

Women**Speak**

S4W Lifelong
Economic
Wellbeing
for Women

**WomenSpeak
Security4Women
Report to the Office for Women:
53rd UN Commission on the Status of Women**

WomenSpeak and Security4Women Submission on the 53rd CSW, including recommendations for the priority theme, the review theme, the country statement and reflections on good process.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Australian Government position at the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women.

WomenSpeak and Security 4 Women have worked collaboratively to prepare our response for the CSW. WomenSpeak and Security4Women co-hosted a preparatory round table in Canberra in October and a CSW training session in Melbourne in November. WomenSpeak then developed the structure for this paper and prepared the first draft of this paper with comments on the draft provided from members of both Alliances.

This paper has four sections:

- a) recommendations for the development of the Agreed Conclusions on the priority theme; in doing so we take the format of the Agreed Conclusions into account, which we understand to include two substantive sections
 - i. the identification of key issues
 - ii. the identification of actions that can be taken by Governments and other actors
- b) recommendations for substantive matters to be raised in the Country Statement, including observations on the review theme; the review theme has been addressed in this section because the CSW does not adopt a separate set of Agreed Conclusions rather issues a summary discussion of the review theme session
- c) reflections on process prior to, during and following on from CSW
- d) common recommendations from the four Alliances

2. Recommendations for the development of the Agreed Conclusions on the priority theme

The priority theme, *the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS*, is germane to the priorities identified by the Rudd Government to achieve gender equality, most particularly the economic security of women and the creation of a new partnership for gender equality between women and men.

We look forward to the Government adopting positions at the CSW which reflect the steps taken, and progress made towards, the closure of the gender pay gap, the adoption of a paid parental leave program, and the equal participation of women and men in decision making processes.

The UN have identified that five sub-themes comprise the priority theme:

- Gender stereotypes and unequal power relations
- The unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at household level
- The unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the public sphere
- Equal sharing of care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS
- Legislative and policy responses to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in all areas

In our discussion of each sub-theme we have identified the key issues and strategies that could be adopted. Each discussion point includes

- An encapsulation of our views on the key issue
- A review of relevant evidence from the UN Expert Group process
- Reference to relevant precedent language adopted at the UN – drawing from the Beijing Platform for Action, the Beijing Plus Five “Outcomes Document”, a range of Agreed Conclusions adopted by the CSW, and CEDAW articles and General Recommendations.
- Our recommendations on language that the Government could put forward for the Agreed Conclusions.

2.1 Overarching statement on the global financial crisis

WomenSpeak and S4W view

WomenSpeak and S4W are concerned that the global financial crisis may have a detrimental impact on gender equality programs and measures.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This matter was not addressed by the UN Expert Group meeting.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- Beijing Platform for Action, emphasising the need for political commitment to make available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women – paraphrased in CSW 52 Agreed Conclusions at paragraph 1 (E/2008/27; E/CN.6/2008/11)
- International Conference on Financing for Development, emphasising the need for gender-sensitive financing for development – paraphrased in CSW 52 Agreed Conclusions at paragraph 3 (E/2008/27; E/CN.6/2008/11)
- Recognition of productivity gains from investing in women – CSW 52 Agreed Conclusions at paragraph 11 (E/2008/27; E/CN.6/2008/11)
- Recognition of negative impact of insufficient political commitment and budgetary resources in achieving gender equality – CSW 52 Agreed Conclusions at paragraph 16 (E/2008/27; E/CN.6/2008/11)
- Recognition of “lingering negative consequences ... of structural adjustment programs” – CSW 52 Agreed Conclusions at paragraph 18 (E/2008/27; E/CN.6/2008/11)

Recommendations

WomenSpeak and S4W urge the Australian Government to actively lobby for the inclusion of language in the Agreed Conclusions that

1. Reiterates the productivity gains associated with the gender equality agenda, inter alia, the increased participation of women in the paid workforce, and the long-term economic security generated by greater workforce attachment for women
2. Calls for governments to ensure that programs to achieve gender equality are not lost as governments develop economic stimuli packages to respond to the global financial crisis
3. Calls for governments to ensure that the differential gender impacts of fiscal restraint measures are recognised and steps taken to ameliorate detrimental impacts.

