the ongoing discussions around provisions for access to therapeutic abortions and LBTQI2+ rights.

Collectively, having participated in numerous sessions, the following issues (which disproportionately affect women and girls living in rural areas) were of high importance to our delegation:

- Universal and affordable access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education
- Prevention of, and response to, victims of human trafficking and modern slavery
- Granting and guaranteeing dignity-based rights, such as: access to technology and information systems, access to transportation, advocating for positive masculinity, widow’s rights, land rights
- Maintaining rights of Indigenous peoples, including land, culture, and language rights
- Ensuring access to gender-specific health care, gender-based violence, early forced child marriage, early pregnancy, forced abortion of female foetuses, family planning
- Encourage the elimination of harmful practices (i.e. female genital mutilation)
- Supporting political, social, and economic empowerment, and participation in governance and leadership in decision-making processes
- Mitigating the impacts of climate change, including agriculture, food security, and extreme weather
- Working collaboratively as NGOs, in the reality of a globalised society
- Addressing both short- and long-term effects of conflict and war

Faith was also mentioned as a key factor of the CSW discussions.

## **Impact of Faith**

We discussed the role of faith in identifying and responding to the above issues.

Faith plays a key and complex role in gender justice issues, as it influences and shapes our various cultures. For some, it can be a restrictive force; for us as Anglicans, our faith is a liberating factor. We have a voice in society to engage in difficult matters and make a positive change; with other churches, with governments, and with civil society.

We acknowledge the power of prayer in seeking long-lasting solutions to support the most vulnerable. There is great strength in a collaborative, ecumenical approach.

Faith encourages and supports us in this work, as faith and feminism inform each other. We believe in the intrinsic worth of all people, that God has made us all equal in God's eyes. As women of faith we should always advocate for peace, and call for people to accept and respect one another.

## **Impact of Issues**

We discussed the role that these issues play as they pertain to our ongoing spiritual development.

Our shared understanding of the issues, especially as they affect women and girls living in rural areas, ensures our commitment to achieving the equality we have articulated throughout this process, to speak out against discrimination and injustice, and to act positively towards change. Our increasing awareness of issues invites us to re-read the scriptures through a lens of gender equality.

We are empowered in supporting one another as these issues transcend geopolitical borders. We share a moral obligation to care for one another and all of creation. We strongly refute any actions that reject our inherent dignity as beloved children of God.

Our faith remains firmly rooted in God, through Christ, by the power of the Spirit.

## **Moving Forward**

It is our hope that delegates to the ACC will have been briefed by their local UNCSW delegates on issues pertaining to rural gender inequality, work towards achieving the SDGs, and efforts to collaborate with civil society. We believe it will be positive for future follow-up with those who have participated in this capacity.

The collection of data is essential in monitoring and evaluating ministries and activities in these areas.

We urge Provinces of the Anglican Communion to review and revise policies and practices to support gender parity and equality at all levels. We encourage that the theme of "Leave No One Behind" will be intentionally integrated into the work of the ACC, requesting clear theological teachings and statements from our leaders for gender justice. Identified 'specialists' in the Communion could mobilise and educate the church on these matters (both field practitioners and researchers).

We lament that our delegation was incomplete as a sister from the south was twice denied a visa.

We are grateful for the privilege of representing the Communion at the United Nations.

*Ruth Bridgen - Australia*  
*Laura Marie Piotrowicz - Canada*  
*Thapelo Beleme - Central Africa*  
*Jill Hopkinson - Church of England*  
*Deborah Jackson - The Episcopal Church*  
*Vira Mamboyabo Marthe - Democratic Republic of the Congo*  
*Cheang Sao Lin - Hong Kong (Macao)*  
*Tam Yeuk Tia - Hong Kong*  
*Nolavy Remamy Osoro - Indian Ocean (Madagascar)*

*Kaori Nakamura - Japan*  
*Tae Yasumura - Japan*  
*Heather Hye-Kyun Noh - Korea*  
*Maria Elena Cristerna - Mexico*  
*Ellen Bernstein - New Zealand*  
*Charlotte Haley-Lee White - Scotland*  
*Sadiya Butros Tia Dent - Sudan*  
*Rose Mpango - Tanzania*  
*Laura Lloyd-Williams - Wales*



**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN  
SIXTY-SECOND SESSION  
12 – 23 MARCH 2018**

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ACHIEVING  
GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL  
WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**AGREED CONCLUSIONS**

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women. **AD REF**
2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, throughout their life cycle. **AD REF**
3. The Commission reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews, and the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and the follow-up to those conferences and summits, have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas. **AD REF**
4. The Commission reaffirms the commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls made at relevant United Nations summits and conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action and the outcome documents of its reviews. It recognizes that the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda contribute, inter alia, to the improvement of the situation of rural women and girls. The Commission also recalls the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. **AD REF**
5. The Commission also recalls the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. **AD REF**
6. The Commission recognizes the importance of relevant International Labour Organization standards related to the realization of women's right to work and rights at work that are critical for the economic empowerment of women, including those in rural areas, and recalls the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization and the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and notes the importance of their effective implementation, including in rural areas. **AD REF**

