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Dear Julia,

Please find attached my report, required as part of my participation in the Australian government delegation to CSW52. I hope it provides some useful insight into my experience and I would be happy to discuss any part of it in greater depth if there is interest.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you personally, and your team, for supporting my application to be part of the Australian government delegation and the briefing materials and support while in New York.

It was a fabulous experience for me and I have returned with a new perspective on international mechanisms, the UN and the importance of CSW. I also have a better grasp on our potential to contribute to significant changes in policy and practice here in Australia that can ultimately lead to improved outcomes for women in Australia and our region.

I am looking forward to hosting the post CSW roundtable and am pleased I will have the opportunity to talk to you further about these discussions.

Yours sincerely



Alex Haynes

Commission for the Status of Women CSW 52

Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

NGO delegate report - Alex Haynes, Security4Women

“Gender equality is something that must be felt by men and women - it will not come from micro credit schemes, or women in leadership positions”
Professor Shivrak, Columbia University

As part of the NGO preparations I spent a wonderful hour with Professor Shivrak from Columbia University the day before CSW started and it shaped my framework for making sense of the discussions and negotiations that followed over the next two weeks.

An amazing woman Professor Shivrak emphasised the need to make change last, not just engage in problem solving and the need to rearrange normalities not just do things to people. We need to change stereotypes. This is a cultural issue not just about finance, indicators and monitoring but they provide a rigorous structure to lead the cultural change required. She also explored the notion of beginning where we are.....

So where are we in Australia with advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women?

This report provides an overview of the 52nd session of the CSW and highlights some opportunities for us to use the agreed conclusions to formulate a plan of action to improve gender equality in Australia. It also points to ways we can improve our process and preparation for CSW.

The Commission for the Status of Women is one of the most important global forums for gender equality and while Australia has had a proud history at this Commission we have a lot of work to do together to regain this presence, enthusiasm and leadership.

Background to priority theme

The last decades have witnessed important progress in the development of global commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. Commitments on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women have been made by Governments at the international level, including at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), and the Millennium Summit (2000). The CSW itself has called different actors to contribute to resource mobilization to advance women's rights and gender equality, as well as agreed on recommendations to advance gender responsive budgeting, to name a few.

Despite the commitments of Governments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, and the progress in some areas such as education, the situation of women in many countries remains bleak.

There are also a number of global factors that have had an impact on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, such as: trade liberalization, increasing migration, the international security agenda, rising of religious fundamentalisms, foreign direct investment, speculative capital flows, economic growth patterns that increase inequalities between and inside countries, the feminization of poverty and the privatization of public services and enterprises.

What does it mean for Australia?

This year's theme, financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, is particularly instructive to Australia. Many of the discussions and outcomes provide a useful framework for both NGO's and government to progress gender equality initiatives. In addition to a robust framework financial resources are critical for achieving gender equality and are necessary for both women-specific targeted and gender mainstreaming interventions. Financing is also necessary for the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW).

While there are many opportunities in the international arena for enhancing financing for gender equality through the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness this report focuses on the need for key policies, strategies and tools to be developed and implemented at the national level.

To achieve gender equality it is important for Australia to develop the following:

- Strong legal framework
- Comprehensive policies and strategies
- Effective institutions to promote gender equality

During its deliberations the Commission reaffirmed that states, like Australia, have primary responsibility for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and that for national machineries to be effective, a strong institutional framework with clear mandates, location at the highest possible level, accountability mechanisms, partnership with civil society, a transparent political process, adequate financial and human resources and continued strong political commitment are crucial.

Australia has an opportunity to take a leadership role, provide models and practice examples, particularly in areas like gender budgeting where we have significant expertise.

How can the Agreed Conclusions inform our work?

While all 23 Agreed Conclusions are important and should be considered they lack any real targets or timetables and no strong mechanisms for effective tracking and monitoring of financial resources spent on gender equality.

It is widely recognised, by governments and civil society, that the allocation of financial resources has been insufficient at all levels for real progress in all twelve

critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). In addition progress toward meeting Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 on gender equality and MDG 5 on maternal mortality has been lagging behind progress made with respect to the other MDGs.

Moreover, the Agreed Conclusions fail to address the need for adequate resources and a diversity of funding mechanisms to support the indispensable role of women's organizations as the driving force of the agenda of gender equality and empowerment of women at all levels. Since almost half the world population is under the age of 25, gender equality mechanisms should also address youth and address the specific problems youth organizations face in accessing funds for their activities working towards gender equality.