2.2 Gender roles and stereotypes and unequal power relations

2.2.1 Recommendations on the identification of key issues

a. Address harmful and persistent cultural, social and economic stereotypes that detrimentally impact upon the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by recognising the complex and harmful social, cultural and economic patterns which result in the majority of women being unpaid primary care givers and the majority of men being paid workers with a limited role in raising their children. These patterns have detrimental impacts on women and men, inter alia

- in the case of women contributing to decreased economic security and independence
- in the case of men contributing to strong cultural prohibitions on men engaging in care giving

Until such time as these social, cultural and economic patterns are addressed it will not be possible to reconfigure the unequal power relations between women and men.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted

- the complex and widespread existence of harmful gender stereotypes and the detrimental impacts on women, Mary Daly, p 12
- the impact of damaging cultural stereotypes for men/ “traditional gender norms”, Gary Barker, p 2; Olagoke Akintola, p 4; UNAIDS, p 5
- the transformative gender relations potential of involving men in care, Gary Barker, p 7, Linden Lewis, p 4
- that a discussion on sharing responsibilities between women and men is a discourse on power, Linden Lewis, p 2

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

4. The Australian Government should seek to include in the issues section of the Agreed Conclusions reference to the persistent and harmful social, cultural and economic patterns which construct women as primary care givers and men as breadwinners, and the detrimental impact of these on equal power relations between women and men; on women’s economic security; and on the ability of men to share in care giving responsibilities.
5. The Australian Government should seek to include acknowledgement that full realisation of CEDAW by states parties, particularly with respect to articles 4, 5 and 11, would result in the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

b. Recognise the inter-relationship between violence against women and the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men is detrimentally affected by violence against women, both in the public and private spheres of home, work and government. A culture of violence against women is predicated on power asymmetries which also diminish the possibility of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted

- That violence is anathema to caring and thus to create a new ontology of caring violence must be addressed, Linden Lewis, p 4-5
- That “VAW is deeply rooted in and condoned by gender beliefs and roles”, Mary Daly, p 8 – we would argue that VAW and unequal sharing of responsibilities operate on the same continuum of gender beliefs and roles.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

6. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the detrimental impact of violence against women in the public and private spheres and the detrimental impact of violence against women on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

c. Recognise that a range of factors can influence the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men

WomenSpeak and S4W view

A policy lacuna on care

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men are detrimentally affected by the lack of overarching government policies on care. In this respect we note particularly the expert paper by Mary Daly, which addresses this matter at pp 26 – 27.

Cultural and socio-economic factors

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can be differentially affected by a range of factors including, inter alia, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, being HIV positive, sexual orientation, geographical location and immigration status. Any steps to address the persistent social, cultural and economic patterns which result in unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men must also address the impact of these factors.

The impact of changes to public and private sphere participation in caring labour

WomenSpeak and S4W note that the relationship of caring labour to private and public sector participation has undergone a transformation in the past twenty-thirty years. We note that as governments have reduced their direct participation in a range of caring services (most particularly, healthcare, childcare and eldercare), favouring instead market solutions or public-private partnerships for the delivery of these services, that there have been positive

and negative impacts on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in this context.

Most particularly, we note that as healthcare, childcare and eldercare have been privatised the burden of providing homebased alternatives has disproportionately fallen on women. For example, as healthcare funding has diminished patients have been sent home earlier from hospital, increasing the call for homebased care. In some instances families can afford to buy homebased care. In a few instances, governments fund homebased care through state subsidies. But in the majority of cases, women and girls make up the shortfall. The impacts of this are wide-ranging, including income foregone, opportunities for education, training and promotion foregone, and risk of physical injury.

The entrenchment of gender roles in caring work as women increase their participation in the paid workforce, and the positive and negative impacts on migrant women workers

WomenSpeak and S4W are of the view that while women have returned to work in increasing numbers, their participation in the paid workforce has not been accompanied by a transformation of gender roles in the caring realm. Overwhelming it is women who are expected to manage the impact on familial caring responsibilities when both parents engage in paid work, and women who provide the majority of paid replacement care.