7. The Commission acknowledges the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives in their respective regions and countries, and their follow-up mechanisms, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas. **AD REF**
8. The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It acknowledges that gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls and women's full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. **AD REF**
9. The Commission reaffirms that the promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, are crucial for women's economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty and women's economic empowerment, and also reaffirms the need to take measures to ensure that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, and that equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the promotion, protection and full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. **AD REF**
10. The Commission recognizes that rural women's equal economic rights, economic empowerment and independence are essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It underlines the importance of undertaking legislative and other reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men, as well as girls and boys where applicable, to access economic and productive resources, including land and natural resources, property and inheritance rights, appropriate new and existing technology, financial products and services, including but not limited to microfinance, and women's full and productive employment and decent work, and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, in both agricultural and nonagricultural activities in rural areas. **AD REF**
11. The Commission reiterates that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to be implemented in a comprehensive manner, reflecting its universal, integrated and indivisible nature, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting each country's policy space and leadership while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments, including by developing cohesive sustainable development strategies to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Commission affirms that Governments have the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels with regard to progress made. **AD REF**
12. The Commission recognizes that progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in particular in rural areas, and the realization of their human rights has been held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to universal healthcare services, and secondary and post-secondary education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes, and unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. It stresses the urgency of eliminating these structural barriers to realize gender equality and empower rural women and girls. **AD REF**
13. The Commission acknowledges that all rural women and girls often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and marginalization. It respects and values the diversity of rural women's situations and conditions and recognizes that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment. It also stresses that while all women and girls have the same human rights, rural women and girls in different contexts have particular needs and priorities, requiring appropriate responses. **AD REF**
14. The Commission expresses concern that 1.6 billion people still live in multidimensional poverty and that nearly 80 per cent of the extreme poor live in rural areas and acknowledges that progress in the eradication of poverty has been uneven and that inequality has increased. It expresses concern that poverty is a serious impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and that the feminization of poverty persists. It emphasizes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It acknowledges the mutually reinforcing links between the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty. It stresses the importance of support for countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. **AD REF**

15. The Commission expresses concern that many rural women continue to be discriminated against, marginalized and economically and socially disadvantaged due to, inter alia, their limited or lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, decent work, social protection, quality education, public health, including health-care services, justice, sustainable and time- and labour-saving infrastructure and technology, land, water and sanitation and other resources, as well as to financial services, credit, extension services and agricultural inputs as well as their limited financial inclusion. **AD REF**

16. The Commission recognizes the important role and contribution of rural women as critical agents in poverty eradication, in enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development as well as fisheries. It underlines that meaningful progress in these areas necessitates, inter alia, closing the gender gap, introducing appropriate gender-responsive policies, interventions and innovations, including in agriculture and fisheries, and women's equal access to agricultural and fisheries technologies, technical assistance, productive resources, land tenure security and access to, ownership of and control over land, forests, water and marine resources, and to participation in local, regional and international markets. **AD REF**

17. The Commission reaffirms the right to food and recognizes the crucial contributions of rural women to local and national economies and to food production and to achieve food security and improved nutrition, in particular in poor and vulnerable households as well as to the well-being of their families and communities, including through work on family farms and women-headed farm enterprises. It expresses deep concern that, while women contribute significantly to the food produced worldwide, women and girls are disproportionately affected by hunger and food insecurity, in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination. It recognizes women's critical role in both short- and long-term responses to food insecurity, malnutrition, excessive price volatility and food crises in developing countries. **AD REF**

18. The Commission stresses the importance of investing in gender-responsive and quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including in rural areas, inter alia, safe drinking water and sanitation, energy, transport, water for irrigation and technology, including information and communications technology, and other physical infrastructure for accessible public services. **AD REF**

19. The Commission reiterates the importance of safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport and roads in facilitating transport linkages on domestic routes and promoting urban-rural connectivity to empower women and girls and to boost economic growth at the local and regional levels, promote interconnections among cities and villages, peoples and resources and facilitate intraregional and interregional trade. **AD REF**

20. The Commission reaffirms the right to education and stresses that equal access to high quality and inclusive education contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls including those in rural areas. It notes with concern the lack of progress in closing gender gaps in access to, retention in and completion of secondary and tertiary education and emphasizes the importance of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities. It recognizes that new technologies are, inter alia, changing the structure of labour markets and provide new and different employment opportunities that require skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, and in this regard, emphasizes the importance of all rural women and girls having the opportunity to acquire them. **AD REF**

21. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, rural girls are still more likely than rural boys, and urban girls and boys to remain excluded from education, and recognizes also that among gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour that girls undertake, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence in and outside of school, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than boys. **AD REF**

22. The Commission reaffirms the right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, without distinction of any kind, and recognizes that its full realization is vital for women's and girls' lives and well-being and for their ability to participate in public and private life, and is crucial for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, including in rural areas. It recognizes that targeting and eliminating the root causes of gender inequality, discrimination, stigma and violence in health care services, including the unequal and limited access to public health services is important for all women and girls, including in rural areas, especially those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations. **AD REF**

23. The Commission emphasizes the need to accelerate progress towards the goal of universal health coverage that comprises universal and equitable access to gender-responsive, quality health services and quality, essential, affordable and effective medicines for all, including for rural women and girls, and that it is critical to promote physical and mental health and well-being, especially through primary health care, health services and social protection mechanisms, including through community outreach and private sector engagement, and with the support of the international community. It stresses the importance of strengthening health systems in terms of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality in order to better respond to the needs of all women and girls, including in rural areas, and enabling rural women's active participation in the design and implementation of health systems. **AD REF**

