



Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary

NGO with special consultative status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2013 and with the Department of Public Information since 2006.

News from the UN - # 100

RSHM at the UN

March 2019

Dear friends and colleagues,




With the publication of this issue of News from the UN we celebrate our 100th edition! Initiated by **Sr. Rita Arthur RSHM** soon after the RSHM NGO acquired DPI status, our RSHM NGO Newsletter - *News from the UN* - was first produced in September 2007. In the 12 years that have passed since the inaugural copy, we have traced the stories of many initiatives and events at the UN and shared succinct articles and resources with our members, colleagues and collaborators in our RSHM ministries around the world. The aim was to share a resource that could be easily accessible and widely circulated, helping us to learn about and use the resources available to us through our accreditation as an NGO at the UN.

Over the years, *News from the UN* has been one of the strategies we have used to meet the objectives set for our RSHM NGO in 2007: **Education, Participation and Advocacy**. We have shared events, news updates and milestones of the UN's work that relate to our Institute mission, the calls of our Chapters and the priorities set for our JPIC / NGO collaboration. We have also shared ways in which our RSHM ministries around the world have engaged with us and the advocacy that we do at the UN, in collaboration with others. Where possible, we have highlighted the countries where we are present and our visiting groups. Through all of this, the collaboration of our faithful translator, **Sr. Maria Luisa Pinho RSHM** from Portugal has made it possible to publish an edition in Portuguese as well as English.

Some memorable moments shared:

- In September 2008 a total 13 RSHM including our JPIC Coordinator and team attended the **DPI Conference** at UNESCO in Paris.
- Our first **intern** was Sr. Anne Murphy RSHM who spent 6 weeks working with Sr. Rita in late 2008.
- Since 2016 we have welcomed 4 interns, - all of whom have been students at **Marymount Manhattan College**.
- **Visits** from our **Enlarged General Council in 2008 and 2014 and the Network of RSHM Schools in 2015**.
- Over an 18 month period (2015 – 2017) each issue highlighted a particular **Sustainable Development Goal**.
- **Echoes from the Climate Conference Rio+20; the World Social Forum; the World Water Forum, Habitat III, COP 21 and COP 23.**

Looking to the future, we would like to explore your ideas and suggestions for the newsletter going forward. *What would you like to see?* What suggestions would you like to offer to make our communication more effective and relevant? We hope that you will take a few minutes to share your ideas and suggestions with us using the following link:  <http://bit.ly/2USoN9S> or sending us an email at rshmngo@gmail.com



- ✓ What two qualities of the RSHM NGO “**News from the UN**” do you appreciate most?
- ✓ What suggestions do you have to make it more effective and relevant?
- ✓ Any general comments or questions?



Commission of the Status of Women.

From **11-22 March 2019**, the **Commission on the Status of Women** met at UN Headquarters in New York, US. Nearly 2,000 Member State delegates and 86 Government ministers gathered, together with 5,000 representatives from civil society organizations around the world. This year's session focused on the priority theme of *“social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”*.

Over the 13 day period some **800 side events and parallel events** were held at various venues in and around the UN, while the official sessions and negotiations played out in the main venue, with women from around the world

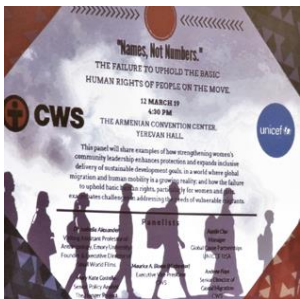
At 11:00pm on the last day, after nearly two weeks of input, intense discussion and negotiations, members of the 63rd session of the UN Commission of the Status of Women (CSW 63) adopted a set of **agreed conclusions and recommendations**. They recognized the progress that has been made including in several areas of social protection expressed in an increased number of girls in school and improved access of women and girls to basic health services. However, they acknowledged that many gender gaps and inherent biases remain in social protection systems, in the access to public services and in work towards sustainable infrastructure, highlighting the links between these gaps and persistent poverty with rising inequality. Strong calls were made (See box) →



- **Invest in social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure** to support the productivity of women's work, including in the informal economy
- **Build on existing commitments to gender equality** to strengthen access to social protection, public services and infrastructure for all women and girls,
- **Promote the full and equal participation and leadership of women** in related policy dialogue, planning and decision making
- **Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work** by ensuring access to social protection for unpaid caregivers of all ages, including coverage for health care and pensions;
- **Scale up investment in quality public care services** that are affordable and gender-responsive; identify and remove barriers to women's and girls' access.
- **Guarantee the availability of safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation**, including for menstrual hygiene, in homes, schools, refugee camps and other public places;
- **Strongly condemn the impunity and lack of accountability** rooted in historical and structural inequality that accompanies pervasive violence against women

A glimpse into some Side Events....

Several sessions I attended during CSW made effective use of film as a medium to convey a message and instigate discussion on important themes relating to gender equality....**“Names not numbers”** put a human face on migrants, allowing them to tell their stories...and drawing on their reflection on the journey they have made to find safety, security and asylum. **“Maid in Hell”** is a documentary focusing on the shadowy world of recruitment of unemployed women from Africa to jobs in domestic work in the Middle East. Despite the work done by advocates in their countries of origin, the haunting question “Why?” How can recruitment agencies that focus on enslaved women and girls survive and even thrive in the 21st century.



→ [Watch short video](#)

Just the day after the **cyclone Idai** made landfall in **Mozambique** the



Government presented an informative and interesting side event on how they were implementing social protection policies that benefitted women and girls in Mozambique. Two

programmes run by NGOs in collaboration with the Government were highlighted.