The failure to transform societal attitudes towards familial caring work, most particularly the failure to transform workplace cultures, has resulted in families purchasing replacement care, rather than developing new models for reconciling work and family responsibilities. Increasingly, this care is being provided by migrant women workers. At one level, this has a positive impact on the workforce attachment of migrant women workers. But at another level, the wages and conditions available for this work are poor; the training available to support these workers is minimal (thus the quality of care provided can be diminished); and the intergenerational costs for the families of migrant women workers are considerable – grandmothers assume caring responsibilities for the children left behind. In some instances, vulnerability to violence and sexual assault is also a factor for migrant women workers providing care in the home.

UN Expert Group meeting view

These perception are shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted that the experiences of unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men differ according to

- geography and levels of development, Mary Daly, p 5
- income and globalisation (including the “nanny chain” which sees women from developing countries migrating to developed countries to provide care to the children of parents who have returned to the workforce), Mary Daly, p 11; Rostgaard, p 4
- costs to women of unpaid care work, Mary Daly, p 19, UNAIDS XX.

Participants in the UN Expert Group meeting also noted that labour market regulation can have a positive impact on the economic security of women involved in the care economy, particularly in addressing the wage penalties associated with the care economy and conditions of work (Razavi and Staab, p 19).

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five

- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendations

7. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the differential impact of a range of factors, inter alia, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, being HIV positive, sexual orientation, geographical location and immigration status, in addressing inequalities between the sharing of responsibilities between women and men.
8. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the growing impact of privatisation in the healthcare, childcare and eldercare sectors, and the disproportionate impact this has had on women, as they have provided unpaid replacement care in the home
9. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the entrenchment of gender roles in caring work as women have increased their participation in the paid workforce, noting particularly the positive and negative impacts on migrant women workers, inter alia, poor wages and conditions for these women workers.

2.2.2 Recommendations on actions that can be taken

a. Actions that address persistent cultural, social and economic stereotypes

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that persistent cultural, social and economic stereotypes need to be addressed through a whole of government and whole of community approach. Legislative, policy, programmatic and educational campaigns are required to shift the gendered stereotypical assumptions about caring labour.

While specific actions are addressed in subsequent sections of this paper, in our view an overarching statement of the type of actions required could be useful at an early stage of the Agreed Conclusions. In particular, a broad set of recommendations targeting men could usefully be incorporated into the start of the actions to be taken.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting, including the papers by Mary Daly, Linden Lewis, UNAIDS and Olagoke Akintola. For actions to address men see particularly the paper by Gary Barker, and his recommendations for change at pp 9 – 11.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendations

10. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to a whole of government and whole of community approach in addressing the persistent cultural, social and economic gender stereotypes which perpetuate the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.
11. The Australian Government should advocate for specific reference to actions that can be taken to address the equal participation of men, inter alia, scaling up fatherhood

preparation courses and information campaigns focusing on men's roles in the lives of children; scaling up interventions to reach younger boys and young men with alternative gender messages; reviewing a range of government policies to assess how they influence men's participation as father, including national health policies; supporting research into alternatives for men's involvement in early childhood development policies; supporting alternative models of fatherhood, including same-sex couples being assisted to have their own children through access to assisted reproduction; and making health and other social services more friendly to men.

b. Actions that address the policy lacuna on care-giving arising from gender stereotypes about care

WomenSpeak and S4W view

Better capturing data that recognises the economic contribution of unpaid work in the home, including caring work

WomenSpeak and S4W recognise that national systems of accounts have failed to adequately recognise the economic value of unpaid work and caring labour in the private sphere of the family.

Razavi and Staab (2008, 5) note that the UN System of National Accounts has incorporated some elements of unpaid work (unpaid work in family business, collection of firewood and water), however, very few countries have properly implemented the System of National Accounts. Moreover, some significant aspects of caring work are excluded (including shopping, washing clothes, feeding or bathing one's child, elderly parent or neighbour) although some countries include these in "satellite accounts."