24. The Commission expresses deep concern that as a result of lack or limited access to essential health-care services and information and limited agency over their own lives, rural women experience significant disparities in health, including reproductive health outcomes, such as higher rates of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, obstetric fistula and limited options for family planning, than women in urban areas. It expresses further concern that these disparities are exacerbated by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. **AD REF**

25. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against all women and girls, which is rooted in historical and structural inequality and unequal power relations between men and women. It reiterates that violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level. It expresses deep concern that women and girls in rural and remote areas may be particularly vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty, limited or lack of access to justice, effective legal remedies and services, including protection, rehabilitation, reintegration, and health care services. It reemphasizes that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and violates and impairs or nullifies their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. **AD REF**

26. The Commission recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of violence and a violation and abuse of human rights and impedes the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas. **AD REF**

27. The Commission recognizes the contribution of rural families to sustainable development and that the sharing of family responsibilities creates an enabling family environment for the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas and that women and men make a significant contribution to the welfare of their families and communities. **AD REF**

28. The Commission acknowledges the benefit of implementing family-oriented policies aimed at, inter alia, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the full participation of women in society, work-family balance and the self-sufficiency of the family unit and recognizes the need to ensure that all social and economic development policies are responsive to the changing needs of and expectations on rural families in fulfilling their numerous functions and that the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of all family members must be respected. **AD REF**

29. The Commission recognizes that rural women and girls undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and that such uneven distribution of responsibilities is a significant constraint on women's and girls' completion of or progress in education and training, on women's entry and re-entry and advancement in the paid labour market and on their economic opportunities and entrepreneurial activities, and can result in gaps in social protection, pay and pensions. It also recognizes that addressing attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys at the household and community levels creates an enabling environment for the social and economic empowerment of all rural women and girls. The Commission stresses the need to recognize and adopt measures to reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household and by prioritizing, inter alia, infrastructure development, social protection policies and accessible affordable and quality social services, including care services, child-care, maternity, paternity or parental leave. **AD REF**

30. The Commission expresses deep concern about the slow or stagnant economic growth and development, the rising inequalities within and among countries, volatile food and energy prices, continuing food and energy insecurity, remaining effects of the world financial and economic crises, water scarcity, epidemics, demographic changes, unplanned and rapid urbanization of populations, insufficient investment in development in rural areas, unsustainable fisheries practices and use of marine resources, natural hazards, natural disasters and environmental degradation, the increasing challenges caused by humanitarian emergencies, displacement, armed conflicts and the adverse impacts of climate change, all of which are exacerbating disadvantages, vulnerabilities and inequalities that rural women and men, girls and boys and their families face. **AD REF**

31. The Commission recognizes that globalization presents both challenges and opportunities for women's economic empowerment, including rural women. It also recognizes that there is a need to make broad and sustained efforts to ensure globalization is fully inclusive and equitable for all, including rural women and girls, and becomes an increasingly positive force for women's economic empowerment. **AD REF**

32. The Commission notes with great concern that millions of people, including women and girls living in rural areas, are facing famine or the immediate risk of famine or are experiencing severe food insecurity in several regions of the world, and noting that armed conflicts, drought, poverty and the volatility of commodity prices are among the factors causing or exacerbating famine and severe food insecurity and that additional efforts, including international support, are urgently needed to address this, including in response to urgent United Nations humanitarian appeals with emergency aid and urgent funding. **AD REF**

33. The Commission is deeply concerned that climate change poses challenges to poverty eradication and the achievement of sustainable development, and that owing to gender inequalities, rural women and girls, especially in developing countries, including SIDS, are often disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, extreme weather events and natural disasters and other environmental issues, including land degradation, desertification, deforestation, sand and dust storms, persistent drought, sea level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification. It recalls the Paris Agreement and that the Parties acknowledged that they should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider gender equality, the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity, and in this context, also recalls the adoption of the Gender Action Plan by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its 23rd session. It acknowledges the necessity for every person, including women and girls in rural areas, of present and future generations to have access to an environment adequate to their health, well-being and the critical importance of ensuring such an access for the empowerment of rural women and girls and the sustainable development and resilience of rural communities. **AD REF**

34. The Commission recognizes the impact of armed conflict on rural women and girls, and the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in peace-building and in this regard, stresses the importance of their full, effective and meaningful participation, including by increasing their role in peace processes as well as in decision-making in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and reiterates the important engagement by men and boys as partners in promoting this participation. **AD REF**

35. The Commission also stresses the importance of strengthening rural women's and girls' voice, agency, participation and leadership, and women's full, equal and effective participation at all levels of decision-making. It recognizes the critical role played by rural women's civil society organizations, trade unions, enterprises and cooperatives in gathering and uniting rural women and supporting them in all spheres. **AD REF**

36. The Commission recognizes that Indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas, regardless of age, often face violence and higher rates of poverty, limited access to health care services, information and communication technologies (ICT), infrastructure, financial services, education and employment, while also recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including to climate change mitigation and adaptation. **AD REF**

37. The Commission expresses concern that women and girls with disabilities, particularly those living in rural and remote areas experience stigmatization and an increased risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual violence and abuse compared to those without disabilities, and that they face a lack of accessible and inclusive services in rural areas, limited access to justice and equal recognition before the law, as well as limited opportunities for productive employment and decent work, participation in political and public life, living independently and inclusion in their communities, and having the freedom to make their own choices. **AD REF**

