

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

**ANGLICAN  
COMMUNION**

IN OVER 165 COUNTRIES



**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE  
STATUS OF WOMEN 56<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**NEW YORK CITY  
MARCH 2012**

**“REPORTS AND REFLECTIONS”**

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In honour of the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams

In office from 2003-2012

104<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury

With profound appreciation for his support and vision of a growing  
role of the Anglican Communion at the United Nations, and for his  
commitment to fostering an abundant life for women and girls  
across the world.





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## FOREWORD

**Anglican women have engaged with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) since 1985** when the Anglican Consultative Council was first granted official non-governmental status with ECOSOC, the UN Economic and Social Council.

Anglican women were at:

**Nairobi (1985)** to plan the Forward Looking Strategies,

**Beijing (1995)** to dialogue with officials from 189 governments and to set new benchmarks for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

**Beijing + 5 (2000)** to broaden the Platform,

**Annually, since 2002** to discuss all aspects of women's empowerment.

They gave graciously of their time and talent because their faith compelled them to follow the gospel ethic of equality for all people, and to affirm with Mary in her response to Gabriel, that the seemingly impossible is possible.

This year ***"The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development, and current challenges"*** was the Priority Theme of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Cognizant of the focus on rural women, the Anglican team encompassed a wide spectrum of experiences:

- rural women farmers who know first-hand the inequities under which they live,
- women who live in rural areas and, with the farmers, know the hardships of accessing essential services,
- women who are executives in organizations which seek to eradicate the inequities,
- women with positions in the Church.

All came to the UN to talk about the theme amongst themselves and with other Christian women and men under the banner of Ecumenical Women, with members of nearly 300 other non-governmental organizations, and with the Commission itself, to ensure that the final statement encompassed all the ideals for which Anglicans are striving.

These ideals are summarized in the **Statement to the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC)**

***"Young women and men, girls and boys working together toward gender equity"*** is the Commission's Emerging Theme. Since 2007 Anglican women have been central to the ever growing awareness that girls and young women who participate in UNCSW must be part of the Commission's deliberations. Beth Adamson, in particular, has been instrumental in nurturing girls and young women by keeping in touch with them through succeeding years, and organizing opportunities for them to dialogue with the Commission. This has resulted in the Working Group on Girls becoming an independent organization and achieving international stature with over 80 affiliates.

The Revd Terrie Robinson, the Anglican Communion Networks Coordinator, was the keynote speaker for CSW56. Her presentation of, ***"Anglicans responding to violence against women and girls,"*** was authoritative and compelling. We are blessed to share in Terrie's abilities on women's issues.

Rachel Chardon, Special Assistant to the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations, eased the way for Anglican women to be in New York for the **56th Session** of the UNCSW, shepherding them through the various processes involved, and remaining calm, efficient, and effective throughout two weeks.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and organization of Rachel's right-hand, Ashley Lhérisson. Ashley's commitment and dedication to the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations' delegates helped enable CSW56 to succeed in its mission.



## **ANGLICAN PROVINCIAL DELEGATES TO THE UNCSW56**

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## **The Revd Kathy Barrett-Lennard**

AUSTRALIA

REPORT ON UNCSW56

### **GENERATIONAL WELFARE DEPENDENCE: AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING WOMEN AND GIRLS IN RURAL AUSTRALIA**

Australians call our country “The lucky country”, and by world standards, we are fortunate. Issues in rural areas such as equity of access, however, affect both Australian men and women. Long distances to hospitals and schools lead to social isolation for those who are unable to travel hundreds of kilometres to reach these destinations.

Eighty percent of Australia’s population lives in cities that hug the coastline, while twenty percent inhabit the vast inland and the occasional provincial city. Most Australians’ life experience is therefore of the city, and the vast majority of women who voluntarily find themselves in the country do so due to marriage, or as a result of being posted to a town as a professional (teacher, banker, nurse).

There are however, women and girls whose choices are severely limited, and so are distinctly disadvantaged. They may have been born in a rural town, or been re-located from the city into cheaper Government housing. Due to their ethnic background, lack of skills, poor health, low educational attainment, teenage pregnancy or unemployment, they find themselves needing to access unemployment or sickness benefits. The benefits are means tested, but because jobs are limited and healthcare expensive or too difficult to access, a woman may live all of her life receiving welfare. If a woman does find the confidence to apply for a job, the difference between the dollar amount of the welfare payment and income from the new job (after deducting expenses for child-care, transport, work clothes and tax) may make staying in the welfare system the more attractive option. The “safety net” meant to protect people from desperate poverty has become, for many, a “snare”, keeping them dependent.

A disproportionate number of these families are First Nation People and have the added pressure of providing hospitality to extended family networks. Saving any money in such circumstances is almost impossible as most of these people believe that “family comes first” and therefore they lend money or give food to their family networks in order to ensure that when things are tough, they too will be supported by the kinship group. In addition, many don’t own motor vehicles, and this lack of mobility has negative implications for seeking employment and health care in larger regional centres.

Welfare dependence can mean that a child grows up in a household that calls unemployment benefits “pay” and has no role-modelling or understanding of the benefits of employment such as; the self-esteem associated with bringing in a wage, the satisfaction that comes from achieving work goals, having a social group of work colleagues and being recognized as a productive member of the town. Rural towns are generally small in Australia, so the welfare recipients are very visible, and often excluded by others.

Low income or welfare dependent families can access low-rent Government housing. Due to recent increases in the price of city real estate, the Government housing departments have been purchasing less expensive homes in rural areas. Single-parent families with no experience of rural life are being sent to these towns. A lack of infrastructure (public transport, specialist medical services, education and training), lack of employment opportunities and a lack of social capital to adequately support these families is the reality in many towns. Isolation from extended family and friendship networks, inadequate income to access child-care (when it is available) and a sense of being “stuck” in an alien environment, can lead

many women to depression and addictions. Addictions often mean that the little amount of income that is available is spent on drugs and alcohol leaving children to suffer in health and nutrition. Women and girls are very vulnerable when under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and many seek out like-minded people. Their quality of life and standard of living therefore continues to slide backwards.

Generational welfare dependence can lead to a lack of self-determination and diffusion of responsibility and initiative. For example, if a handle breaks or if the door comes off its hinges, there can be an expectation that the responsibility for repair resides in the Department of Housing, rather than in the tenant. This is learnt behaviour which keeps women dependent.

An opportunity for capacity building with a group of women was recognised and a programme developed in our small rural community. The project was named "Meals on a Shoestring".

The Anglican Church applied for a Government grant to run a 2 year program for 12 women with school aged children. Each of the women was a welfare recipient, was unemployed, many had drug and/or alcohol addictions and had grown up in families that were also welfare dependent. The women felt inadequate and so socialised very little and as a result attendance at school functions and community events was limited. Several of their children had behavioural problems which were identified by the school.

Along with the school principal, a social worker and a doctor, we chose the 12 participants. Each week we bought the raw ingredients for a night meal, proportionate to the size of each family. The women learned to cook basic wholesome meals (many had previously bought pre-packaged or take-out food), learned about hygiene, budgeting and nutrition. The social implications were also tangible very early on. The women went as a group to the school sports day for the first time, they asked for a workshop to learn computer skills, they began to socialize together out of lesson time, they spoke with the school principal and child health nurse and built up a larger social network which included volunteer helpers and church women. At the end of two years, most had begun working, one had started her own gardening business, two were considering distance education options, one had taken up swimming in the local pool and had lost 25 kg, another joined the local government grounds team, and another was commissioned by the Shire to paint a town mural.

The key to the success of this program was that the women were welcomed, valued, listened to, celebrated and in return they worked, contributed and gave back to the community. Their activities were documented in photos and occasional local newspaper articles, which raised their profile as a group of women who were empowered to make a positive difference in their own lives.

This program was very costly in terms of time and resources, but the individual gifts and confidences developed in the women gave life not only to themselves but also to their children.

As a result of this programme, 12 families were given a different perspective on life, and the chance to move away from welfare dependence. It is our hope that their children will be encouraged to attend school more regularly and look for opportunities to join the workforce and lead productive lives. This programme has been showcased to other communities, and with funding, can be replicated in a multitude of different settings.

There is a risk of this issue not being seen as important when compared to the poverty experienced in other countries, however, poverty means different things in different countries. Rural women and girls in Australia suffer; their struggles are real and cry out to be addressed.

We come to this gathering honouring our humanity as equal before God and precious in God's sight. We come acknowledging that we are ultimately responsible for each other, and so I offer this issue to you for serious consideration, and in the hope that as a Christian community, we may find a voice to address this problem for rural women in Australia.





## **Roselind Bashobi Halder**

BANGLADESH

REPORT ON UNCSW56

### **“EVE TEASING:” AN ISSUE FACING THE RURAL GIRLS OF BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh is a male dominated society. Women in Bangladesh are the principle sufferers and victims of various injustices such as: gender discrepancy, polygamy, divorce and physical humiliation. The teenagers and youth of today are women's hopes for tomorrow. I will focus on one of the serious issues facing rural girls. **Eve Teasing!**

**Eve teasing in Bangladesh:** Sexual harassment often known as “eve teasing” is a regular occurrence for the women and girls of Bangladesh. On the long walk from home to school they are often surrounded and teased by groups of boys. These boys yell indecencies at the girls. They laugh, push, pinch, and grab at them. Sometimes they pull their clothes so violently that they are afraid they will be ripped right off of their body. A recent study by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) showed that, almost 90% of girls age 10-18 have experienced this form of abuse. According to the study, teenage boys, rickshaw pullers, bus drivers, street vendors, and traffic police have all been cited as “eve teasers”. It is widely known that women and girls who are subjected to sexual harassment experience trauma that can leave deep psychological scars. The BNWLA study also noted that in the past two years high incidences of girls have committed suicide because of “eve teasing”. The innocuousness of the label belies further violent implications such as rape and murder.

**Rape and Murder:** Rape is the most common form of violence against women in Bangladesh. In 2010, there were over 5000 reported incidents; almost 2000 of those incidents were rapes of teenage girls. Statistics show that 801 committed suicides, 66 were murdered, while the remaining number of teenage girls suffer severe lifelong psychological trauma. One has to wonder how many of these crimes could have been prevented if society took sexual harassment more seriously and did not wait until girls were raped and murdered to take action.

**Curtailed Education:** Sexual harassment has increased the school drop-out rate among girls. Parents concerned about their daughter's honor and safety sometimes keep their daughters home and or marry them off at an early age. Girls' enrollment in 2003 was 84%, compared to 81% for boys.

Statistics show that 10% of the girls of primary school age have never been enrolled in school. Of those who are enrolled, poor attendance, high repetition rate, high dropout rates (37% for girls) and low achievement is apparent. As a result, over a quarter of girls of the age group completing primary education do so with a minimum level of expected competencies.