For the purposes of identifying priorities for focus in Australia several action orientated sub clauses of Conclusion 21 are emphasised below to highlight ways we can frame our work agenda in Australia in line with international activity in the area of gender equality.

21. The Commission urges Governments and/or, as appropriate, the relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system within their respective mandates, and invites the international financial institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, bearing in mind national priorities, to take the following actions:

a. Increase the investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, taking into account the diversity of needs and circumstances of women and girls, including through mainstreaming a gender perspective in resource allocation and ensuring the necessary human, financial, and material resources for specific and targeted activities to ensure gender equality at the local, national, regional and international levels as well as by enhanced and increased international cooperation;

During the two week Commission many countries emphasized that only limited progress in allocating and channeling resources to translate the commitments to women's empowerment and gender equality into actions has been made. The twin-track approach to achieving gender equality through: 1. gender mainstreaming; and 2. targeted elimination of gender based discrimination and women's empowerment, was adopted in the Beijing Platform for Action. However a disproportionate emphasis on gender mainstreaming in a number of countries is considered by some to have resulted in a substantial reduction in resource allocations to women's empowerment and the elimination of gender-based discrimination. Exceptions were highlighted in individual sectors such as education.

There seems to have been a tendency in some contexts to focus on gender mainstreaming, at the expense of dedicated investments in women's empowerment. There was a trend, reflected in Australia, to reduce or even abandon specific investments in women-focused programs, organisations and structures. Support to women's organisations, national machineries for the advancement of women and gender units were reduced with the argument that they had become redundant.

There was a loss of gender expertise, capacity and advocacy - skills that are indispensable to successful gender mainstreaming.

m. Improve, systematize and fund the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated and gender-related data, including disaggregated by age and other factors, and on women's contribution to the care economy, and develop necessary input, output and outcome indicators at all levels to measure progress in financing gender equality and the empowerment of women, in particular, in introducing and implementing gender-responsive approaches to public finance;

Data disaggregated by sex and indicators for designing and implementing key policy initiatives on financing for gender equality as well as for monitoring and evaluating results achieved are critical.

Using the clause as a framework we can start by the;

1. Analysis of sex disaggregated data of the main indicators at Australia level - education outcomes, individual income, employment, superannuation, value of unpaid work, work and family, gender wage gap, dissections by occupation and industry groups, health and safety. Sex disaggregated data should be available for relevant statistical series as a matter of course particularly in the analysis undertaken by government agencies such as ABS, DEEWR, FaHSCIA, Health
2. Establishment of an ABS User Group (Women's' Statistics Advisory Group) advising on statistics about women - this would facilitate the identification of some of the enhanced data sets would be relevant now and in the future and negotiate with ABS on sample design structures that produce sound statistics on Women
3. Resumption of comparable data analysis to the previous Women's Year book (social data relevant to women produced throughout the 1990's). The NZ statistics regular report "Focusing on Women" is an impressive example.
4. Preparation of a women's profile from the 2006 Census be placed on the ABS website with the other Census Community profiles
5. Gather baseline data and develop a series of key indicators that will inform progress, can be monitor impact of legislation, projects and programmes

Switzerland stressed the importance of incorporating the caring sector (or reproductive sector) into government planning and budgeting. Measuring unpaid work is effective in raising the visibility of women's contribution to the economy. Switzerland's recent study indicated that the total of unpaid work was 8 billion hours (65% of the unpaid work was done by women) compared with total of paid work being 6 billion hours.

The focus on better data has also been emphasized in the CEDAW Committee report (2006) responding to Australia's 4th and 5th reports. The Committee requested Australia to include adequate statistical data and analysis, disaggregated by sex,

ethnicity and disability, in its next report (due this year) so as to provide a full picture of the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. It also recommended that Australia regularly conduct impact assessments of its legislative reforms, policies and programmes to ensure that measures taken lead to the desired goals.

p. Develop and implement, where appropriate, methodologies and tools, including national indicators, for gender-responsive planning and budgeting, in order to systematically incorporate gender perspectives into budgetary policies at all levels, with a view to promoting gender equality in all policy areas;

Australia has notable expertise in the area of gender responsive budgeting and we need to look at why it has not progressed, is it political will or capacity? Gender responsive budgeting as a strategy for changing budget policies and resource allocations to strengthen financing for gender equality - both the revenue and expenditure side of budgets should systematically reflect the different needs of women and men, boys and girls. The most significant thing about this topic was the importance of political will and sensitisation of decision makers in addition to capacity building and technical expertise. Gender focal points in line ministries was common and like Morocco's example worked better when those sympathetic to the cause were recruited to be trained and supported as the focal point rather than people being nominated or inserted.