38. The Commission recognizes the important contribution of rural women and girls of African descent to the development of societies and the promotion of mutual understanding and multiculturalism, bearing in mind the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). **AD REF**

39. The Commission recognizes that the positive contribution of rural women migrants has the potential to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination, underlines the value and dignity of their labour, in all sectors, including in care and domestic work, and encourages efforts to improve public perceptions of migrants and migration and recalls the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of rural migrant women and girls, particularly those who are employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work. **AD REF**

40. The Commission recognizes the contributions of older rural women, including widowed women, to households and communities, especially in cases where they are left behind by migrating adults or as a result of other socio-economic factors to assume childcare, household and agricultural responsibilities. **AD REF**

41. The Commission acknowledges the important role of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the relevant contribution of national human rights institutions, where they exist, and the important role of civil society in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, as well as in advancing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **AD REF**

42. The Commission welcomes the major contributions made by civil society, including women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders, girls' and youth-led organizations and trade unions in placing the interests, needs and visions of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, on local, national, regional and international agendas, including the 2030 Agenda. It also recognizes the importance of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society in the implementation of measures to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. **AD REF**

43. The Commission reaffirms the importance of significantly increased investments to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including rural women and girls, through, inter alia, the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, the full implementation of official development assistance commitments and combating illicit financial flows, so as to build on progress achieved and strengthen international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation. **AD REF**

44. The Commission recognizes the importance of a conducive external environment in support of national efforts towards the economic empowerment of women, through promoting the control, ownership, management and participation of rural women in all sectors and levels of the economy, which includes the mobilization of adequate financial resources, capacity-building and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, which in turn would enhance the use of enabling technologies to promote women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. **AD REF**

45. The Commission recognizes the importance of fully engaging men and boys, as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas. **AD REF**

46. The Commission urges Governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites civil society, inter alia, women's organizations, including rural women's organizations, producer, agricultural and fisheries organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, faith-based organizations, the private sector, national human rights institutions where they exist, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions: **AD REF**

### ***Strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks***

- a. Take action to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, so as to improve their lives, livelihoods and wellbeing; **AD REF**
- b. Consider ratifying or acceding to, as a matter of particular priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, limit the extent of any reservations, formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Conventions, review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them, withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the relevant Convention and implement the Conventions fully by, inter alia, putting in place effective national legislation and policies; **AD REF**

- c. Design and implement national policies and legal frameworks that promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and create an environment that does not tolerate violations or abuses of their rights, including those involving domestic violence, sexual violence and all other forms of gender-based violence and discrimination; **AD REF**
- d. Enact legislation and undertake reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men, and where applicable girls and boys, to access natural resources and economic and productive resources, including access to, use of, ownership of and control over land, property and inheritance rights, including in diverse types of land tenure, appropriate new technology and financial services, including credit, banking and finance, including but not limited to microfinance, as well as equal access to justice and legal assistance in this regard, and ensure women's legal capacity and equal rights with men to conclude contracts; **AD REF**
- e. Enact legislation to promote women's, including rural women's, land registration and land title certification, regardless of their marital status, and address practices and stereotypes that undermine their land rights, including in the context of customary and traditional systems, which often govern land management, administration and transfer in rural areas; **AD REF**
- f. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against all women and girls, including in rural areas, and implement targeted measures to address, inter alia, the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and the marginalization they face, through the development, where needed, and adoption of laws and comprehensive policy measures, their effective and accelerated implementation and monitoring, and the removal, where they exist, of discriminatory provisions in legal frameworks, including punitive provisions, and setting up legal, policy, administrative and other comprehensive measures, including temporary special measures as appropriate, to ensure women's and girls' equal and effective access to justice and accountability for violations of the human rights of women and girls, and ensure that the provisions of multiple legal systems, where they exist, comply with international human rights obligations. **AD REF**
- g. Eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against rural women and girls in public and private spaces, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against rural women and girls and end impunity, and to provide protection as well as equal access to appropriate remedies and redress, to comprehensive social, health and legal services for all victims and survivors to support their full recovery and reintegration into society, including by providing access to psychosocial support and rehabilitation, access to affordable housing and employment, and bearing in mind the importance of all women and girls living free from violence, such as sexual and gender based-violence, domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, as well as elder abuse, as well as of addressing the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls through enhanced prevention measures, research and strengthened coordination, monitoring and evaluation, by, inter alia, encouraging awareness-raising activities, including through publicizing the societal and economic costs of violence, and work with local communities; **AD REF**
- h. Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, which affect women and girls in rural areas disproportionately and may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, and which continue to persist in all regions of the world despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts, including by empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms which condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon them. **AD REF**
- i. Pursue, by effective means, programs and strategies for preventing and eliminating sexual harassment against all women and girls, including harassment in the workplace and in schools and cyber bullying and cyber stalking, including in rural areas, with an emphasis on effective legal, preventive and protective measures for victims of sexual harassment or those who are at risk of sexual harassment; **AD REF**
- j. Integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of and follow-up to development policies, plans and programmes, including budget policies, where lacking, ensuring coordination between line ministries, gender policymakers, gender machineries and other relevant government organizations and institutions with gender expertise, and appropriate collaboration with the private sector, non-governmental and civil society organizations and national human rights institutions, where they exist, and paying increased attention to the needs of rural women and girls to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres and that the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty is reduced; **AD REF**