**Early Marriage:** Through the same process in which “eve teasing” pushes girls out of education, girls who are harassed are also pushed into marriage before they are physically and mentally prepared. Half of Bangladeshi girls are married before they reach 15 years of age. They usually bear their first child while they are still teenagers. These adolescent girls face the risks of childbirth often without medical care and have a high incidence of maternal mortality. Teenage mothers from 15-19 years old face a 20-200 percent greater chance of dying in pregnancy than a women aged 20-24.



# **Claudette Kigeme and Mathilde Ndalsenga**

BURUNDI

REPORT ON UNCSW56

## **THE SITUATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN BURUNDI**

Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty, ill-health, low education, gender inequalities and a general lack of opportunities are all major challenges for the country. Of the 8.9 million people that live in Burundi, 90 percent live off of agriculture and more than 70 percent live on less than \$1 a day. The Government has initiated Poverty Reduction strategies, but the situation has not changed. The circumstances of women, especially those living in rural areas, remain a critical concern. In addition to poverty, women and girls face issues such as low levels of education, a lack of land, credit and training, as well as poor health infrastructures.

### **WOMEN AND POVERTY**

Overall, agriculture and farming are the main contributors to Burundi's economy and jobs in this industry are predominantly done by women. Despite their presence in the workforce, however, women still face many issues when it comes to owning land, as they are often left out of the decision-making process. In addition, women are also disadvantaged when it comes to seeking funding for small businesses due to their lack of access to funding and collaterals. Moreover, trade liberalization, through removal of tariffs and privatization of utilities, has had a negative impact on women. Increased open markets have led to increases in domestic markets of imported goods which compete with local products. Women's lack of limited access to education, business and entrepreneurial skills and information prevent them from competing on an equal basis with imported goods.

Efforts to ensure women's equal access to education and training, access to factors of production, as well as information and new technologies are needed to strengthen women's competitiveness.

### **RURAL WOMEN AND EDUCATION**

Poverty and cultural barriers negatively impact the education of women and girls. The majority of which do not have access to school, and those who do, are more likely to drop out due to poverty, the long distance walk to school, which makes them more vulnerable to gender-based violence, a heavy workload at home, or a general lack of parental support. Consequently, many women and girls have limited access to information and opportunities that would enable them to improve their economic situation.

### **RURAL WOMEN AND HEALTH**

Burundi is among several countries with extremely high rates of maternal mortality, recently documented at 86.2 percent. The low socioeconomic status of women and the lack of health infrastructure makes it extremely difficult for these women to secure adequate health care. As a result, many women are charged high fees, if they cannot afford the fees they are often ignored, which leads to higher birth rates per woman and even more early marriages.

Another major health care concern in Burundi is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. While HIV/AIDS is decreasing in urban areas due to sensitization and training, it is increasing in rural areas because of migration and a general lack of information and access to training in rural areas. More women and girls are victims of this pandemic and also serve as caregivers. Today more than 800,000 girls are orphans of war and/or HIV/AIDS. The care of these children becomes the responsibility of mothers who are themselves vulnerable. Essentially, health issues like HIV/AIDS, with so many rippling effects negatively impact economic growth.

## **ACTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT**

Although poverty, education and health care are a continuing issue in Burundi, the government has initiated a number of policies to improve the conditions of women in this country. In terms of social justice, the government offers pregnant women free health care to reduce maternal mortality. Also, mothers with infants under the age of five are free or reduced cost health care for their children in order to decrease infant mortality. The small income that would be spent on health care can thus be saved for other necessities. Additionally, the government has initiated free universal primary education that encourages both girls and boys to go to school. This allows young girls who have gotten pregnant to reintegrate into school after they have given birth. The legal framework established by the government to allow for microfinance institutions is helping to improve the economic situation of women. Although, the majority of these institutions are still based in urban areas, there is hope for some rural women to be reached and improve their economic situation.

## **WHAT ANGLICANS ARE DOING TO HELP THE SITUATION**

It has been proved that women who are illiterate are unable to access basic education; are unaware of their rights; do not participate fully in local decision-making; and lack the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their economic situation. Fortunately, over the past 12 years, the Anglican Church through the Mothers' Union (MU) has undertaken a literacy program to help women become literate where 59,000 have been reached.

Since 2010, that programme has been extended to women's economic empowerment through education and formation of savings and loans groups alongside business skills training and micro credit programmes, thanks to support from Trinity Wall Street, Five Talents International, Lakarmissionen, Whiteroft Foundation, AngliCord, and Mothers' Union Australia. With support from Christian Aid and Episcopal Relief and Development, the church has also helped community members with food security and environment programmes together with health programmes which reduce the burden of rural women and enable economic improvement. With TearFund, church and communities are being mobilized to address all those issues including poverty.

In conclusion, rural women in Burundi need more economic justice. Principally, women in this country lack decision-making power that matches their contributions to the economy. Moreover, they work hard, but their work is seldom acknowledged and appreciated. While land is the most valuable asset in an agricultural country like Burundi, women have no right to land inheritance. Consequently, they are vulnerable to economic gender-based violence especially with regards to widows. Despite efforts made by the government and other organizations to improve the situation, more advocacies must be made on Burundi's behalf, especially towards land inheritance for women and access to capacity building and other sources of funding in order to invest in other sectors of society, aside from agriculture.



## **The Revd Jo-Ann Todd**

CANADA

REPORT ON UNCSW56

### **ONE TOPIC REGARDING AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING RURAL WOMEN IN CANADA**

I have struggled in terms of how to respond to this, as Canada is such a geographically large nation, full of regional diversities, each area with its own challenges. I have decided to speak from my personal perspective and observations. As a city person who has now lived and worked in rural mid-western Ontario for more than 30 years, I have come to the conclusion that the single most important issue that affects rural communities, and hence rural women and their families is rural depopulation. This has been caused by long term farm gate price instability – fluctuating boom and bust cycles that have resulted in farmers who have lost everything, or sold out before it got that far. These lands are then purchased by farmers who have the security of supply market regulated commodities, larger individual land holders who buy up or rent acreages to cash crop for profit based on sheer economy of scale, and of greater concern, the large multi-national corporations who are buying up large tracts of land, particularly in Western Canada. A quick look at 2006 Statistics Canada data in Snapshot of Canadian Agriculture confirms my observations. “As farm numbers drop, the average size of a Canadian farm has increased...” and “the average age of farm operators continues to increase.” So, fewer farmers are farming and those who are farming are getting older. “The number of operators under 35 years of age has been declining since at least 1991...” Although interestingly “(T)he proportion of women who count themselves in as farm operators has increased since 2001 (2006 census data at 27.8%) and (they) make up 40% of operators on multiple operator farms (however) women continue to be rare as sole operators”. “Nearly half of all farms operators had an off-farm job or business.” Those families who can afford to and choose to farm have come to terms with the fact that do to so means to subsidize their lifestyle. Most farm families I know have at least one outside income to support them.

So many farm houses and barns stand empty. The small towns and villages that for generations were the hubs of rural communities have fewer people to support them; businesses shut down, stores close and main streets are full of empty store fronts. Hospitals down size or close completely, local doctors are long gone, and physician recruitment is a challenge. Local schools close and children are bussed for longer and longer periods to go to regional schools, Childcare centers are gone and churches close. Service clubs struggle to find members, economically depressed communities become but ghosts of their former selves, empty buildings abound. The government services that do remain are consolidated regionally. It is necessary to travel farther and farther to fulfill a family’s basic needs, (special needs are nigh impossible and where available, there are huge wait lists) and yet there is no public transportation—there aren’t enough people left to make it economically viable. Many young people, farm kids and town kids, leave to attend post-secondary education, and don’t return. Others leave to find work. For those who stay, or return to their home communities, jobs are difficult, if not impossible to find. “Although women in the four counties have higher levels of education than men...they earn less money and are more likely than men to be unemployed or not participating in the labour force.” *[from Statistics Canada as reported in Poverty, It’s Not a Choice I Made; A Report Card on Women & Poverty in Huron, Perth Grey and Bruce Counties, 2008]*

“Our review of the literature on rural poverty suggests the following groups of sub-populations are most vulnerable to rural poverty: children, women... immigrants, seniors and Aboriginal people.” *[Gov’t of Canada: Research and Analysis – Rural Poverty Discussion Paper.]*

Rural housing price have fallen, making housing in small rural towns and rental farm houses increasingly attractive for lower income people, particularly in light of extreme housing prices in larger urban centres. Although I have no data, it seems in-migration of lower income individuals and families to rural communities is on the rise. “Rapidly rising housing cost in most urban centres offers the largest explanation for the rise in low (urban) income.” [*Gov’t of Canada: Research and Analysis – Rural Poverty Discussion Paper*] Local papers all reported significant increases in rural food bank usage in 2011.

And here-in may lay the opportunity for Anglican (and other faith) communities. Although many rural Anglican churches are small and elderly, and themselves are struggling with financial viability, using the gifts of the people in the churches, including the use of the building itself, ministries focused on out-reach programs to those struggling in poverty provides the chance to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Churches can work together to support or increase existing local initiatives or create new programs as befits the needs within each community. Example of which I am aware: supporting school food programs, weekly meal programs and food banks, use of church buildings for support agencies who need local space for services, and advocating for increased rural services. Our futures may depend on reaching out to those who truly need us, much like the days of the early Christian Church.



## **The Revd Penny Lewis**

CANADA

REPORT ON UNCSW56

I live in rural southern Ontario in Canada on 100 acre property. It is made up of coniferous and deciduous forests, agricultural fields and a large pond. The forests are registered as 'managed forest' and have just been harvested. A local farmer harvests the hay fields. Our pond and surrounding land are classified as wet land and registered as such. This allows the 100 acres to have different classifications so that the land is managed in a sound environmental way.

Historically this geographical area was used by aboriginal tribes. They were pushed off the land as government offered the land with title to immigrants from Scotland and Ireland in the middle to late 1800's. These rural folk cleared the land of trees and huge boulders. It was a tough job with virtually no tools but saws, pick axes and the sweat of the brow. They built fences, had simple hand plows and eventually horses assisted the farmer. The farms practiced mixed farming. This included crops, animals and there was always had a vegetable garden. They usually had food for the table but little else. They lived very close to the line. This was all prior to Medicare and social assistance in Canada

Then things changed. I live in the Mono Hills. All was well when the horse pulled the plow and wagons, but when the tractor came in it was a different matter. The farmer who originally owned our property was killed when his tractor rolled over on him. With the land not so suited to mechanized farming and folk finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, the third set of land dwellers / owners began to move in. Today these are known as 'gentlemen' farmers; people who make their living in urban areas and come to the country for weekends, holidays and often retirement. Farming is then their hobby not their livelihood. By and large these people are conscientious concerned people. They care about the environment, issues pertaining to water, land and wild life.

On a national level something happened when a book was published in Canada in 2007. It helped some urban folk get back in touch with rural roots... Alison Smith and J B McKinnon wrote The 100 Mile Diet, A Year of Local Eating. [Random House Canada] The book was based on their experience of following a challenge to eat only food that was produced within a 100 mile radius of where they lived in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia. The effect of the book was to make city folk much more conscious of where their food came from, how far it had travelled to the super market and the plight of local farmers. Some of the growth of farmers' markets can be traced to the concept of eating locally.