The long-term economic consequences of failing to "count" women's unpaid or undervalued labour include, inter alia,

- The distortion of national economic indicators through failing to recognise the market-based economic value of women's unpaid or undervalued labour
- Long-term economic insecurity for women who have weakened workplace attachment or no workforce attachment
- Diminished access to education and training
- Under-development of human capital and depletion of social capital

While many models have been developed which enable this labour to be accounted for, very few governments have adopted the practice. Properly valuing the economic contribution of unpaid work in the home and caring labour in the home would go some way to addressing the negative cultural stereotypes associated with this work, which in turn would contribute to a greater equality in the sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

Adopting policy frameworks on care-giving

Following the work of Mary Daly at the expert group meeting, it is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that governments should adopt a policy on care-giving, which should have as a goal valuing care and undertaking measures to ensure the equality of responsibilities in care-giving, be adequately resourced to enable "increases in the supply of services, improve the conditions under which care-giving is carried out, and make it more equal in terms of shared responsibilities...[quality of care should be addressed through] the adoption of standards and benchmarks... [which] should be applied to both unpaid as well as paid care-giving. Measures also need to be put in place to set standards around foreign/migrant care workers." (Daly 2008, 27).

Adopting a gender budgeting framework

WomenSpeak and Security4Women consider that comprehensive gender budgets are an important tool in the realisation of the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men. Part of the challenge in engendering an equal sharing of responsibilities is to make visible the economic contributions that have traditionally been ignored by mainstream economic theory and practice. Gender budgeting provides an institutional mechanism to transform gender blind economic theory and practice and thus contributes to the realisation of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

UN Expert Group meeting view

In reference to the valuing of unpaid work and care in national economic systems WomenSpeak and S4W note the paper of Shahra Razavi and Silke Staab; in relation to a policy framework on care-giving, WomenSpeak and S4W note particularly the paper by Mary Daly.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendations

12. The Australian Government should advocate for reference to the inclusion of unpaid work in the home and caring labour in the UN System of National Accounts, including those forms of labour currently recognised in some satellite account systems; and that governments implement the UN System of National Accounts
13. The Australian Government should advocate for the reference to the adoption of a policy framework on care-giving which seeks to properly value care and recognise its intersections with a range of government policies, allocate adequate resources to support care-giving, and put in place standards and benchmarks for the provision of quality paid and unpaid caring.
14. The Australian Government should advocate for reference to the adoption of gender budgeting mechanisms as an institutional contribution to the achievement of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

2.3 Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level

2.3.1 Recommendations on the identification of key issues

- a. Promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level through economic change**

WomenSpeak and S4W view

Better capturing data that recognises the economic contribution of unpaid work in the home, including caring work

Please see section 2.2.2.b for our views on this matter.

Investment in infrastructure

Economic change with respect to funding for infrastructure is also required to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men. The under-investment in

infrastructure has a disproportionate impact on women, resulting in them spending significant portions of their day gathering fuel or water. So long as infrastructure remains poor then the equal sharing of responsibilities of women and men in the household will be jeopardised.

UN Expert Group meeting view

The perception that the true economic value should be ascribed to unpaid work in the home and caring work is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted the costs of caring labour on women (see Daly 2008, 19; Razavi and Staab 2008, 13 – 19). Recognition of the gender differentiated impacts of poor infrastructure development is recognised by XXX.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendations

15. See recommendation 11.

16. The Australian Government should advocate for recognition of the disproportionate impact on women and girls of poor infrastructure investment and development and the detrimental impact this has on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the household.

b. Promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level through social and cultural change, particularly through the promotion of a shared vision for gender equality

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level persist because of the strength of social and cultural expectations that women will conduct unpaid or undervalued work in the private sphere of the home, caring for children, family members and community; while men operate in the public sphere of the paid workforce. The impact of these expectations is that women and men do not take an equal share in the caring work conducted in the home. Governments must demonstrate strong leadership, particularly through community education programs which seek to challenge social and cultural expectations (including harmful gender stereotyping) – recognising the insidious nature of intergenerational transmission of harmful gender stereotypes.

UN Expert Group meeting view

WomenSpeak and S4W note that the papers from Linden Lewis, Gary Barker, Mary Daly, UNAIDS, and Shahara Razavi and Silke Staab all address the detrimental impacts that gender norms have on the reconceptualising of gender roles in caring labour, and the complex set of policies and education strategies required to address the gender norms.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five

- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

17. The Australian Government should seek recognition that a shared vision for gender equality, in which women and men can equally share responsibilities, particularly for caring work, require complex, multi-sectoral policy responses and community education campaigns. In particular, policy responses and community education campaigns must address the persistent and harmful gender stereotypes that naturalise a woman's capacity to care and belittle those men who adopt such behaviour.