The Expert Group recognized that gender-responsive budgeting initiatives (GRB) although limited in scope in many countries, have made important contributions to advance gender equality at the local and national levels. Nevertheless, there are challenges including:

- limited impact on macroeconomic policy which is often shaped by international financial institutions and globalization;
- little practical linking of budgets to rights to date;
- the contradictions between gender equality as a development goal that cuts across sectors and ministries and the bureaucratic reality of line functions, departments and agents which mitigate against a broad approach;
- the difficulty in assessing the impact of gender-responsive budgeting given that policy change is often due to a range of forces and not one single initiative; and
- those involved often do not have the power themselves to change budgets.

The report makes recommendations on three dimensions or means by which gender-responsive budget frameworks can engage with performance based or results-based budgeting. Australia can integrate a gender perspective into their public finance system through:

- including in the budget guidelines the requirement of gender impact assessments and resource allocation for gender equality
- developing a methodology to systematically track expenditures
- Improving quantitative and qualitative sex- and age-disaggregated and gender-specific data collection and analysis to monitor changes in gender

- relations over the life-cycle;
- developing a methodology to systematically incorporate a gender perspective into the results-based public financial management systems, including costing women and men's unpaid work
- improving cooperation between finance ministries, treasury and national women machineries
- developing performance indicators to measure progress in gender-responsive approaches

The Australian Government can enhance women's participation in all phases of the budget cycle. Specifically:

- strengthen mandates of mechanisms for the advancement of women and provide them with sufficient resources,
- fully resource national action plans for gender equality and the empowerment of women and
- make gender-responsive budgets mandatory in all areas.
- improve the readability of the budget or budget literacy so it can be better understood by more, not only for NGO's others but also for government departments to improve their performance

In presenting their achievements on a high level panel on financing for gender equality Morocco expressed the importance of "proximity" - deconcentration of decisions and partnerships with NGO's. The population has to understand - understand the goals, the means and the impact. In explaining how they moved from advocacy to working instruments they explained how they used workshops targeted at sympathetic government officials close to the budget to develop focal points in line ministries and how these focal points had developed a handbook for NGO's and MP's and produced a gender report that evaluated all public policy with representation of NGO's in the process and it had been submitted to parliament. With better information and indicators, the resources could be more targeted because the gaps were identified.

x. Undertake gender-sensitive assessments of national labour laws, policies and programmes, and establish gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for employment practices, including those of transnational corporations, building on appropriate multilateral instruments, including the ILO Conventions;

Australia could adopt a gender perspective in implementing the development goals of full and productive employment, using the ILO's decent work policy interventions on employment planning, social protection, fundamental principles and rights at work, access to credit for entrepreneurial activities, market support, skills training, and the full participation of women in social dialogue in labour market planning.

Countries like Greece and Israel spoke about their practice of doing gender assessments of all legislation (not just new legislation).

Canada expressed frustration that while Finance and Treasury required a gender audit of all new spending that was often too late. Equivalent demands needed to be inserted at the policy end of the process. They do have an effective Parliamentary

Group on the Status of Women that had been instrumental in achieving the gender audit requirement and also the gender equality action plan.

y. Allocate adequate resources for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in the workplace including unequal access to labour market participation and wage inequalities, as well as reconciliation of work and private life for both women and men;

Perhaps it is timely for a review of the Sex Discrimination Act to establish whether the exemptions are relevant, the way family responsibilities are dealt with in the Act is appropriate and whether the powers of the Commissioner can be strengthened to initiate investigation and action rather than simply responding to complaints.

We could also propose investigation into whether the HREOC Act can be amended to grant the Sex Discrimination Commissioner the power to independently monitor the status of women and report directly to parliament, similar to the Social Justice Commissioner produces Social Justice Report.

This would rely on the development of gender transformative indicators - once we can measure and determine what is happening we can improve it. We could perhaps develop 5-8 in the first instance covering things like pay equity, safety, unpaid work, decent work, workforce segregation and the means by which to measure performance against these indicators.