For many rural folk in Canada the challenges of transportation, education, medical care, industrial agriculture and development, and even clean water for our aboriginal people are just some of the issues they have to face. Canada is very much an urban country. It is important for us who attended the CSW 56 to hear the challenges of rural women living in developing countries. We need to ask and seek responses to the questions: how does how we live, our trade policies, our protection acts, our exports, adversely affect rural women living in developing countries?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Anglican UN Office and Rachel Chardon for facilitating the visit to the UN and the hospitality offered to those Anglicans who were accredited through this office. It is when we connect with our Anglican sisters from other parts of the world that we can begin to see the incarnation of the world wide Anglican family and work to support one and other. It is when we can hear the call to a 'social gospel'.





## **France Vixamar**

HAITI

### **REPORT ON UNCSW56**

Rural women in Haïti remain vulnerable and marginalized in society. Unlike men, they are responsible for all commercial activities related to purchases and sales. They must find solutions to ensure crop storage and processing of products collected. In addition, they walk long hours on very rough tracks, or use public transport that is deficient and accident prone to go to the marketplace that is usually squalid and crowded with trash. Many ditches with dirty water and flies have to be avoided. The marketplace is where basic commodities are often sold at prices prohibitive by merchants from the cities.

Rural women are responsible for the selection of crops and seed supplies. Almost exclusively, women control the distribution of crops. They are therefore better informed than men in the profitability of various crops and are often seen as better managers than men. The importance of their role in the distribution sector of the urban and regional economy is indisputable. Their activities vary, as some are involved in the fish auction markets on the street, while others spend a good amount of time looking for sales in the small stores and markets. In addition, there are those rural women who focus on the trade of goods.

Income is generally below the minimum wage and is used mostly to feed and provide for the children. This trade does no other form of insurance against illness, theft or fire, for example. Unlike the small traders, women entrepreneurs are generally educated women. They run and operate hair salons, fashion boutiques, restaurants; shops, housewares, cosmetic shops, and kindergartens.

Rural women play an important role in the economy and society. Whether it is in business or commercial farming, the formal or informal sector, women have a tremendous effect on both the domestic and national economy.

Women have come to realize the importance of their role in the upward march of the country towards progress and civilization. They are a force with which the nation can and does rely on. They endow specific organizations, participate in developing the country and often find original and effective answers to problems in their communities. The struggle for the emergence of a more just and egalitarian society is inconceivable without the effective and efficient participation of Haitian women who must throw their weight onto the scales for their full participation in national development.



## Amy Tanaka and Mieko Nishimaki

JAPAN

### REPORT ON UNCSW56

The rural area of Japan is closely connected to Japan's primary industry. It has been sustaining the domestic diet – i.e. rice and seafood – and has been protecting mountains and forests, which provide the water supply and serve various other functions necessary for our daily lives. Japanese women have played a significant role as a major labor force in the primary industry, often belonging to their family business. The primary industry's labor population has been diminishing significantly overtime, so much so that it has been a serious social issue. However, it is remarkable that Japanese women have been revitalizing the local economy. The progress of women's participation in the management and decision-making process of village communities will open new potential to the following issues: "urbanization (a higher concentration of people in big cities) and depopulation of provincial cities," "food safety," "practical use of sustainable resources," and "decreased self-sufficiency in food." However, we apprehend decades of ramifications on the primary industry, due to the nuclear disaster that occurred after the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11th, 2011, which has placed even the right to live in great jeopardy.

#### **Current situation of Japan's rural area**

70 percent of Japan's land is covered by mountains and forests. Therefore, the majority of its arable land outside of the flat area is mountainous and too narrow to take advantage of agricultural machinery. Due to their small scale, farms in Japan are mostly family-operated as a supplemental business, and for a long time more than half of their major workforce has been female family members.

It is also a serious problem that, without new successors, the average age of farmers is getting progressively older because of the nature of this business: the productivity of petty farmers is always subject to natural conditions and is not profitable enough to pay off their hard labor.

Hence, growing depopulation is propelling the increase of abandoned farming land year by year. On the other hand, Japan, being an archipelago surrounded by ocean, has many good natural harbors. Due to its traditional seafood diet, Japan is the world's biggest seafood consumer. However, this too has been facing the issues of aging and lack of successors due to the decrease of hauls (by overfishing, environmental changes in inshore fishery caused by natural and manmade conditions), increase of cheap imported seafood, and hard labor. The vast majority of fishermen are male. However, women are in charge of work when the haul is brought in, as they sort, process, pack, transport, and sell fish at the market.

*Reference: In 1965, on a calorie base, Japan's self-sufficiency ratio was 70 percent. However, with the change in diet and domestic industrial structure, and economic globalization, the self-sufficiency gradually decreased. As of 2011, Japan's self-sufficiency ratio was down to 39 percent, resulting in Japan being the greatest food importer in the world.*

#### **Women**

In rural Japan, despite the fact that women have been a major labor force in the primary industry, they are seldom part of the decision-making body. It is undeniable that their positions are not high enough for them to contribute to that process.

*Reference: The percentage of female members in agricultural committees - 4.93% (2010)*

*The percentage of agricultural committees without any female members – 47.7% (2010)*

*The percentage of female board members in Fisheries Cooperative Associations – 0.31% (2009)*



*The percentage of female board members in Forest Cooperative Associations- 0.34% (2009) (“White Paper on Gender Equality”)*

*Representatives of management by gender: Male: 99.8%, Female: 0.2%*

*Women with no wages, or workers’ compensation benefits: 52.0 (2008 as per Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries)*

*Women who have “retirement plans for agricultural laborers”: 9.2% in 2009 (Source: Agricultural Census)*

Besides farming, the wife expects her husband’s participation in household work, child-rearing, and elderly care. The same situation can be seen in other camps of the primary industry – a situation that must be understood in this context: that women’s position in Japanese society has been kept low historically (as of 2011, the Gender Gap Index ranked Japan 98th out of 135 nations, the worst in developed countries) and that a strong sense of “gender roles” and a tradition of “primogeniture” have been preserved in rural areas.

It is imperative to actualize the empowerment of rural women: by promoting their participation in management, relief from excessive labor, enlightening and propelling family management agreements (deciding wages and holidays among family members), partaking in the decision-making process, increasing the opportunities to learn professional skills and knowledge, facilitating necessary information, nurturing leadership so that women can make necessary proposals to the local community, and a revolution in the male companion’s fixed mindset concerning gender roles .

Rural Japanese women continue to strive to increase their family income by the direct sale (bypassing brokers and COOPs) of processed food, using excess and lower grade produce that would otherwise be discarded, and by running restaurants featuring their local produce. They have inherited the know-how to make preserved food such as miso, soy sauce, tofu, and pickles. As they manage processed food businesses, they take advantage of these traditional skills by passing them on to new generations.

Reflecting on the past, the sustainable and recyclable lifestyle is now regaining popularity. For instance, some people find it very educational and beneficial to experience the rural retro life, where they learn how to use biologically diverse communal mountains and mutually supportive communities in which the members coexist in harmony. Therefore, rural women plan and run green tours and programs for urban dwellers, to experiment with daily country life – programs that are spreading widely.

This type of new entrepreneurial movement has brought additional income and motivation to women who used to be kept outside of management. It also supplies employment and exchange opportunities between city and country people.

## **Conclusion**

First, it has been reported that “support projects/developments” by Japanese ODAs and such are actually destroying other Asian rural communities. Had they given the opportunities to meet and collaborate with other Asian counterparts, Japanese rural women would be able to share their expertise in order to eradicate poverty and hunger. The actualization of this idea would be a true model of “local-oriented development” rather than those useless, bureaucratic ones that often generate negative consequences.

Second, the Great East Japan Earthquake followed by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster brought critical damages to Japan’s agriculture, forestry and fishing industries. Its ramifications, especially physical hazard to children, are one of our biggest concerns: their growing cells are susceptible to radiation. By eating radio-active contaminated food, they will suffer with internal exposure for decades. What you eat is the source of your life. You can practically hear the cry of these women who must deal with food production.

Considering their feelings, it is absolutely unacceptable that our government is trying to sell nuclear power plants overseas, especially to other Asian nations. We feel a strong sense of mission, that we must spread this to women throughout Asia, that we must collaborate with them in order to create safe and sustainable environments without nuclear energy, and that we must ensure that our children can live long, healthy lives.

The Anglican Church in Japan started a disaster relief project called “Let’s walk together,” deploying two support posts in addition to the existing administrative office. These stations help people with handicaps, female foreigners, etc. Our church will continue to search, help, and walk together with underprivileged people.



## **June Nderitu**

### **KENYA**

### **REPORT ON UNCSW56**

#### **CONDITION AND ISSUES OF RURAL WOMEN IN KENYA**

With the advent of the millennium, the status of Kenyan women and specifically rural women has various facets based on the very dynamic nature of life in Kenya and in the world.

As with many African countries, gender inequality which is more pronounced in the rural areas in Kenya has undermined economic growth and social development due to constraints in access to social and economic capital such as employment, political, financial and social services.

Scholars, politicians, religious institutions and government all agree that empowering women and particularly rural women will enable them to actively participate and contribute to social, economic and political activities, which is critical to sustainable development. To this end, Kenya has put in place various policies and interventions including legislation, female specific policies and programs aimed at addressing specific gender gaps or forms of discrimination. Such interventions include affirmative action, promoting girl child education and economic empowerment through the introduction of the Women's Enterprise Development Fund.

Kenya is currently implementing a long term development blueprint - Vision 2030, alongside the work towards the Millennium Development Goals. Within this framework that seeks to transform Kenya into a middle income country by 2030, gender concerns are addressed under the Social pillar with interventions in financing for enterprise development, education and access to social services taking top priority.

The biggest challenge facing Kenya in respect of gender interventions that have a bearing on rural women is the lack of data and statistics. Those available on social and political dimensions are somewhat scanty.

A couple of issues:

**Education:** Interventions aim at promoting girl child education through free primary and secondary tuition, provision of bursaries and scholarships, expansion and improvement of infrastructure in schools including sanitary facilities, construction of boarding schools in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), provision of water and sanitation facilities to create conducive and gender responsive environments particularly in ASAL schools etc. However, gender disparities exist in participation, progression and performance in rural areas at primary education level for girls.

**Financing for Enterprise Development:** About 35% of rural household nationwide are headed by women and this is a reflection of the overall poverty level in the rural areas. Households headed by women in rural areas are the poorest (over 50%) This poverty can be alleviated through empowering rural women to access credit, education and employment. GoK has put the Women Enterprise Development Fund to reduce poverty levels through economic empowerment of women. This fund avails credit to women for enterprise development (businesses and other economic activities) at low interest rates. Challenges however abound in targeting of, management and disbursement of the fund and political interference in some cases.