2.3.2 Recommendations on actions that can be taken

a. Actions to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level through economic change

WomenSpeak and S4W view

Full economic valuation of unpaid work and caring work in the home

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level can only be achieved by ascribing a true economic value to the hitherto unpaid or undervalued work conducted in the household.

Investment in infrastructure

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level can only be achieved by addressing the under-investment and development of infrastructure, particularly access to energy and water.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by Razavi and Staab in their contribution to the UN Expert Group meeting which noted the importance of valuing unpaid caring and unpaid household work in systems of national accounts (2008, 5).

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

18. See recommendation 11.

19. The Australian Government should seek government commitments to infrastructure investment as a means of addressing the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

b. Actions to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level through social and cultural change

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men at the household level persist because of the strength of social and cultural expectations that women will conduct unpaid or undervalued work in the private sphere of

the home, caring for children, family members and community; while men operate in the public sphere of the paid workforce. The impact of these expectations is that women and men do not take an equal share in the caring work conducted in the home. Governments must demonstrate strong leadership, particularly through community education programs which seek to challenge social and cultural expectations (including harmful gender stereotyping) – recognising the insidious nature of intergenerational transmission of harmful gender stereotypes.

UN Expert Group meeting view

WomenSpeak and S4W note that the papers from Linden Lewis, Gary Barker, Mary Daly, UNAIDS, and Shahara Razavi and Silke Staab all address the detrimental impacts that gender norms have on the reconceptualising of gender roles in caring labour, and the complex set of policies and education strategies required to address the gender norms.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

20. See recommendations 9 and 10.

2.4 Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the public sphere

2.4.1 Recommendations on the identification of key issues

- a. Recognise the linkage between the household labour of women and their unequal participation in the public sphere – formal decision making processes**

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that women's participation in formal decision making processes in the private sphere of business and the public sphere of government are detrimentally affected by the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the household.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

21. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the disproportionate impact of household labour on women's participation in formal decision making processes.

b. Recognise the linkage between the household labour of women and their unequal participation in the public sphere – paid work

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men would improve the participation of women in the paid work sphere. At present the disproportionate burden carried by women for caring labour diminishes their workforce attachment, contributes to the gender pay gap, and jeopardises their long-term economic security.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

22. The Australian Government should seek to recognition of the detrimental impact that the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the household has on the participation of women in the paid labour market.

c. Recognise the importance of transforming concepts of leadership and public sphere participation to better reflect the practices of both women and men

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by transforming our vision for leadership, challenging patriarchal hierarchies, expectations of a 24-7 availability; instead embracing a vision for leadership which encourages the reconciliation of work-life balance, and more consensual, non-hierarchical decision-making practices.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This matter was not addressed in the expert group papers.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

23. The Australian Government should seek recognition that models of leadership need to be transformed to take into account the equal responsibilities of women and men for caring work in the home.

2.4.2 Recommendations on actions that can be taken

a. Actions which recognise the importance of workplace practices which enable parents and carers to balance work and family responsibilities, including through legislative enforcement and community education campaigns

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by the adoption of workplace practices which enable parents and carers to balance work and family responsibilities. While we will discuss a range of legislative mechanisms in section 2.6 of this paper, we note in particular a large range of measures that would assist families in achieving work-life balance, inter alia,

- Government support for the provision of childcare and eldercare, including ensuring that it is affordable, accessible of a high quality
- Legislating for flexible work practices, including flexible working hours (including compacting work hours into a smaller number of days and flexi time), increased flexibility around working from home (including tele-commuting), increased support for part-time work and job-sharing
- Government support for paid parental leave schemes

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

24. The Australian Government should advocate for a broad range of legislative mechanisms to be included in the actions section including, government support for affordable, accessible, and quality childcare and eldercare; flexible working practices; and paid parental leave.

b. Actions which increase the education and training options for women and girls

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by increasing the education and training options for women and girls, thus facilitating their participation in the paid labour force.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

25. The Australian Government should advocate for the incorporation of actions directed at improving the education and training available to women and girls, with the intention of increasing their participation in the paid labour force.

