



**Government  
Equalities Office**

United Nations Commission on the  
Status of Women 59<sup>th</sup> Session:

Beijing+20: working towards Gender  
Equality

**Helene Reardon-Bond OBE,  
Head of UK Women's National Machinery**

In this issue:

- Introduction
- Update on the UK's preparation
- Engagement with UK NGOs
- CSW and post 2015
- NGO participation at CSW

Welcome to GEO's third CSW59 newsletter. The UK Government's preparations for CSW are now well underway. Since our last newsletter we have been busy running a series of engagement activities around the critical areas covered in the [Beijing PFA](#) and have been engaging with other Member States to ensure we work together for a positive outcome for women and girls at CSW59. You can read more about our activities below.

CSW59 is an opportunity for countries to reaffirm the promises they made in Beijing in 1995 to improve the lives of women and girls. But it is also an opportunity to call for a serious commitment to gender equality in the post-2015 development goals. In this issue, Jessica Woodroffe of the Gender and Development Network outlines some of the key priorities for post-2015 that NGOs raised at our annual National Consultation with Women event on Nov 10<sup>th</sup>.

We have also provided some practical information for those of you who will be attending CSW59. Please do continue to keep us informed of your intentions to attend CSW, and let us know of any side events your organisation is arranging by emailing Louise at [louise.sheridan@geo.gov.uk](mailto:louise.sheridan@geo.gov.uk)

We hope you find these newsletters informative. If you have any feedback on what you might like to see covered please contact us at [womensengagement@geo.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:womensengagement@geo.gsi.gov.uk).

Best wishes

Helene

## Update on UK Government Preparations

UK Government preparations for CSW59 are well underway. The UK's objectives for a good outcome for CSW include:

- Achieve a strong **Political Declaration** that publicly reaffirms commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and calls for a strong and explicit commitment to gender equality and the human rights of women and girls in the post 2015 framework. Ensure the document does not include regressive language or roll back on progress;
- Ensure that the **Working Method Resolution** reaffirms CSW as the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the empowerment and the human rights of women and girls and that it is fit for purpose post 2015;
- In the run up to CSW build a positive negotiation climate with other member states, UN bodies and civil society;
- Ensure that we progress the UK's key international priorities for women including PSVI, addressing social norms including FGM and CEFM (following last year's PSVI and Girls Summits), women's economic empowerment, education, VAWG and SRHR.

We expect the Ministerial delegation to be formed of the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, and Baroness Lindsey Northover, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DfID. The UK official delegation to CSW will consist of two lead officials from GEO, officials from DFID and support from the UK Mission. A strong delegation of five Parliamentarians will be funded by the [IPU](#) to attend CSW this year.

We are working collaboratively with the UK Mission and UK Civil Society to construct a programme for Ministers which cuts across a number of Departmental aims and objectives including advancing the UK's objectives on gender equality. We have a number of UK-sponsored side events in the pipeline including one on online abuse and violence against women and another on social norms and the girl-child.

Both events are scheduled to take place in week one. We have also received a number of invitations to co-host events with EU counterparts that are currently under consideration. Finalised details for these events will be featured in the next edition in two weeks time.

## CSW discussion at EU High-Level Gender Meeting, Riga

GEO officials Helene Reardon Bond and Andreas Heraclides recently attended an EU high level gender group meeting in Riga, where CSW 59 was one of the main issues discussed. The European Commission made clear that all member states should work to ensure that CSW remains the main source of expertise and the primary world forum for gender equality. The UK reaffirmed its support of CSW and its commitment to accelerating gender equality for women and girls everywhere.

Ensuring women and girls were at the heart of the post-2015 development goals was also a main topic of discussion. The UK reiterated our commitment to a standalone goal on gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender across the goals, and our willingness to continue working with other EU states to achieve this.