## **The Revd Petra Jeong Woon Lee**

KOREA

REPORT ON UNCSW56

### **TOWARD THE EMPOWERMENT OF KOREAN FEMALE FARM WORKERS**

In my country rural women face a variety of issues, however this report focuses primarily on the status of today's rural women farmers. The demographic rate of women farmers in the major agricultural business was 28 percent in 1970, and since then it has increased rapidly, rising to 52 percent in 2006. This rate has doubled what it was almost 4 decades ago. According to the result of the 2007 agriculture investigation, which the Korean National Statistical Office announced, 51.4 percent of the Korean agriculture population is female farm workers.

The growth of the demographic rate of female farm workers in Korea is growing gradually, and the role of female farmers has been making remarkable progress in rural areas. Nevertheless, the distinctive recognition of their status is very rare. Even though they are recognized as female farm workers, many of them remain in the part-time job market or as assistant farm workers because of its complicated legal process. More specifically, I'm going to look into the reality of South Korean Women Farmers.

#### **The Reality of South Korean Female Farm Workers**

Although the female farm workers occupy the half of agricultural human resource, their status is not as clear as a substantial manager because many of them are regarded as unpaid family workers. Additionally women are considered as a supplementary labour force because they are mainly engaged in monotonous work unit. And this causes the devaluation of their labour value.

The rate of the ownership of the farmland by female farm workers is markedly low. What is more important is that the farmer's main assets: farmland, housing, etc. are registered in the name of male owner at government bureau. This has been customary in South Korea. There are limited policy loans for women who do not own the farmland; even more their career in agriculture can be hardly recognized.

Women farmers' labour has not been properly assessed and they don't have clear job status so that the standard compensation after traffic accident and natural disaster is being applied unfavourably against their wishes.

The female farm workers cannot have their own various social insurance as a career woman. In cases of social security service and security of the aged, they are vulnerable.

The female agriculture is excluded from the structure of production. Although 377,000 people from all parts of the country participate in 16,950 crop units; there are still only 4.4 percent of women farmers amongst them. Participation in agriculture guild and company is only 3.1 percent as well, as of the end of 2004.

According to the Gender Statistics DB from Korea Women's Development Institute (2006), gender wage gap in the field of agriculture, forestry and fishery (male average wage vs. female average wage shows 48 percent.

According to the 2003 Survey for Women Farmers done by Kim YoungOk and Kim YiSeon, although the level of participation in agricultural issues and decision making issues varies slightly, chances of women participation in the decision-making process are relatively very low and mostly women get involved in the decision-making process of their husbands to a certain degree.

### **The Way Forward**

To be briefed on the reality of Korean women farm workers, the insecurity of the position of female farm workers in the related law doesn't comply with the increasing number of women farm workers.

Moreover the reality is that female farm workers live in a more conservative and sexually discriminated culture than urban dwellers. Additionally, they are located in places where there are no social security services due to their uncertain status.

Furthermore they feel a double sense of alienation from the multiple works with household chores, farming and community activities, the lack of ability of information collection and literacy for related government policy, and the lack of leadership experience in society.

Policies should be implemented to reorganize the farming market for rural women in order to correspond with changes in women farmers' role as principal agents in agricultural area. It is required to customize policies for women farmers so that they correspond to the development of women activity, life cycle and leadership training.



## **Pritty Sangma**

### **NORTH INDIA**

### **REPORT ON UNCSW56**

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from Church of North India, and the Diocese of North-East India. I praise and thank God for the privilege He has given me to be able to be in your midst as part of the initiative of the Anglican Communion's delegations to the 56th session on the Status of Women.

The Church of North India (CNI) covers all the states of the Indian Union except the four Southern states and Pondicherry, a tiny Union Territory. CNI has 27 Dioceses. The Diocese of the North-East India from where I come is located in the extreme north eastern part of India and is surrounded in most parts by China (Tibet), Burma (Myanmar), Bhutan and Bangladesh. The diocese was formerly known as Diocese of Assam. North- East India is geographically isolated from the rest of the country and economically underdeveloped.

The Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (WFCS), a wing of CNI, was founded after the formation of the CNI in 1970 through the union of several churches. WFCS functions in the Synodical, Diocesan and Pastorate levels. The objective of WFCS is to provide a forum to women in the church to network for the purpose of empowering women and raising a women's force in the church to work as agents of change at home, church and community.

The wide gulf between urban and rural women in Indian social status is significant and continues. Illiteracy, poverty, and poor health, still provide huge challenges in rural areas and women are among the most vulnerable. The empowerment of women in rural India could change the face of the whole country. As Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India put it - "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women".

Women in today's India face discrimination not just on the basis of gender but on other factors such as caste, community, religion. Discrimination against the women and girls begins very early, often before her birth - prenatal sex determination tests followed by abortions eliminate thousands of female fetuses.

It continues as she trudges along the roles of daughter, wife, and mother. Dictums like "A girl is the wealth of others" (Parayadhan, in Hindi), "Bringing up a girl child is like watering a neighbour's garden" abound in many of the Indian languages. Those girls who manage to survive birth and beyond, find the dice heavily loaded against them. Women and girls are denied equal access to food, health care, education, employment, their rights and even simple human dignity. Over time various progressive legislations have been made by the state and the law courts have intervened to change things for the better. Things are getting better, but they still have a long way to go.

In North-east India, women enjoy greater mobility and visibility than women of other parts of the country. Practices such as dowry and bride burning are not very prevalent in the region. This is often cited to portray a picture of equity between men and women in the region and has given rise to the presumption that violence against women is not a major concern in the region. Data collected by the North East Network an NGO, however suggests that violence against women, particularly domestic violence, is on the rise in the North-east.

For about five decades now the region has faced some kind of disturbance or the other. As it generally happens universally in conflict situations, women and girls have borne the brunt of the suffering and atrocities on this account and often homelessness.

The WFCS of our diocese has stepped in, albeit in small ways, to do what it can. DWFCs had helped in one of the ethnic flare up which had displaced thousands of people, mostly poor. We could visit some of the remotest villages, and distribute things that the victims needed most, and immediately.

The Diocesan Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (DWFCs) is working in collaboration with other churches and NGOs to build bridges and bring peace to the turbulent region. We believe that women and the girls will benefit when peace will return.

With respect HIV, North-east India is considered one of India's high risk regions. Drugs are a problem too. Reports say the region's location plays a significant role in drug trafficking. It is well-recognised that drug addiction is the key cause of HIV infection. Trafficking of rural women and girls in the region is growing. The problem is aggravated because of low level economic development in the region. Many young girls from the villages are migrating to bigger cities in other parts of the country in search of jobs. We have conducted awareness programmes in the villages with the help of Christian doctors and educators. We have, too, conducted workshops women to create awareness of the social and legal rights of women.

North-East India is the home to more than 200 of India's 300 odd listed tribes. Most ethnic groups in the region have strong egalitarian traditions, this value extending largely to the matter of gender. Societies such as the Khasis and Garos of Meghalaya state are matrilineal where inheritance rights go to daughters. However, even in these societies women have little voice in political decision making. These tribes have local council for administering traditional and customary laws, but women have no place in such councils. This suggests the need for the empowerment of women in a matrilineal society.

The situation can be worse for the tribes where the male chief owns all property and can do anything with the land as he wishes.

DWFCs is working on capacity building, training and providing exposure on the issues of reproductive health, civil and legal rights, violence against women, natural resource management of rural women and girls and so on.

DWFCs has been involved in economic enhancement of rural women particularly taking advantage of the strong tradition in many ethnic communities of handloom weaving. DWFCs is focusing on this traditional skill. Girls from the rural background have been given education and training in computer, office management so that they can earn their living and help others in their villages whenever they can. I am indebted to few big hearted women in AWE who have helped in the past the rural girls to see their dreams in the Diocese. My parish has taken up programmes to reach out to street children in the city in collaboration with a Christian NGO.

We all know transforming an entrenched system of gender discrimination is simply not going to happen overnight. We cannot talk about empowering women without redefining the concept of power. Empowerment is facilitating, encouraging women and girls to articulate their needs, and enabling them to stand on their own feet to secure their rightful place in society and home. It is not enough to make women literate. We have to give them education that will shape and change their outlook.

As we gather here we have to find ways of fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of the millions of women and girl children who are underprivileged and discriminated. A society cannot develop without the development of womenfolk. A happy woman will make a loving home and raise sons and daughters with healthy outlook towards life, and this in turn give the dividend of peaceful co-existence in society.

Let us put on the amour of God to face the challenges, and do what we can to bring about a change. We must support each other in prayer so God guides us in our work. God bless.





**Alice Garrick**  
PAKISTAN  
REPORT ON UNCSW56

**THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN PAKISTAN**

Women Development & Service Society (WDSS) has had the privilege of a diaconate role within the service outreach programs of the Diocese of Raiwind – Church of Pakistan. Our focus over the last 20 years had been on women in the area of capacity building, education and awareness building in rural and semi-urban areas, promoting skills, legal aid and human rights.

The role of rural women in their family and in society is very important. Indeed, the rural women in Pakistan have been actively involved in agriculture and its related fields. These women contribute to crop production and harvesting, they look after livestock and they also prepare dairy products. Many poor women live under the umbrella of a landlord for their bread and butter or because of his influence. The women are also involved in forced employment as maid-servants, field laborers for collecting vegetables, cotton collecting, rice planting, cleaning of cattle yard, etc.

The brick kiln industry is common in rural areas and unfortunately, the workers of brick kilns belong to the poorest class of society and the women help their husbands from dawn to make the mud for bricks. This is very tiring work for women but they have to do this. Their children are also involved in the process of brick making. Because of this hard work and lack of proper food, they look very weak and sometimes they become the victims of serious diseases. Most of the brick workers are paid high wages in advance and they have to give back the loan in the form of brick making labor. Despite, such a huge contribution of women in family and society their role has not been recognized.

There is a general inhuman attitude and violence that is practiced all over the country in many different ways. The rural women/young girls were used for settling the disputes between two families. This custom is called vani and swara in Punjab and NWFP provinces.

In this dealing, the age of male and female is not considered. Keeping in view this unfair dealing of girls, the government has banned this custom recently but even then the cases of this practice still happen in backward areas of Punjab. In the same way, in the Sind province, the women/young girls are married with the Holy Quran just because for the safety of family property. This practice is also banned under the law.

Aside from agriculture sector, a large number of rural women are involved in traditional business such as sewing, embroidery, knitting, cruised work, making of mud pots, baskets, rope, cot knitting etc. Some women conduct the poultry businesses in farming, supply of feed, hatching and egg supply. The working atmosphere of rural women is pitiable as they have no security from their masters. That is why the violence against women is common.

The women in Pakistan also perform their duty to domestic responsibilities such as looking after children, cooking, cleaning, washing and also dealing with the family matters and problems.

Another dark aspect of rural women is the human smuggling from backward areas to big cities. The human smugglers buy the women/young girls from poor families for a small amount of money and they sell them as house maid servants.

In poor class society, the women are not considered the valuable human beings and therefore they are not given the opportunity of education or any skill training. They think that girls will go away from their families and there is no need to spend money on their grooming. Often times, males are given preference over females in feeding, clothing etc.