- k. Eliminate barriers and afford equal and effective access by all rural woman and girls to justice, legal remedies and legal support by, inter alia, providing adequate law enforcement and public safety infrastructure, accessible and affordable services, increasing rural women's and girls' legal literacy, such as awareness of and information about their legal rights, including on the existence of multiple legal systems, where they exist, providing legal assistance, gender-responsive training for police and security forces, prosecutors, judges and lawyers as well as other relevant authorities and officials in rural areas, as appropriate, putting in place mechanisms to ensure accountability and judicial remedies, and mainstreaming a gender perspective into justice systems at all levels to ensure the equal protection of the law for rural women and girls, taking into consideration, inter alia, the UN rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules); **AD REF**
- l. Guarantee the universal registration of births, including in rural areas, and ensure the timely registration of all marriages for individuals living in rural areas including by removing physical, administrative, procedural and any other barriers that impede access to registration and by providing, where lacking, mechanisms for the registration of customary and religious marriages, bearing in mind the vital importance of birth registration for the realization of their rights; **AD REF**

***Implement economic and social policies for the empowerment of all rural women and girls***

- m. Design, implement and pursue gender-responsive economic and social policies that aim to, inter alia, eradicate poverty, including in rural areas, and combat feminization of poverty, ensure the full and equal participation of rural women in the development, implementation and follow-up of development policies and programmes and poverty eradication strategies, support increased rural employment and decent work, and promote the participation of women at all levels and sectors of the rural economy and in diverse on-farm and off-farm economic activities, including sustainable agricultural and fisheries production; **AD REF**
- n. Pursue macro-economic policies that support diverse economic activities, including smallholder agricultural production and the food security and nutrition of all rural women and girls and their communities by fostering the positive and mitigating the negative impact of international investment and trade rules; **AD REF**
- o. Emphasize the need for business enterprises, including transnational corporations and others, to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for human rights abuses by their operations, products or services on the wellbeing of women and girls in rural areas and provide for or cooperate in their remediation; **AD REF**
- p. Design and implement and pursue fiscal policies that, inter alia, promote gender equality and the empowerment of all rural women and girls, inter alia, by facilitating greater access to social protection and financial and business services, including credit, for women in rural areas, in particular women heads of households; **AD REF**
- q. Refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries; **AD REF**
- r. Mainstream a gender perspective and include sustainable agricultural and fisheries development issues in national agricultural and rural development policies, strategies, plans and programmes, enabling rural women to act and be visible as stakeholders, decision makers and beneficiaries, taking into account the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication; **AD REF**
- s. Strengthen and support the critical role and contributions of rural women, including women farmers and fishers and farm workers, to enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development, eradicating poverty, achieving food security and improved nutrition and the economic well-being of their families and communities; ensure their equal access to agricultural technologies that are affordable, durable, sustainable and accessible to women farmers and fishers, through investment, the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, and support research and development and integrated and multisectoral policies to improve their productive capacity and incomes, strengthen their resilience, and address the existing gaps in and barriers to trading their products in national, regional and international markets; **AD REF**

- t. Strengthen national, regional and international efforts, as appropriate, to enhance the capacity of developing countries to support rural women farmers, including smallholder farmers, and those in subsistence farming and fisheries, horticulture and livestock to achieve food security and improved nutrition, including through appropriate mechanization in agriculture, sustainable agricultural practices, and education and training on vaccination and management techniques and public and private investment to close the gender gap in agriculture and facilitate rural women's access to extension and financial services, agricultural inputs, land, water and irrigation; **AD REF**
- u. Strengthen sustainable production and consumption patterns, including family farming, respecting and protecting traditional and ancestral knowledge and practices of rural women in particular the preservation, production, use and exchange of endemic and native seeds, and supporting alternatives to the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides harmful to the health of rural women and girls and their communities; **AD REF**
- v. Invest in and strengthen efforts to empower rural women as important actors in achieving food security and improved nutrition, ensuring that their right to food is met, including by supporting rural women's participation in all areas of economic activity, including commercial and artisan fisheries and aquaculture, promoting decent working conditions and personal security, facilitating sustainable access to and use of critical rural infrastructure, land, water and natural resources, and local, regional and global markets, and valuing rural women's, including indigenous women's, traditional and ancestral knowledge and contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, for present and future generations; **AD REF**
- w. Ensure integrated food and nutritional support for rural women and girls, including those who are pregnant and breast-feeding, and their access at all times to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food requirements for an active and healthy life; **AD REF**
- x. Invest in provision of and access to quality, resilient and gender responsive infrastructure and time-and labour-saving technologies, information and communication technologies (ICTs), safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, and safe drinking water and sanitation for all, including through technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, to improve the lives, livelihoods and wellbeing of all rural women and girls; **AD REF**
- y. Promote women's leadership and their full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation and household energy management and to ensure that a gender-based approach is adopted in relation to water and sanitation and energy programmes, through measures, inter alia, to reduce the time spent by women and girls in collecting household water and fuel, and to address the negative impact of inadequate water and sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education as well as to protect women and girls from being physically threatened or assaulted and, from sexual violence, while collecting household water and fuel and when accessing sanitation facilities outside of their home or practising open defecation; **AD REF**
- z. Commit to encourage urban-rural interactions and connectivity and eliminate geographic and territorial disparities by strengthening gender-responsive sustainable and affordable transport and mobility, technology and communication networks and infrastructure, underpinned by planning instruments with a gender perspective, based on an integrated urban and territorial approach that maximizes the potential of these sectors for enhanced productivity, social, economic, and territorial cohesion, as well as safety and environmental sustainability; **AD REF**
- aa. Optimize fiscal expenditures to extend social protection coverage to all rural women and girls and establish nationally appropriate social protection floors to ensure access to social protection, without discrimination of any kind, and take measures to ensure sustainable, long-term financial support for social protection systems and make information on social protection measures and benefits widely available and accessible to all rural women and girls bearing in mind that social protection policies play a critical role in reducing poverty and inequality and supporting inclusive growth and and contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas; **AD REF**