The CEDAW Committee recommended that Australia fully utilize the Sex Discrimination Act and consider the adoption of quotas and targets, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25, to further increase the number of women in political and public life and to ensure that the representation of women in political and public bodies reflect the full diversity of the population, particularly indigenous women and women belonging to ethnic minorities.

The Commission reaffirmed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol. There is strong support from women's organisations and networks for Australia to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention to strengthen the enforcement mechanisms available for the rights within CEDAW. The Optional Protocol does not create new rights, but provides a new enforcement mechanism for existing rights that have been in force since Australia became a party to CEDAW. Perhaps the Prime Minister could reaffirm and announce a commitment to sign the Optional Protocol on the anniversary of Australia's signing (July).

ll. Create and enhance a supportive environment for the mobilization of resources by non-governmental organizations, particularly women's organizations and networks, to enable them to increase their effectiveness and to contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including through assisting in the implementation of the Platform for Action and participating in policy processes and programme delivery;

There are countless examples of how the struggle to advance social justice, human rights, sustainable development and peace, have been strongly supported by women's organizing. Achievements on the areas of gender equality and women's rights are almost unthinkable, without the strong and effective presence and push of active feminist and women's movements and organizations working at all levels, on diverse issues and with diverse women.

In order for women's movements to be as strong and as sustainable as they can be, they require bold leadership, innovative spirit, and significant funding. However, research on the trends of the past decades show that the funding available for gender equality is very limited and diminishing. Lack of financial resources is a critical hurdle for women's rights and gender equality in the world.

Channel resources through women's funds at different levels and intermediary granting-making institutions truly committed to advance women's rights and gender equality, to reach out and support smaller-sized and middle-sized women's organizations working at the grassroots and other levels. Resources for all women's organizations of diverse sizes, sectors and working on different issues need to be allocated.

At the national level, support the inclusion and full engagement of women's organizations and movements in the definition of national action plans, which will guide the prioritization of gender equality and women's rights and empowerment.

Renew the commitments to strengthening movements, by investing more in alliance building, networking, linking and learning as well as supporting endowments for national women's organizations to build a strong institutional base.

The comments so far are related to the priority theme of financing for gender equality but in addition to this CSW52 had a review theme and an emerging theme - gender perspectives in climate change. One of the Agreed Conclusions, initially proposed by Samoa, addressed this emerging theme.

jj. Integrate a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national environmental policies, strengthen mechanisms and provide adequate resources to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels of environmental issues, and in particular strategies related to the impact of climate change on the lives of women and girls;

As an emerging issue we need to begin to understand its implications for Australia and the women living in Australia but it may also be an area of regional focus, particularly in the Pacific. We need to further define our understanding of this issue and work to incorporate gender perspectives in new policy development processes around this priority area for the Rudd government.

In addition to comments about the substantive content of the CSW meeting this report highlight some process issues that should be considered if we are committed to improving our engagement and effectiveness in this important arena.

How can we engage with the CSW process?

If the United Nations is one of 3 pillars that underpin the Rudd government's Foreign Affairs policy then there is room for much greater engagement with CSW.

At CSW itself there are at least 4 opportunities to make an impact:

- Country Statement outlining the approach
- Responses to high level panels - interventions
- Negotiation on Resolutions and Conclusions
- Convening side events and panels

There is potential to improve in all these areas. This year we made no responses to the high level panels and did not convene any side events or panels despite having significant expertise both within the delegation and the NGO's who attended. We did contribute to the HIV/Aids Resolution through the involvement of Sun Hee Lee (AusAid).

There are also opportunities throughout the annual cycle of CSW in preparation and follow-up. Firstly the expert panel - we can identify experts and recommend them to CSW to be included in the expert panel. The draft Agreed Conclusions come from this expert panel session so it is a critical point in the lead up to CSW itself.

The current National Women Secretariats consultation could culminate in a workshop to create a joint report that incorporates a wider view of Australian women's input into the themes. Representatives from this group could meet with the Government delegation prior to them leaving for CSW.

Pre departure briefing and NGO workshop could focus more heavily on the themes and the draft agreed conclusions, which are generally issued a week or two prior to CSW.

Delegation itself needs to have extensive expertise in the process and the subject matter. NGO representation is critical and greater diversity in this group could enhance our contribution. Government funding to enable greater diversity of women to attend would be desirable.

New Zealand outlined their process of negotiating with their Minister a framework within which the delegation was free to negotiate and outside which they needed to check in. This worked well and is necessary due to the fast paced and often fluid negotiations.

Thank you to all involved for including me in this process.