The women are not decision makers in the family or in marriage or even in their careers. The arranged marriage is more respectable and the women have to marry whoever their parents decide. After the marriage, the women must to face family likes and dislikes and maintain the relationships of in-laws. If a male birth is not achieved, the women have to listen to the unfair talks from in-laws. Women cannot even decide the number of births.

The government is well aware about the difficult situation of women for their development and taking the measures for her social status. It has started many rural development programs in the sectors of education and medical care and cure programs as well as small loan business schemes. But the lack of knowledge and cooperation are the main obstacles to achieve the targeted results. It is a great need to promote the awareness of women's uplift among the poor communities and make the positive atmosphere for marginalized groups of women.

In the past years we, the Women Development & Service Society (WDSS), have been able to share the message of freedom, breaking barriers and neutralizing traditional values in gender and social relationships. This has been a challenging task with an Islamic context, and we have a sense of achievement. However all the achievements and encouragements we have had over the years, we still need to go a long way in our objectives of justice, human dignity and equality. The unfortunate reality of rural women in this country still needs to be reorganized and dealt with by the Churches in Pakistan.





## **The Revd Alicia Tabacla Sibaen**

PHILIPPINES

REPORT ON UNCSW56

### **“THE INDIGENOUS RURAL WOMEN OF THE CORDILLERAS IN NORTHERN PHILIPPINES: THE HURDLES THAT LIMITS THEM TO BE AGENTS IN POVERTY AND HUNGER ERADICATION.”**

A woman advocate of women’s rights some years ago once wrote: *“When women stop to work even just for a day or an hour, the world economy will collapse.”* I believe this to be true because when women stop to plant and gather there would be no food on the table. What I prepared to share with you this afternoon is specifically focused on the Indigenous Rural Women--their struggles for economic empowerment, and the challenges that prevents them from full participation to the eradication of poverty and hunger.

**Overview:** There are around 110 ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines and they constitute almost 15% of our population. Most of them live in mountain ranges, interior hills, and coastal areas. One of the second largest of this ethno-linguistic group is found in the northern Philippines. This region is popularly known today as the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). This is where I was born and raised as an indigenous rural woman myself. I belong to the Kankana-ey tribe which is a farming tribe. Buguias my home town is known as the “salad bowl of the Philippines” because we grow at least 68-70% of vegetables that supplies the whole nation. But because the Philippine Government is a signatory to the General Agreements on Tariffs & Trade (GATT-WTO), our vegetable industry is very much affected by the importation of cheap vegetables and fruits from China.

Indigenous Peoples of the Cordilleras are collectively known as “Igorots” (*“Mountain people”*). A woman is called “Igorota” which carries with it either a positive or negative connotation. For lowlanders, “igorots” are uneducated, backward people who live in the mountains. This is often the root of discrimination between lowlanders and highlanders. On the positive side the Igorots are known for their unique way of life and earth spirituality. They have a unique sense of connection to nature. They have this belief that nature is their kin.

But indigenous peoples especially women are doubly burdened with gender discrimination and discrimination as indigenous people. Since we live in the mountains, the government seems to overlook the IP’s and this seen in low government budget appropriation, government neglect, and making them least priority in economic projects being implemented.

#### **How did my advocacy begun?**

After my seminary education, I was assigned in the mining areas in my diocese and it was where my eyes were opened to the difficulties and struggles of women in the mines. It was where my advocacy for “anti-mining” begun in the late 90’s. I was assigned there during the time when the Benguet Mining Corporation (one of the oldest & biggest mining corporations in the Philippines which is of course 90% owned by foreign company) is ready to do an “open-pit mining” (literally flattening the mountain) to extract the gold ore in the easiest and fastest way possible. The women in this community where at receiving end of the ill effects of this mining practice because it means massive dislocation, destruction of their farms, water source, destruction of their properties, and the disintegration of their socio-cultural life.

During this time women did not watch from a far. They organized themselves, conducted signature campaigns, collaborated with other NGO's and People's Organization, marched to the Mining Company, and lobbied in the local government for support. There was even a day when the women invited me to go with them in the actual site of the open pit mining and formed a human barricade to protect the flattening of the mountain. It became a bloody confrontation between the women protesters and company hired military men. Most of the women were physical harassed, pushed, kicked off by the company guards. We made some impact, but of course the Mining Company has all the resources and connections to do and get what they want.

On a lighter note, a success story happened in Surigao, in southern Philippines; the women organized themselves to protest against a foreign mining company which was sanctioned by the government to operate within two villages. When the wife of the Barangay Captain (local chief) knew about it, she immediately organized the village women so that when the staff of the mining company came to talk to the village officials the women with the stroke a church bell formed a human barricade and protested against the mining operation. And because of this protest the company finally withdrew its application.

So what happened when women are displaced by the mining operations? Most of the women are forced to find opportunities in the urban areas, and some went to work as domestic helpers abroad. But what's in store for them in the urban areas? Almost nothing. Many end up as side- walk vendors, street sweepers, waitresses, household help, and if no opportunity at all some of them end up as scavengers hoping to find a living in somebody's trash.

### **Challenges: Impacts on Indigenous Rural Women**

**A. Mining:** Indigenous communities have long ago realized that mining will affect their means of livelihood and in the end leave their lands useless and their mountains bare and susceptible to disaster. It is for this reason that there is a united struggle against mining here. Inarguably, the primary concern of indigenous peoples (IPs) in the Philippines is the issue of land tenure. Mining causes massive displacement of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands. Development aggression such as mining, has threatened indigenous way of life because of the intrusion in their ancestral domain – their farms, homes, forests, and sacred places of worship. Also the increased migration from other communities seeking work negatively affects local people. Deforestation and flattening of mountains for mining make them susceptible to landslides and other disasters that affect upland and lowland communities.

Occasional disasters such as mine tailing dam failures aggravate the pollution of soils and rivers caused by toxic chemicals and acid mine drainage which have serious impacts on the health of indigenous communities, especially of women.

Air, water, and land pollution contaminate their food and water intake while mineworkers and communities at the receiving end of toxic mine tailings face a range of serious health threats such as asthma, tuberculosis, skin diseases, gastrointestinal diseases and even cancer. Women also are at risk to suffer reproductive health problems such as spontaneous abortion and malformed babies.

As homemakers, women are also greatly affected by the disintegration and social disorders caused by mining among which destruction of traditional values and customs, and even family unity, are sought by bribery methods that try to undermine mining communities.

As care givers, women also experience difficulty in gathering food and water for the family since the forests are no longer their homes – they will now need to adjust to the money-based economy which indigenous peoples are not used to. Carreon further reported that in many cases there has been an increase in the number of domestic violence against women, and incidents of alcohol and drug addiction, gambling, incest, and even wife swapping and infidelity.

### *In conclusion*

I believe that rural women in the Philippines can become empowered through both formal and informal education because that was the main source of empowerment for me. I came from the Northern Philippines called the "Cordilleras" and I am one of the few who struggled to get an education. I also believe that other rural women can be empowered through awareness building, education of their basic "human rights", confidence building, encouragement to become leaders in their own community and to help them find better access to health, education, and livelihood assistance (like access to capital to build up their own business), and work or livelihood that truly celebrate the gifts of women, and not those that expose them to hazard and danger.



**Dr Elaine Cameron**

SCOTLAND

REPORT ON UNCSW56

## CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION FACING RURAL WOMEN IN SCOTLAND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH (SEC)

Life in rural Scotland, an astonishing 90% of the country's land mass, needs to be given more value and esteem in order to receive the funding and infrastructure support it requires. Although many of the challenges affect both women and men, because traditional gender role models and attitudes tend to prevail, it is women who have the worst deal: e.g. the lack of childcare; fewer opportunities for paid employment; poor public transport; slow (possibly non-existent) broadband.

Indisputably the quality of rural life can be enhanced through education, in its broadest sense. For the SEC, there are two distinct, but interlinked, aspects to such a challenge: to be an advocate for the importance of improved rural education; and to deliver appropriate confidence-building theological education within rural congregations.

Working ecumenically is important. Currently such an opportunity lies within the Scottish Churches Rural Group (SCRG), a group within Action for Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) committed to developing opportunities in rural life. The advocacy role – ensuring that the value and dignity of rural communities is understood by government and other decision-makers – is strengthened by denominational rural collaboration and by the many years which the Group have spent working with the government on issues such as Food Policy and Pilgrim Routes.

However, the SEC can still have a distinct voice. Our Scottish Parliament works consultatively, giving various bodies the opportunity to be heard. A challenge facing many rural communities is the possible closure of their local primary school. The SEC has responded to a recent Government consultation, advocating that primary school closures would be detrimental not only to the children, but also to women, and the wider community. Rural women plead, "Please keep our small rural schools." The SEC has underlined the many benefits of such schools: small class sizes; children living at home, an awareness of important rural needs.

The SEC challenges the view that where people are educated does not matter. People, especially women, educated IN the rural community are energised and empowered about the issues important to the rural agenda. Collaborative decision-making births constructive action, and calls for innovative approaches to learning and teaching methods – e.g. teachers becoming facilitators, helping children use internet-based tools (including mobile phones?) appropriately. Innovative course content could help women access micro credit, and become rural business entrepreneurs.

These issues challenge the SEC is in relation to its approach to theological education, and how it nurtures women, and men, in rural congregations. For all our material and economic advancements, there is a great hunger amongst women for deeper, spiritual understanding of their faith. They want to explore how their faith fits with their daily lives. They need to better understand their calling as individuals, their mission as a member of a congregation and as part of the church presence in the wider local community. It is about gaining confidence to speak as disciples of Christ.

The two challenges interlink. For as rural women's confidence in their mission grows, so will a supportive community spirit – without which our rural communities cannot thrive.



**Cindy Petersen**

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**REPORT ON UNCSW56**

## **CHALLENGES FACED BY RURAL WOMEN IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) stretches across seven countries, Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and the island of St Helena. It has a diverse membership of approximately 3-4 million people representing many cultures and languages. There are many challenges in this Province. In South Africa the majority of its people have faced years of oppression under the policy of apartheid. Mozambique and Angola are rebuilding after being ravaged by years of civil war. The Province is confronted every day with the pandemic of HIV & AIDS, poverty eradication, environmental issues, improvement of the level of education and a lack of delivery of basic services. In rural areas women suffer due to a lack of basic services including water, sanitation, roads, health care and education. These women work hard to provide for their families in areas that are challenged by high unemployment rates for themselves, husbands and children. These women look towards those who can assist them in providing solutions and bring meaningful improvement to their communities.

Hope Africa, the social development programme of ACSA was set up to assist as a capacity building component to build institutional capacity of Dioceses in the Province in number of programmes. Hope Africa has a deliberate focus of building the social development ministries in dioceses that are rural in location, with high rates of poverty and limited access to economic opportunities. Through participatory learning methodologies it is hoped that social development structures will participate in building responses and approaches to local sustainable development strategies. Some of the projects included in the programme are: education, HIV & AIDS, food security, social services, income generation, food gardens and agriculture, health care, skills training and advocacy. In addition to Hope Africa, the Mother's Union (Zululand) and Tswaraneng (Eastern Cape) are also doing work that focuses on rural women and poverty alleviation.