- bb. Protect and promote the right to work and rights at work of all rural women in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment, taking into consideration international labour standards and national labour laws, including by setting wages that allow for an adequate standard of living, implementing policies and enforcing regulations that promote decent work and uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and taking measures to address gender-based discrimination, occupational segregation, the gender pay gap and unsafe and unhealthy working conditions; **AD REF**
- cc. Promote the economic empowerment of rural women and the transition of rural women from the informal to the formal economy by improving their skills, productivity and employment opportunities including through technical, agricultural, fisheries and vocational training, including their financial and digital literacy and facilitate the entry and re-entry of all rural women, especially young women, into the labour force; **AD REF**
- dd. Encourage and facilitate rural women's entrepreneurship and expand opportunities for their enterprises, cooperatives and self-help groups, to diversify and increase their productivity by engaging in sustainable agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, including mariculture, cultural and creative industries and other areas of economic activity, and improving access to financing and investment, technology and infrastructure, training and diverse markets; **AD REF**
- ee. Increase trade and procurement from rural women's enterprises, cooperatives and women-owned businesses, by building the capacities and skills of rural women, especially young women, to benefit from public and private sector procurement processes, including public food programmes, and fostering their access to local, national and international value chains and markets; **AD REF**
- ff. Take measures to facilitate the financial inclusion and financial literacy of rural women and their equal access to formal financial services, including timely and affordable credit, loans, savings, insurance, and remittance transfer schemes, integrate a gender perspective in finance sector policy and regulations, in accordance with national priorities and legislation, encourage financial institutions, such as commercial banks, development banks, agricultural banks, micro-finance institutions, mobile network operators, agent networks, cooperatives, postal banks and saving banks, to provide access to financial products, services and information to rural women, and encourage the use of innovative tools and platforms, including online and mobile banking; **AD REF**
- gg. Recognize, reduce and redistribute rural women and girls disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, as well as contributions to on-farm and off-farm production, by promoting policies and initiatives supporting the reconciliation of work and family life and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, through flexibility in working arrangements without reductions in labour and social protections, and through the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport and information and communications technology, as well as accessible, affordable and quality childcare and care facilities and maternity, paternity or parental leave and by challenging gender stereotypes and negative social norms and facilitating men's increased participation in unpaid care and domestic work and family responsibilities, including as fathers and caregivers. **AD REF**
- hh. Take steps to measure the value of unpaid care and domestic work in order to determine its contribution to the national economy, for example through periodic time-use surveys, and include such measurements in statistics as well as in the formulation of gender-responsive economic and social policies. **AD REF**
- ii. Invest in and strengthen family-oriented policies and programmes in rural areas that provide the necessary support and protection and are responsive to the diverse, specific and changing needs of rural women and girls and their family, as well as address the imbalances, risks and barriers that they face in enjoying their rights and protect all family members against any form of violence; as these policies and programmes are important tools for, inter alia, fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequality, promoting work-family balance and gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity; **AD REF**
- jj. Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education at all levels, throughout the life cycle, including women and girls living in rural areas and those who have been left furthest behind, by providing universal access to quality education, and free and compulsory primary and secondary education, ensuring inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy, and striving to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary, and secondary education and expanding vocational and technical education for rural women and girls; and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all; **AD REF**

- kk. Eliminate gender disparities and commit to scale up financing and investments in public education systems to fulfill the right to education for women and girls in rural areas by addressing gender-based discrimination, negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, including in curricula, textbooks and teaching methodologies; combat gender norms that devalue girls' education and prevent women and girls from accessing education; provide inclusive, safe, non-violent and accessible schools with gender and disability sensitive infrastructure, including lighting, and safe, accessible and affordable transportation to school; maintain separate and adequate sanitation facilities; train, recruit and retain qualified teachers in rural areas, especially women teachers where they are underrepresented; support rural women and girls with disabilities at all levels of education and training; ensure that rural women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and promote an effective transition from education or unemployment to decent work and active participation in public life; **AD REF**
- ll. Take steps to promote educational and health practices in order to foster a culture in which menstruation is recognized as healthy and natural, and girls are not stigmatised on this basis, recognising that girls' attendance at school can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools that meet the needs of girls; **AD REF**
- mm. Ensure that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education, and in this regard, design, implement and, where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to remain in and return to school, providing them with access to health-care and social services and support, including childcare and breastfeeding facilities and crèches, and to education programmes with accessible locations, flexible schedules and distance education, including e-learning, and bearing in mind the important role and responsibilities of, and challenges faced by, fathers, including young fathers, in this regard; **AD REF**
- nn. Intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate violence and sexual harassment against girls at, and on the way to, school, including, inter alia, by implementing effective violence prevention and response activities in schools and communities, engaging men and boys, educating children from a young age regarding the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect, designing educational programmes and teaching materials that support gender equality, respectful relationships and non-violent behaviour; **AD REF**
- oo. To develop policies and programmes with the support, where appropriate, of international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, giving priority to formal, informal and non-formal education programmes, including scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education, relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to, inter alia, enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection and other risks; **AD REF**
- pp. Address the digital divide, which disproportionately affects rural women and girls, by facilitating their access to ICT and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to promote their empowerment and to develop skills, information and knowledge that are needed to support their labour market entry, livelihoods, well-being and resilience and expand the scope of ICT-enabled mobile learning and literacy training while promoting a safe and secure cyberspace for women and girls; **AD REF**
- qq. Strengthen measures, including resource generation, to improve women's health, including maternal health, by addressing the specific health, nutrition and basic needs of rural women and taking concrete measures to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health for women of all ages in rural areas, as well as quality, affordable, available and universally accessible primary health care and support services; **AD REF**
- rr. Increase financial investments in quality, affordable and accessible health-care systems and facilities and safe, effective, quality, essential, and affordable medicines and vaccines for all and health technologies, including through community outreach and private sector engagement, and with the support of the international community, towards achieving each country's path towards universal health coverage for all rural women and girls; **AD REF**