## Update on Pre-CSW Engagement

- On 26<sup>th</sup> January Helene had the pleasure of attending a CSW Alliance preparation meeting for CSW59 where she shared government preparations and learned about what NGOs have been planning for CSW59.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> February, GEO will host a planning meeting to discuss the Political Statement and Working Methods Resolution, which will be two main outcomes of CSW59. Representatives from domestic and international NGOs will attend.
- On 25<sup>th</sup> February Helene will speak at an IPU CSW preparation event for Parliamentarians.

## **Post-2015 Development and Gender Equality Report from the National Consultation with Women event Nov 10th**

The government's National Consultation with Women event was an opportunity for domestic and international NGOs and government officials to discuss gender equality in the post-2015 development goals. We were very pleased to have Jessica Woodroffe, Director of the Gender and Development Network, facilitate a session on post-2015. Please see Jessica's report of the discussion below.

Members of the CSW Alliance and Gender and Development Network discussed the way in which the post-2015 framework should be addressed at CSW. Our first concern was that a strong message should be sent to those negotiating the framework on the importance of gender equality and women's rights. We also stressed the need to move forwards on language that could achieve transformative change in the power relations between women and men, while protecting all agreed language particularly on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Participants agreed on the need for strong targets under a gender goal on violence against women and girls, women's political participation and influence, and SRHR but were disappointed that women's economic empowerment was not adequately included as a clear target. Many particularly welcomed the target on unpaid care, which should be staunchly defended. Mainstreaming gender equality in education and employment goals was also discussed. The choice of indicators to measure these targets was agreed to be vital, and more investment was called for to ensure that indicators reflected political priorities not just what is currently measured. In particular measuring and targeting social norm change was highlighted as essential if the underlying causes of inequality are to be tackled.

**Jessica Woodroffe, Gender and Development Network**



## NGO Participation at CSW

### **Attending CSW**

#### **Application for a UN Grounds Pass**

Before arriving at on-site registration at UN Headquarters, all participants need to fill out and print an application form for a UN grounds pass, which will be available in the organisation's account on [CSO-Net](#). *Participants will be required to show this form at on-site registration in order to obtain a grounds pass.*

#### **Travel and visa arrangements**

The UN *will not make travel or visa arrangements or pay for any expenses* in connection with the participation of NGO representatives in the sessions of CSW. Such arrangements and costs are the exclusive responsibility of participants. Participants are encouraged to submit their visa applications *well in advance*, in accordance with their local United States Consulate requirements, in order to allow sufficient time for processing.

#### **On-site registration**

Upon arrival at the United Nations, each pre-registered NGO representative must register on site in order to obtain a UN grounds pass. Please expect long queues when collecting your pass. Specifics regarding on-site registration and issuance of grounds passes are provided in the confirmation letter and in NGO advisories in the period preceding CSW.

- See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/ngo-participation/registration#sthash.QdnHcxND.dpuf>

#### **Side events**

The programme of side events, or activities organised outside the formal programme of the session of the Commission, provides an excellent opportunity for Member States, UN entities and NGOs to discuss themes of the Commission and other critical gender equality issues.

#### **Side events held on UN premises**

Permanent Missions and UN entities hold side events on UN premises during the CSW session and may access the online room reservation system for CSW side events on UN premises **here**. For any questions, please contact [csw.sideevents@unwomen.org](mailto:csw.sideevents@unwomen.org). The schedule of CSW side events will be available on the CSW59 website in February 2015.

#### **Parallel events held in the Church Center and other locations**

Parallel events organised by NGOs take place outside United Nations premises, usually in the Church Center (located at the intersection of 44th Street and First Avenue, across from the UN Secretariat building). Any NGO may organise and attend these events—subject to space availability.

NGOs wishing to organise a parallel event during the CSW session should directly contact the [NGO Committee on the Status of Women](#), which is a group of New York-based women's

NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. All questions on NGO-sponsored events should be directed to the NGO Committee on the Status of Women via [info@ngocsw.org](mailto:info@ngocsw.org)

- See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015/side-events#sthash.uwqpwG8L.dpuf>

Please circulate widely amongst your membership and networks. To receive regular updates on our plans for the upcoming CSW session, you can join our mailing list via [womensengagement@geo.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:womensengagement@geo.gsi.gov.uk)