A Women and Gender strategic plan was accepted at the Provincial Synod in 2011 and will be implemented across the Province over the period 2011 to 2020.

The plan has six strategic goals which include: combating gender based violence, counselling and support, inclusive language, developing strategies to address issues of human sexuality, formulating and influencing church policy on matters of gender and to source funding to support sustainable ministries. This project is headed by the Provincial Gender Desk Coordinator, the Revd Cheryl Bird and affects all women in the Province.

After the 2009 national elections the South Africa government established the Department for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities. One of the core functions of this department is to promote the realisation and protection of the rights of women, children and people with disabilities.

Another function is to co-ordinate, collaborate and partner with all government departments, public funded bodies, organs of civil society and the private sector to ensure that considerations of gender, disability and children are integrated into all government programmes and that the results are shown in this regard. In May 2011 a Rural Women Summit was held in the Limpopo Province, where the Minister of this department, Ms Lulu Xingwana categorised the challenges faced by rural women in South Africa. She highlighted: poor or lack of access to socio-economic and cultural infrastructure and services, public amenities and government services, decay of the social fabric leading to challenges of crime, lack of access

to water for both house hold use and agricultural development, low literacy, skills development and inappropriate labour practices, underutilisation or unsustainable use of natural resources, and unexploited opportunities in agriculture, tourism and mining. Ms Xingwana noted that in order “to achieve development of rural women, we have to strengthen efforts that promote collaboration between communities, civil society, the three spheres of government and the private sector” (speech delivered at the Rural Women Summit on 13 May 2011). She stated that departments and spheres of government need to work together to ensure that infrastructure such as housing, water, sanitation, multi-purpose centres, police stations, early childhood development centres, schools and clinics are delivered. She believes that these services are essential to improve the lives of women in rural areas and empower them to participate in all socio-economic activities.

This just a brief outline of some of the challenges in our Province. Hard work and collaboration are needed to improve the lives of rural women within the Province.



## **Jolly Bibirukamu**

UGANDA

REPORT ON UNCSW56

### **GRANDMOTHERS OF THE NYAKA AIDS FOUNDATION IN UGANDA**

Nyaka Aids Foundation is located in south western Uganda in the districts of Kanungu and Rukungiri, bordering Rwanda and the Republic of the Congo, and is about 400 miles away from the capital city of Kampala. Nyaka has introduced a series of community services and programmes – including farming, library services, health visits, water and sanitation, housing, nutritional counseling and support of orphaned children who are cared for by their grandmothers.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The prevailing HIV/AIDS scourge that began in the 80's and continues to date has broken the traditional African family through the deaths of adults, many of whom are middle aged parents; thus creating a new generation of orphans with no relatives to rely on except for their old grandmothers.

These old grandmothers, sparsely educated and very weak, are faced with the responsibility of rearing a generation of children who initially were brought up in urban settings, but now have to resort to the rural settings of their grandmothers.

Moreover, these children who are often times more than six years of age depend solely on their grandmothers for food, clothing, and nurturing. This setting is difficult for both the grandmothers and the children to adapt to. Worse, some of the grandchildren and grandmothers are HIV positive and the much needed healthcare services are often not accessible.

#### **CONDITIONS IN WHICH GRANDMOTHERS LIVE**

There are approximately 91 groups comprising 6,200 grandmothers who live in poverty and other poor conditions due to the lack of basic services such as water, transportation, healthcare, education, and the lack of awareness of their basic human rights.

Within the two districts the Nyaka Aids Foundation addresses the following social and economic conditions:

- Non-negotiable widow inheritance after the death of a husband
- Land grabbing by relatives, thus not enough land to grow food
- Lack of community awareness about child abuse resulting in grandchildren being forced into early marriages due to pregnancy
- Agriculture as the main source of income
- Grandmothers lack of agricultural skills
- Tools and seeds to maximum yield
- Environmental changes that have impacted the rainy season causing food shortage and affecting food security
- High rates of illiteracy among grannies
- Loss and grief
- While grannies have been equipped with income generating skills such as crafts making, there is a general lack of markets for their products
- Grannies lack of self-esteem and life skills
- Grannies three enemies: men, society, and the women who cannot vote women into power and decision making positions





## **Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson**

UNITED KINGDOM

REPORT ON UNCSW56

### **RURAL WOMEN IN ENGLAND – PERSPECTIVES FROM A CHANGING CONTEXT**

The UK is unique within the EU (European Union) and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in that it has a growing rural population. This phenomenon is rare: rural de-population is a major problem in many parts of the world. Each year the rural population of England grows by around 80,000 (a net change) with people primarily moving on retirement or with a young family, looking for access to nature, the countryside and good neighbours. 9.8M people live in rural England, 20% of the population of England.

Rural England has an ageing population with 2.3M people aged over 60, with proportionately fewer in the 15 – 29 age group as young people leave to find education, jobs and housing. Housing in villages and hamlets is very expensive with limited availability, and an absence of affordable homes for rent or purchase. It is questionable whether some rural communities will remain sustainable in the long term with an unbalanced population demographic, an absence of key workers (as they cannot afford to live in rural areas) and poor provision of services such as shops, post offices, clinics and public transport.

There are 900,000 households dispersed across rural England that live in income poverty, 21% of the rural population. Many of these households have children aged under 16, or are pensioners on fixed incomes. This is exacerbated by local rural jobs which tend to be minimum wage, temporary or seasonal and often paid at a lower rate compared to like for like jobs in urban areas. However statistics show that rural residents are less likely to be unemployed, live on low income, be in receipt of benefits, without qualifications or skills, have a baby before the age of 16, die prematurely, be anxious, be homeless, or live in fear of crime.

Food production is very important as 70% of the land area of England is used for agriculture or forestry with only 9.8% for the built environment, but very small numbers are now employed directly in agricultural production. Many rural women commute to work in nearby towns and cities, often in professional roles such as teachers, healthcare workers, business and public sector administration.

Job opportunities for women within rural areas are more limited but this encourages entrepreneurship and the development of micro and small businesses which have an increasingly important part in the economy. Retired grandparents play an increasingly important role in the care of children, as mothers often need to work to help sustain the household, and there are limited numbers of childcare places which are usually expensive.

English villages can be wonderfully engaging and inclusive places to live. They can also be closed, self-serving and exclusive, with some residents living very isolated lives. For some rural residents identity can be experienced in terms of place and community involvement. For others especially those in the hinterlands of major cities, the village acts purely as dormitory and recreation facility. Those whose networks of relationships may be elsewhere during the week often have little time or inclination to become involved in the wider life of the rural community. This leaves particularly older widowed women isolated and lonely and is also a problem for younger single person households.

There are 9639 rural Anglican churches in England, 60% of the total, with a church in almost every rural settlement. All of these churches will be part of multi-church groupings under the care of a priest who may or may not be paid. Rural churches in England tend to be run by lay people with the assistance of a priest who generally lives somewhere else. Without women

the rural Anglican Church would not function. Women take on leadership roles by being churchwardens, participating in church councils and leading or contributing to worship. Most children's work is done by women, who also organise social events, support the elderly and quite often take the lead on awareness raising and issues of justice. Rural women are less well represented on decision making bodies such as deanery and diocesan synods and the General Synod.

Women in rural areas play a vital role in community life and development, particularly if they attend their local church. They volunteer to organise and participate in a great many groups and events in rural communities. These include groups for women such as the Women's Institute (WI) or Mothers' Union, voluntary health and social service provision such as Meals on Wheels, and older people's clubs. Children's and young people's activities including Guiding and Scouting groups, after school clubs and parent and toddlers, tend to be run by women. Women also organise village events throughout the year: fetes, carnivals and other celebrations.

Women participate in governing bodies such as village hall committees and school governors, and where a school is present in a rural community it is an important hub of contact, activity and mutual support for women and children alike. Rural women are also prepared to be involved in developing new activities, community initiatives and events. Community ownership and social enterprise are increasingly being used to provide services needed in rural communities and rural church congregations have an opportunity to get involved in this. Many villages have lost their post office, shop, pub or other businesses and by working together and sharing ownership and responsibility communities can reinstate these services for the benefit of all residents. The church, particularly if it is the last remaining open public building, has a major role in hosting these services. Churches have been adapted to house the: post office, village shop, library, advice centre, school hall, café or IT facility, whilst remaining open for regular public worship. With such a large number of church buildings in the countryside (over 13,000 of all denominations) this role is an important opportunity for churches to be seen to be practically serving the needs of their communities.

However, women are less well represented in the public democratic process at all levels. The most local level of secular governance, the Parish Council, usually has a small number of women as councillors and rarely is the Chair a woman. This is also true for local government at district and county level. Fewer women are willing to stand for election to these bodies. Recent legislation has strengthened the role of local decision making within planning and building and it is essential that women have a voice within these processes. As the established church, the Church of England has an opportunity to encourage and empower more women to get involved in these important bodies.

Women, however, make perhaps the biggest contribution to rural community and church life through the informal actions of ad hoc caring and support through all aspects of life, which is shown to friends and neighbours and other people resident in the community. These networks of contacts, friendship and mutual support provide an opportunity for rural women to be evangelists and missionaries where God has placed them in the local rural community and the wider world. The church's role is to equip them to do this sensitively and effectively and support them through prayer and worship.

As the theologian Luke Brotherton has said, we should: 'focus on the priority of relationships and faithful commitment to others'. There is much potential for rural women of faith to engage further in the changing rural society and expanding democratic process and to share the Gospel in this challenging context.





**Robin Denney**  
UNITED STATES  
REPORT ON UNCSW56

**THE STATUS OF RURAL WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

When compared to their urban counterparts, rural women in the United States suffer higher levels of poverty, less access to health care, higher rates of domestic violence, higher rates of rape, and shrinking life expectancy.

The population of the United States has become increasingly urban over the last 100 years: from 72% rural in 1910, to 20% rural in 2000, to 16% rural in 2010. The rapid urbanization of the last 10 years is linked to young people leaving rural areas looking for work.<sup>1</sup> The financial crisis over the last four years has seen an increase in poverty across the U.S., as well as a decrease in government services. This is especially true in rural areas, with 17% poverty in rural areas compared to 14% poverty in urban areas. The poverty rate among rural households headed by a woman is 38% (compared to 28% of female headed urban households).<sup>2</sup>

Because poverty is statistically linked to domestic violence, and because government funded domestic violence initiatives are being cut, we can predict that domestic violence will continue to increase, especially in rural areas. In Topeka, Kansas, the District Attorney refused to take domestic violence cases to trial beginning in September of 2011, because of budget cut backs at the county. When the city of Topeka found the burden of trying these cases fell on their budget, the city council voted to de-criminalize domestic violence.<sup>3</sup> This shocking development is a worrying sign as the burden of financial crisis is beginning to bankrupt small cities across the United States.