- ss. Increase investments in a more effective and socially accountable health workforce and address the shortage and inequitable distribution of doctors, surgeons, midwives, nurses and other healthcare workers in rural areas, by promoting decent work with adequate remuneration and incentives to secure the presence in rural and remote areas of qualified health-care professionals, enabling safe working environments and conditions, and expanding rural and community-based health education and training and strengthening education for health professionals; **AD REF**
- tt. Take measures to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as neonatal, infant and child mortality and morbidity, in rural areas and increase access to quality health care before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth to all rural women and girls through interventions such as training and equipping community health workers, nurses, midwives, to provide basic pre- and post-natal care and emergency obstetric care, inter alia, by providing voluntary, informed family planning and empowering women and communities to identify risk factors and complications of pregnancy and childbirth and facilitate access to health facilities; **AD REF**
- uu. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, and recognizing that the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on all matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, as a contribution to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the realization of their human rights; **AD REF**
- vv. Intensify national and international efforts to improve public health, strengthen health care systems, and increase the availability of motivated, well-trained and appropriately equipped health professionals and health workers, as well as access to health facilities, including access to diagnosis services, and for the prevention, treatment and care of non-communicable and communicable diseases, as well as neglected tropical diseases, by integrating gender-based approaches for the prevention and control of diseases based on data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics relevant in national contexts; **AD REF**
- ww. Strengthen efforts to achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support for all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV and AIDS, including co-infections and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and address their specific needs and concerns without stigma or discrimination, and promote the active and meaningful participation, contribution and leadership of women and girls living with HIV and AIDS in rural and remote areas in HIV and AIDS responses; **AD REF**
- xx. Devise, strengthen and implement comprehensive anti-trafficking strategies that integrate a human rights and sustainable development perspective, and enforce, as appropriate, legal frameworks, in a gender and age sensitive manner, to combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons, raise public awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, take measures to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to modern slavery and sexual exploitation, provide access, as applicable, to protection and reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking in persons and enhance international cooperation, inter alia, to counter, with a view to eliminating, the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forced labour; **AD REF**
- yy. Strengthen and build the resilience and adaptive capacity of all rural women and girls to respond to and recover from economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters, humanitarian emergencies and adverse impacts of climate change, natural disasters and extreme weather events by providing essential infrastructure, services, appropriate financing, technology, and social protection, humanitarian relief, forecast and early warning systems, and decent work for women; **AD REF**
- zz. Develop and adopt gender-responsive strategies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change to support the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change, through, inter alia, the promotion of their health and well-being, as well as access to sustainable livelihoods, and the provision of adequate resources to ensure women's full participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies and policies related to the adverse impacts of climate change, and ensuring the integration of their specific needs into humanitarian responses to natural disasters, into the planning, delivery and monitoring of disaster risk reduction policies and into sustainable natural resources management; **AD REF**

- aaa. Promote and protect the rights of Indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, health care, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and women's access to decent work, and promoting their meaningful participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, and noting the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for indigenous women and girls. **AD REF**
- bbb. Promote and protect the rights of older women in rural areas by ensuring their equal access to social, legal, and financial services, infrastructure, health care, social protection, and economic resources and their full and equal participation in decision making; **AD REF**
- ccc. Promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring access on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education and productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, as well as by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes; **AD REF**
- ddd. Promote and protect the rights of Afro-descendant rural women and girls, including, where applicable the recognition of their lands and territories, and mainstream a gender perspective when designing and monitoring public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of rural women and girls of African descent; **AD REF**
- eee. Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, and gender statistics, to support policies and actions to improve the situation of rural women and girls, and to monitor and track the implementation of such policies and actions, and enhance partnerships and the mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance to enable developing countries to systematically design, collect and ensure access to high-quality, reliable and timely disaggregated data and gender statistics; **AD REF**
- fff. Promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by reaffirming the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, pursuing policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors and reinvigorating the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development; **AD REF**
- ggg. Take steps to significantly increase investment to close resource gaps, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including public, private, domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, including by enhancing revenue administration through modernized, progressive tax systems, improved tax policy, more efficient tax collection, and increased priority on gender equality and the empowerment of women in official development assistance to build on progress achieved, and ensure that official development assistance is used effectively to accelerate the achievement of of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls; **AD REF**
- hhh. Urge developed countries to fully implement their respective official development assistance commitments, including the commitment made by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets and help them, inter alia, to achieve gender equality the empowerment of rural women and girls; **AD REF**
- iii. Strengthen international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation, and invite all States to enhance South-South and triangular cooperation focusing on shared development priorities, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in government, civil society and the private sector, while noting that national ownership and leadership in this regard are indispensable for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls; **AD REF**