- In **Zambezia province**, World Vision has been focusing on strengthening the access of girls to education; empowering them with competencies and keeping them in school.
- Meanwhile a pilot scheme called **MUVA Assistentes** ...targets young women who have completed secondary school but have not been able to secure jobs. Empowered by a targeted month of intensive training, they are prepared to be become Assistants in the classroom, helping to develop their own skills even as they assist teachers who struggle with large classes. → Watch [the short video....](#)

"Transformative Spirituality: Living in and Through the Spirit,"



This was the title of an inspiring parallel event which our RSHM NGO co-sponsored at CSW 63. It featured Sr. **Miriam Therese Winter MMS** and **Dr. Azza Karam**, Chair of the U.N. interagency Task Force on Religion and

Development. The need for a deep, transformative




shift in consciousness and behavior was stressed, so that, guided by the spirit, we can become persons who see something deeper and embrace something larger. We are all interdependent and part of one another.

Gender responses to Climate Change



The panel highlighted the importance of looking at **climate action through the lens of gender**. Women are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. But they are not just victims but also key active agents of change and

their role in climate adaptation and mitigation is largely untapped. They represent 3.6 billion solutions to make things happen! The **W+ standard** offers a unique way of valuing their contribution to unpaid care work and climate change adaptation projects, giving women access to the needed resources.  [Read more....](#)

Patricia Cole – Marymount Tarrytown Alumna

At the 63rd Session of the UN Commission of Status of Women we attended the 2019 Women's Empowerment Principles Forum ([#WEPsForum](#)) which mobilized over 600 business leaders government and civil society representatives to make a call for ([#genderequality](#)) as a global business and community imperative.

The **ten women's principles** provide corporate and community responsibility guidance in the areas of human rights, labor, and environment. At the forum, there was a very lively discussion and support about the proven benefits of advancing women.



Everyone unanimously agreed that we all win across the board with increased investment in women entrepreneurs, decision-makers, community partners and advocates.

:At this forum we also had the pleasure to meet and network with [Dr. Elisha Attai](#) President and Founder of (**AWOL**) **the African Women and Leadership Foundation** and his extensive team of women and experts and professionals.

AWOL is an international non for profit dedicated to providing global partnership leadership initiatives and Youth Council membership and "**He for She**" **champion** programs. They are located in 12 countries with 32 chapters and youth councils globally and we discussed the great progress they have made in providing increased access and opportunity for women thru their programs.

We left with a great degree of optimism and look forward to continuing to network with all advocates and partners who clearly are ready for positive change and where the world works for women and girls!!

Kathleen Kanet RSHM

I attended some sessions of the 500 events that took place in NYC during CSW in March. Always after these sessions, I wonder then how to share



something with my friends of how women and girls still have to strive for equality with men and of the terrible pain too many girls and women still endure. In a session titled "**Exploited Indigenous Women in North America**" I heard stories of pain and recovery that moved me deeply.

In the **500 Indigenous Nations in the US**, sexual exploitation and prostitution are deeply embedded. The panelists told stories, often their own, of girls and women being lured, threatened, captured, forced, and sometimes murdered so that sex can be sold.

The question toward the end of the session was asked: How can we help change this exploitation? **Here are some of the suggestions proposed by the panelists:** *Be aware of what is happening to children, break the silence, run for office, hold men accountable for buying sex, teach boys to honor girls, speak the truth, lift up one woman today, do something to end domestic violence, support women who come forward to tell their stories, pursue litigation for those who buy sex, define men caught in prostitution to be perpetrators, not clients, begin to learn and to understand the structural violence born of poverty, racism, and exclusion, talk to someone about how you feel about all of this violence done to women and girls.*

I believe that listening to these stories how women who have been hurt by sexual violence and survived can inspire us all to stem and to stop the violence done to women which unfortunately happens in every country, everywhere in every world.

Madison Weisend – RSHM NGO Intern

My first CSW was so much fun, and I feel so fortunate to be in the presence of some of the world's greatest women leaders. I feel confident in my ability to talk about why the rights of women matter, and their connection to a better, stronger future. There is no other event in the world that presents so many diverse learning opportunities about women, and for women.

A glimpse into some of the events I attended.....

1 Wilting in Bloom, Lived Experiences of Women Workers



This event spoke about the experiences of **women flower workers in Kenya**. Flower workers don't often have labor unions, which leaves them without health

insurance and the collective bargaining abilities. They talked about the flowers that are sold in America during holidays such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, and how we can make sure that the flowers we buy are **ethically produced**. → Learn about [women's role in the sustainable flower industry](#)

#2: Partnerships for Development, Inclusive Sustainable Energy Solutions for Gender Equality in Africa

I was overjoyed to attend an event that was centered around the practices of **Barefoot College**, which I visited last year when I was studying in India. They train illiterate women from around the world to build solar panels, and then send them back to their villages with the necessary materials to electrify the community. So far, **300,000 people in 96 countries** have benefitted from the work of Barefoot College and their solar engineers.



→ Watch a video about the [Solar Mamas](#)....

Event #3: Economic Costs of Violence Against Women

This event was centered around the monetization of violence against women, and how this **violent culture effects the global economy**. Approximately **273.4 billion USD** are lost in the **United States** alone as a result of violence against women. The **European Union has lost 352.4 billion, which is nearly 2% of their GDP**. Showing how much is money is lost due to violence against women is a useful perspective that incentivizes business people to reevaluate their professional work..



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