While the U.S. population has enjoyed increasing longevity for the last 100 years, these trends began to reverse in rural areas 20 years ago, for women at higher rates than men.<sup>4</sup> More than 1 in 4 rural women lives in a county that has seen female longevity decrease in the last 10 years (while half as many counties have seen male longevity decrease). The vast majority of rural counties are under-performing the national average of longevity.<sup>5</sup> The dropping longevity is linked to lack of access to regular health care, increase in the un-insured, increasing income gaps, as well as health risks like obesity and smoking.<sup>4</sup>

In the U.S. 1.3 million women per year are raped, resulting in a 1 in 5 lifetime risk of rape for women.<sup>6</sup> It has long been documented in statistical surveys that rates of rape in rural areas are the same as or less than urban areas. However, recent research has determined that rural women are significantly less likely to report rape or seek help because of lack of anonymity in small communities, conservative male-dominated societal structures, and because both police and assailants are more likely to be known by the victim in small communities. The study determined that rates of rape are in fact higher in rural areas.<sup>7</sup>

Rural and urban women alike suffer from wage discrimination; earning 88 cents on the dollar for jobs they are as qualified for as their male counterparts. Women suffer from hiring discrimination, and sexual harassment on the job. Women are also under represented in leadership positions across the public and private sectors.<sup>8</sup>

While the U.S. is considered one of the more developed nations of the world, American rural women continue to suffer decreasing longevity and greater rates of poverty and violence than American men or American urban women. While increasing poverty and decreasing government services set the stage for increased violence against women, and decreased women's health, there are also signs of hope. Research methods are more accurately portraying the problem of

sexual and domestic violence, and violence prevention methods that work are being developed.<sup>6</sup> there is also hope that national health care reforms will improve access to health care for the uninsured. Women across the United States need to come together to demand that government at all levels make violence against women and health care priority issues.

#### References:

1. *U.S. Census Bureau*. “2010 Census Data”, *Daily Mail*. “Ghost towns increase as rural America accounts for just 16% of population” July 28, 2011
2. *U.S. Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service*. “Rural America at a glance 2011”
3. *New York Times*. “Facing Cuts, a City Repeals Its Domestic Violence Law,” October 11, 2011
4. *Center for Rural Affairs*. “Life Expectancy for Rural Women Declining” 2008
5. *Population Health Metrics*. “Falling behind: life expectancy in US counties from 2000 to 2007 in an international context”
6. *Center for Disease Control*. “National intimate partner and sexual violence survey” 2010
7. *National Sexual Violence Research Center*. “Unspoken Crimes: Sexual Violence in Rural America” 2003
8. *CNN*. “Women in top-paying jobs still make less than men” April 20, 2010

# REFLECTION

By: Robin Denney

This was my first time attending the UNCSW. While I was a beginner, I found that my experience working in state and federal policy making, as well as my rural experience in the US, Liberia, and South Sudan, meant that I could be useful in the shaping of our advocacy documents and strategy. Despite the disappointing divisiveness in CSW56, which prevented the ratification of the agreed conclusions, I think that we had a tremendously successful advocacy experience, which will hopefully help to model our CSW advocacy efforts in the future.

I worked on the advocacy committee for Ecumenical Women (an ecumenical group of which Anglican Consultative Council is a part, with a membership of 200 million). It was our job to strategize and produce our policy recommendations based on the agreed priority areas the coalition had developed. We spent many hours going line by line through the outcome documents, looking for problem areas and opportunities to strengthen language. We searched the UN electronic archives for previously agreed to language which fit our objectives, and pieced it together into acceptable amendments. We produced documents and disseminated them to our team of delegates who visited their own country's mission delegations. And we set up meetings with any mission who would meet with us! Time and again, countries were impressed with the quality and detail of our proposals. "You've done our work for us!" was a praise we received more than once.

One of our primary concerns was that access to transportation, which is a critical issue for rural women, was not included in the outcome document. All of our work paid off. Our amendment was proposed, verbatim, by New Zealand and supported by the countries we engaged with.

I was changed by two weeks of working side by side with Anglican sisters from around the world. These are women who are working at the grass roots as pastors, organizers, social service workers, farmers, and church workers. They are nurturing and challenging others. They are fighting injustice, demanding equal access, and working for the future. We came as UNCSW veterans and rookies. We came not concerned about what divides us as a worldwide communion, but rather what unites us. We are one; we are sisters in Christ.

Returning home, I am more excited than ever to engage in the ministries to which I have been called in the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real. The work the UN does is so important, and yet the view I saw from those hallowed halls is that the real and lasting change starts at the grass roots. The UN can encourage change to spread, but the changing is dreamed up and carried out at the local level.

I am convinced that what we do every day is so critically important. We have the opportunity every day to stand up for justice and encourage change in our communities, we just don't always see it. In the United States 1,000-1,600 women are killed each year by their spouse or partner. Women in the US lose 7.9 million workdays a year due to injury from domestic violence. The total cost of domestic violence annually in our country is 8.3 billion dollars (in lost wages and medical care). One in five women in the US has been raped. Violence against women is largely hidden, plagues all parts of our society, and is not taken seriously enough. In Topeka Kansas last October, the city council voted to de-criminalize domestic violence so that they wouldn't have to pay for the trials.

There are structural changes that need to be made in US society as well. Women still make 88 cents on the dollar to men for jobs they are equally qualified for. The US ranks 94 out of 190 nations in terms of women's representation in congress (behind 6 middle eastern countries, and 24 African countries). We have the highest maternal mortality rate of the 40 most industrialized nations. In a quarter of rural counties in the US, female longevity is decreasing. And we are one of the five countries in the world that has not signed the international treaty for the human rights of women since 1979 (CEDAW), along with Iran, Sudan, Somalia, and Tonga.

In my first two weeks home from the CSW, I have met with my city manager to talk about women's issues, and how my church can work with him. I have written articles for my diocese and my parishes, and I have scheduled presentations to talk about UNCSW. I will continue to remind people about the ACC proposals for equal representation (13/31), and the campaign to end violence against women (14/33). I will talk about the violence and inequality that women around the world face, and I will encourage continued action.

Change begins in our own hearts, our families, our churches, our communities...onward Christian peacemakers and advocates!

# REFLECTION

By: The Revd Kathy Barrett-Lennard

I was one of 20 women, gathered by invitation from the Anglican Communion office, to discuss the Priority theme and the Review theme, and to begin discussions around the Emerging issue of this year's UNCSW. We met for two weeks in New York from 27 February to 9 March.

I participated in: morning prayer and UN briefings daily; many parallel events, which discussed a broad range of rural women's issues; the Celebration March for International Women's Day; receptions at the Australian and Turkish embassies, mid-day Eucharists and several excellent presentations at The Episcopal Centre. I attended only one plenary session at the UN as extensive building renovations severely restricted access to all NGO's. As a result of these restrictions, I watched the opening session at The Episcopal Centre via video link. Rachel Chardon from the AUNO was a welcoming and helpful agent for us all, and arranged several wonderful outings, including a Saturday visit to St John the Divine Cathedral and a guided tour of the UN buildings.

The hospitality space at The Episcopal Centre gave an excellent opportunity to gather with other Anglican women to hear their stories and enjoy fellowship. I spoke to women from regions with limited access to water, sanitation, health care, education, land, transport, markets and political representation. Statistics were mind-numbing: 840+ million people in the world are still hungry; sub-Saharan African women spend 44 billion hours a year carting water (exposing them to physical attack and precluding them from education or financially rewarding work). In the vast majority of member nations, rural women were overburdened, under-rewarded, vulnerable and poor, while playing the central role in providing food and well-being for their families, often in the absence of husbands or other men. No Iranian delegates participated this year because the 2011 delegates were arrested on their return home last year. Gender based violence was a pervasive theme.

The many inspirational speakers throughout the fortnight included Nobel peace prize recipient Laymah Gbowee: *"I speak to the powerful and the powerless with the same voice"*; Michelle Bachelet (UN Women): *"Women's strength, women's industry, women's wisdom are humankind's greatest untapped resources"*; and Mr Ban Ki-Moon (UN General-Secretary) commenting on gender equality: *"Men around the table are squirming and looking for an opportunity to change the subject. I sound like a broken record but what is broken is that women are not fairly represented"*. Mr Ban is aware of the fact that we are all called to participate in healing and reconciling the world, and that a sustainable future is only possible when men and women work co-operatively in an environment of equality.

Many positive initiatives were highlighted in the parallel events, where women, the primary victims of poverty and hunger, also became the agents of change. In many stories the church was the catalyst for improving health and well-being in a community, and was a force in society for acceptance without hesitation or discrimination. I became aware of great depths of wisdom and experience as I interacted with many rural women and their advocates, and I found myself transforming from a sympathetic onlooker to a willing advocate for gender equality. I saw the potential for my own ministry through a broader lens.

I am the parish priest of a 4-centre parish in rural W.A., comprised of Aboriginal families, farming families and townspeople, of whom 15% are unemployed or benefit dependent. Across all groups, women are struggling for equality and unless we take seriously our mission to promote gender equality (MDG3), we are not being true to our call as followers of Christ.

I went to the CSW believing that a different world is possible, where women can live in peace, with enough to eat, free from violence and with the opportunity for work and education. Prior to UNCSW, I was not engaged beyond the level of delivering social services (*binding wounds*). I now realize that real change is only possible when the church's emphasis is redirected from delivering social services to speaking out for social justice for all (*healing wounds*).

It was such a privilege to represent the Australian Anglican Church and to experience the richness that diversity of race, faith, language and culture brings to humanity. I am deeply indebted to my sisters in Christ, for their generous inclusion and spirit. Truly, change will happen with such tenacity, dedication and faith.



## STATEMENT FROM ANGLICAN DELEGATES OF THE 56<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN MARCH 2012

“The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges” was this year’s priority theme.

One quarter of the global population is rural women, one-half billion of whom are small holder farmers. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in his speech opening the UN International Women’s Day, stated that to empower rural women is to make a smart investment; women are an untapped natural resource. Yet women in agriculture receive only five percent of agricultural services, which as Mr. Ban said, “makes no sense”. As Marjon V. Kamara, CSW Bureau Chair, stated 92% of world hunger is due to poverty and women in agriculture are the key to reducing hunger and poverty.

After two weeks of attending UNCSW deliberations, parallel and side events and conversations with women across the globe, the 20 delegates from 16 countries from the Anglican Communion wish collectively to present our shared knowledge and expertise. We are agreed that the following are the most fundamental issues that need to be addressed for rural women to lead a dignified life:

- Access and availability to clean water and sanitation
- Food security
- Access to health facilities and affordable healthcare.

**Forty billion hours are spent annually by women and girls fetching water.** Access to water is the fundamental right from which life flows. Water is an incredibly important symbol for Christians, integral to our spirituality and Christian practice – and has been since the beginning of time when *‘the spirit of God swept over the face of the water’* (Genesis 1:2). Without water, life cannot be.