## ***Strengthen the collective voice, leadership and decision-making***

- jjj. Ensure that the perspectives of all rural women and girls are taken into account, and that women, and girls as appropriate, fully and equally participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience, and that women and their organizations, and girl- and youth-led organizations, are fully, safely and actively able to participate in the decision-making, policies and institutions at all levels, including by promoting and protecting the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, the right to vote and to be elected as provided by law, as well as to participate in local and self-governing bodies such as community and village councils, and in political parties and other organizations; **AD REF**
- kkk. Mainstream a gender perspective in decision-making processes and the management of natural resources, inter alia, in land, forestry, fisheries, marine and water management bodies, as well as in planning relating to rural infrastructure and services, transportation and energy, leveraging the participation and influence of women in managing the sustainable use of natural resources; **AD REF**
- lll. Protect and promote the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and collective bargaining so as to enable rural women workers and entrepreneurs to organize and join unions, cooperatives and business associations, while recognizing that those legal entities are created, modified and dissolved in accordance with national law and taking into account each State's international legal obligations; **AD REF**
- mmm. Ensure that the perspectives of rural women, and girls as appropriate, in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in humanitarian emergencies are taken into account and that they effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as take into account the perspective of women and girls who are internally displaced and refugees; and ensure that the human rights of all rural women and girls are fully respected and protected in all response, recovery and reconstruction strategies and appropriate measures are taken to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against rural women and girls in this regard; **AD REF**
- nnn. Ensure that women affected by natural disasters, including those caused by the adverse impacts of climate change, are empowered to effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in leadership and decision-making processes in this regard; **AD REF**
- ooo. Support the effective participation, decision-making and leadership of rural women in enterprises, farmer and fisher organizations, producer cooperatives, trade unions, civil society and other relevant organizations ensuring a safe and enabling environment, and provide support for those organizations, including by investing in programs that provide opportunities for rural women and girls to exercise their voice, agency and leadership; **AD REF**
- ppp. Develop and implement policies and strategies that promote rural women's and girls' participation in and access to the media and information and communications technologies (ICTs), including by increasing their digital literacy and access to information; **AD REF**
- qqq. Recognize the important role the media can play in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, including through non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive coverage and by eliminating gender stereotypes, including those perpetuated by commercial advertisements, and encourage training for those who work in the media and the development and strengthening of self-regulatory mechanisms to promote balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls, which contribute to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of discrimination against and exploitation of women and girls; **AD REF**
- rrr. Support the important role of civil society actors in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms of rural women; take steps to protect them, including women human rights defenders, and to integrate a gender perspective into creating a safe and enabling environment for the defense of human rights and to prevent violations and abuses against them in rural areas, inter alia, threats, harassment and violence, in particular on issues relating to labour rights, environment, land and natural resources; and combat impunity by taking steps to ensure that violations or abuses are promptly and impartially investigated and that those responsible are held accountable. **AD REF**

sss. Fully engage men and boys to take an active part in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls both in public and private spheres; design and implement national policies and programmes that address the role and responsibility of men and boys and aim to ensure equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in caregiving and domestic work; transform with the aim to eliminate those social norms that condone violence against women and girls, and attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys, including by understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality such as unequal power relations, social norms, practices and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls; and engage them in efforts to promote and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls for the benefit of both women and men, girls and boys; **AD REF**

47. The Commission recognizes its primary role for the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which its work is grounded, and stresses that it is critical to address and integrate gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. **AD REF**
48. The Commission calls upon Governments to strengthen, as appropriate, the authority and capacity of national mechanisms for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, at all levels, which should be placed at the highest possible level of government, with sufficient funding, and to mainstream a gender perspective across all relevant national and local institutions, including labour, economic and financial government agencies, in order to ensure that national planning, decision-making, policy formulation and implementation, budgeting processes and institutional structures contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including in rural areas. **AD REF**
49. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme, within their respective mandates, and relevant international financial institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms to support Member States, upon their request, in their efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all rural women and girls. **AD REF**
50. The Commission encourages the international community to enhance international cooperation and to devote resources to developing rural areas and sustainable agriculture and fisheries and to supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, herders and fishers in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries. **AD REF**
51. The Commission recalls General Assembly resolution 72/181 and encourages the secretariat to continue its consideration of how to enhance the participation, including at the sixty-third session of the Commission, of national human rights institutions that are fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), where they exist, in compliance with the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council. **AD REF**
52. The Commission calls upon UN-Women to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting Governments and national women's machineries, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. **AD REF**



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The Revd Ezgi Saribay Perkins – Precentor of the Cathedral Church of St Paul in Wisconsin  
Bishop Andrew M.L Dietsche – Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York*



*Marnie Dawson Carr – Recognized for her significant involvement in the founding of the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations.*

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