In order to achieve this year’s UNCSW priority theme, we are also agreed that rural women and girls need to be empowered through:

- Education: formal and informal, so as to attain the highest level of education they choose
- Entitlement to land ownership and inheritance rights
- Access to resources; financing (i.e. credit), markets for their products and access to transportation.

It must also be said that these issues affect not only rural women and girls in developing countries but also the rural poor and indigenous women and girls in developed countries.

We commend the ACC for resolutions 13/31 and 14/33 as tools that contribute to the empowerment of rural women.

We thank the Primates for the opportunity to come together this year in New York City. It has provided us the chance to share and learn from and with each other. We are committed to taking these learnings back to our own communities and act on them.

We urge the ACC to take strategic action at the global level.



Australia: The Revd Kathy Barrett-Lennard

Bangladesh: Roselind Halder

Burundi: Claudette Kigeme, Mathilde Ndayisenga

Canada: The Revd Penny Lewis, The Revd Jo-Ann Todd

Haiti: France Vixamar

Japan: Mieko Nishimaki, Emi Tanaka

Kenya: June Nderitu

Korea: The Revd Petra Jeong Woon Lee

North India: Pritty Sangma

Pakistan: Alice Garrick

Philippines: The Revd Alyse Sibaen

Scotland: Dr Elaine Cameron

South Africa: Cindy Petersen

Uganda: Jolly Babirukamu

United Kingdom: Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson

United States: Robin Denney





## IN GOD WE CAME TOGETHER

The 56th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women has ended, and the Anglican Communion Delegates to the United Nations have returned home. Shared experiences, fresh perspectives, and newly acquired resources and advocacy skills go home with us to continue our ministries with commitment and enthusiasm!

Sent to the United Nations from their respective Provinces for the two-week session, extraordinary individuals made up our delegation. While unique in their persons, we are all Anglican sisters who came together in a place very different from our day-to-day rural homes. We supported one another as we participated in the many side and parallel events offered at the 56th session whose priority theme was the

**“Empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.”**

Mutual support was magnified even more as Provincial delegates accompanied sisters to difficult meetings. They stood in solidarity with our delegation from Nippon Sei Ko Kai (the Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan) to more than six Permanent Missions to the United Nations. The purpose of these visits was to bring attention to the crisis Japan experienced in March, 2011 -- deadly nuclear contamination spread by damaged power plants as a result of the earthquake and tsunami. The message our Japanese delegates voiced at those Missions that graciously heard them was:

**“Help us eliminate nuclear power plants.”**

Our delegates brought their Anglican voices and perspectives to the UN and the deliberations in which they participated. Stories about rural living touched us all, helping everyone understand what it means to be connected to the land and to the land through our ancestors. They also gained a better understanding of the role that gender equity and justice play in preserving and strengthening those connections. Taking care of the land is both a deeply felt moral responsibility, and a witness to our faith. As Robin Denney of the Episcopal Church of the USA said:

**“The responsibility comes with joy.”**

The Revd Kathy Barrett-Lennard of the Anglican Church of Australia, who lives with her husband and children on their farm said:

**“It is a spiritual connection to the land.”**

Sisterhood in the context of this Anglican gathering and engagement with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women involved the coming together to commune with one another for a time to share diverse conditions, experiences, and concerns. In this case rural living was the focus of our common voice.

While “agreed conclusions” of the entire assembly of CSW56 failed – a disappointment- it was a privilege to walk alongside and support each other as we visibly grew in confidence and determination and made a distinctive and vital contribution to CSW56.

## APPENDICES





## ACRONYMS

Action for Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)  
Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA)  
Anglican Communion Office (ACO)  
Anglican Consultative Council (ACC)  
Anglican United Nations Office (AUNO)  
Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs)  
Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA)  
Church of North India (CNI)  
Commission on the Status of Women 56<sup>th</sup> Session (CSW56)  
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)  
Diocesan Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (DWFCS)  
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)  
European Union (EU)  
General Agreements on Tariffs & Trade-World Trade Organization (GATT-WTO)  
Indigenous Peoples (IPs)  
Mothers' Union (MU)  
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)  
Scottish Churches Rural Group (SCRG)  
Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC)  
United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)  
Women Development & Service Society (WDSS)  
Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (WFCS)  
Women's Institute (WI)  
Working Group on Girls (WGG)  
World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW)

# PROVINCIAL DELEGATES AGENDAS

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

- 10:00 am: The Opening Session of the Fifty Sixth Commission on the Status of Women All Provincial Delegates who have the Official Badge of CSW56 will be allowed into the ECOSOC Chamber assuming no other non-scheduled UN business overrides this Event – first come allowed. Arrive via the Lobby of the United Nations – entrance at UN Gate on First Avenue between East 44<sup>th</sup> & 45<sup>th</sup>.
- UN Registration for Delegate Badges will continue at UN Lobby, 9am-4pm: for those who were unable to procure your Official Badge on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, please do so on Monday.
- 815 Registration: If unable to attend live Event, come to 815 Mezzanine for Welcome Breakfast  
Beginning 8:30 am, Mezzanine, 815 Second Avenue (on the corner of East 43<sup>rd</sup> St & 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. NYC)
- UN Webcast of CSW 55 Opening Plenary Session: for those unable to get to ECOSOC Chamber for the UN live event. 9:45am-1pm, 815 Mezzanine, 815 Second Avenue (corner of East 43<sup>rd</sup> St & 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.)
- 12:10 – 12:40pm: Opening Eucharist for all Anglican Delegations
- 1:15 – 2:00: Brown Bag Discussion of all Provincial Delegates to CSW 56, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, 815 Second Ave. (corner of East 43<sup>rd</sup> St & 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.)
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Day Handbook

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

- Morning Chapel Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: Ecumenical Young Adults  
8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.)
- Morning Briefing NGO CSW shares important information about CSW 56  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.)
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates  
(815 Second Ave, NYC, at the corner of Second Ave & East 43<sup>rd</sup> St.
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook
- AUNO Daily debrief:  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican Communion Office

## WEDNESDAY, 29 FEBRUARY

- Morning Chapel Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: Presbyterians  
8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.)
- Morning Briefing NGO CSW shares important information about events.  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook
- 10:00 – 11:30am AUNO Guest Keynote Speaker: the Revd Terrie Robinson,  
Anglican Communion Networks' Coordinator, Women's Desk Officer,  
Topic: "The Anglican response to violence against women and girls," followed by Discussion  
Location: The 815, The Chapel of Our Lord.
- AUNO Daily debrief: 5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office

### THURSDAY, MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2012

- Morning Chapel *Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: Salvation Army*  
8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.)
- Morning Briefing *NGO CSW shares important information about events.*  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook
- 12:00 – 3:00pm AUNO Guest Speaker: Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson,  
National Rural Officer for the Church of England,  
Topic: “Key Learning’s – from working with Rural Women,” followed by Discussions  
Location: The 815 ‘Hospitality Space’
- 3:00 – 5:00: Anglican Women at Prayer,  
Facilitated by Phoebe Griswold, Location: The 815 Mezzanine
- AUNO Daily debrief  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office

### FRIDAY, MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2012

- Morning Chapel: Women’s World Day of Prayer  
*Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: United Methodist Women*  
8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN)
- Morning Briefing *NGO CSW shares important information about events.*  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook
- Eucharist (This is the Closing Eucharist for The Episcopal Church delegation)  
12:10pm, 815 Chapel
- Artisan Fair: NGO CSW Artisan Fair free of charge. 100% of proceeds go directly to Artists.  
3:00-7:00pm: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of UN Church Center (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN)
- AUNO Daily debrief  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office

### MONDAY, MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

- Morning Chapel *Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: Medical Missionaries*  
*Bible Study: 8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.)*
- Morning Briefing *NGO CSW shares important information about events.*  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook and any arranged Mission Visits
- AUNO Daily debrief:  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office

### TUESDAY, MARCH 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

- Morning Chapel *Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today:*  
*Episcopalians/Anglicans: 8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.)*
- Morning Briefing *NGO CSW shares important information about events.*  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook and any arranged Mission Visits

- 12:45pm – 2:00pm: All Provincial Delegates are invited for a Group Tour of the United Nations. *Please meet at the Information Desk of the UN Lobby by 12:40pm*
- 2:30pm: Priscilla Atkins, AUNO Guest Speaker  
*The 815 Mezzanine*
- AUNO Daily debrief:  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office

### **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2012**

- Morning Chapel *Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: YWCA Bible Study*  
8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (*corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.*)
- Morning Briefing *NGO CSW shares important information about events.*  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook and any arranged Mission Visits
- AUNO Daily debrief:  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office
- Invitation to all Provincial Delegates to attend a Hospitality & Farewell Dinner at Saint Margaret's Episcopal Church, Longwood, South Bronx the Revd Theodora Brooks, Vicar  
(*Time to be arranged later – for group travel plans to the Church*)

### **THURSDAY, MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2012**

- Morning Chapel *Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: WFMUCW*  
8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (*corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.*)
- Morning Briefing *NGO CSW shares important information about events.*  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates
- 10:00am: Presiding Bishop and Primate, the Most Revd Katherine Jefferts Schori will meet with Provincial Delegates, The 815 Mezzanine
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook
- NGO CSW Forum invites you to join in a Celebration of International Women's Day  
Arrive at 11:00am on the corner of First Avenue at First 42<sup>nd</sup> St for a Celebration March:  
"Global Women for Equality, Development and Peace"
- AUNO Final Daily debrief:  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2012**

- Morning Chapel *Ecumenical Women organize daily worship. Today: Office of the Chaplain*  
8am-8:45am, UN Church Center Chapel (*corner of First Ave & East 44<sup>th</sup> St across from UN.*)
- Morning Briefing *NGO CSW shares important information about events.*  
8:45-9:45am, UN Church Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- 9:00am – 5:00pm: The 815 Mezzanine serves as Welcome Space for Delegates
- Through-out Day: selected Side Events as listed in Consultation Handbook
- Eucharist (This is the Closing Eucharist for The Anglican delegations)  
12:10pm, 815 Chapel
- 3:00pm (unless otherwise announced)  
Closing Session of the Fifty-Sixth Commission on the Status of Women  
(*Traditionally, there is the opportunity for all Provincial Delegates to attend*)
- AUNO Farewell Daily debrief (May be changed, if Closing Session requires.)  
5:30-6:30pm, 815, Anglican UN Office



Name	Country
The Revd Kathy Barrett-Lennard	Australia
Roselind Halder	Bangladesh
Claudette Kigeme	Burundi
Mathilde Ndaisenga	Burundi
The Revd Jo-Ann Todd	Canada
The Revd Penny Lewis	Canada
France Vixamar	Haiti
Mieko Nishimaki	Japan
Emi Tanaka	Japan
June Nderitu	Kenya
The Revd Petra Jeong Woon Lee	Korea
Pritty Sangma	North India
Alice Garrick	Pakistan
The Revd Alicia Tabacla Sibaen	Philippines
Dr Elaine Cameron	Scotland
Cindy Petersen	South Africa
Jolly Babirukamu	Uganda
Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson	United Kingdom
Robin Denney	United States





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