2.5 Care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS

2.5.1 Recommendations on the identification of key issues

- a. Recognise that gender inequality underpins the prevalence of HIV among women and the disproportionate burden on women for care giving for people living with HIV/AIDS**

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that gender inequality, including the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, underpins the prevalence of HIV among women. Globally, XX% of people living with HIV/AIDS are women. Gender inequality means that women are vulnerable to HIV infection for a range of reasons including XXX.

Gender inequality, particularly the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, accounts for the disproportionate burden on women for care giving for people living with HIV/AIDS. WomenSpeak and S4W note the work of XX which suggests the over 90% of the caring for people living with HIV/AIDS is conducted by women. One outcome of this is that when positive women become sick they are less likely to be cared for by male partners and may be vulnerable to receiving no care as a result.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

26. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the gender inequality which underpins the prevalence of HIV among women and the disproportionate burden on women for care giving for people living with HIV/AIDS.

- b. Recognise the range of impacts which affect women as the primary care givers for people living with HIV/AIDS**

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that there are a range of negative impacts on women arising from their disproportionate responsibilities in caring for people living with HIV/AIDs. WomenSpeak and S4W note that the papers from the UN Expert Group meeting included forgone income and opportunities for promotion, longer and more common periods of leave (often unpaid) from work than those with other forms of caring responsibilities, costs associated with drug treatments and therapies along with ancillary medical costs, physical injury, and the effects of stigma associated with caring for someone with HIV/AIDs (see below further information on this final impact).

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

27. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the negative impacts which affect women as a result of their caring responsibilities for people living with HIV/AIDs, including an enumeration of specific issues such as the longer and more common periods of leave required to care for someone living with HIV/AIDs and costs associated with drug treatments, therapies and ancillary medical costs.

- c. Recognise that HIV/AIDs has severely strained health systems, particularly in developing countries, and this has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls because of the unequal sharing of caring responsibilities**

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that as health systems have struggled to cope with the impact of the HIV/AIDs pandemic women have been disproportionately affected because of the unequal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men. This is particularly the case in developing countries where the ongoing impact of structural adjustment programs and low levels of economic development have resulted in long-term underinvestment in the health system. One impact of this has been a high level of dependency in developing countries on home based care options. Women, as the primary carers of those living with HIV/AIDs have been disproportionately affected by this approach to healthcare.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC

- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

28. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the disproportionate impact on women caused by the underinvestment in healthcare, particularly in developing economies, and the additional strain on healthcare systems caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

d. Recognise that the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS can diminish access to support services

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the stigma associated with HIV/AIDSs can affect the ability of carers of those living with HIV/AIDS to access support and services. The stigma associated with HIV/AIDSs, along with the

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

29. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

2.5.2 Recommendations on actions that can be taken

a. Take steps to properly integrate into the health system, and to fully fund, home based caring options

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

30. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

b. Take steps to recognise a continuum of care model in responding to HIV/AIDS

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

31. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

c. Take steps to support carers of those living with HIV/AIDS

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

32. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

d. Take steps to increase household access to HIV/AIDSs related services and resources

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN systemca

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

33. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

e. Take steps to facilitate the greater participation of men in caring for those with HIV/AIDS

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

34. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

f. Take steps to address equal access to land, property and housing for women affected by HIV/AIDS

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

35. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

g. Take steps to increase research on care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by

UN Expert Group meeting view

This perception is shared by participants in the UN Expert Group meeting who have noted XYZ

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

36. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the

2.6 Legislative and policy responses to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

2.6.1 Recommendations on the identification of key issues

- a. Recognise the vital importance of robust anti-discrimination and equality mechanisms in contributing to the realisation of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men**

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by the adoption and realisation of robust anti-discrimination and equality mechanisms, in particular provision for protection against and sanction for discrimination on the grounds of family responsibilities. WomenSpeak and S4W advocate for individual complaints mechanisms as well as processes designed to address systemic failures. Such mechanisms must be fully funded with meaningful sanctions and broad-based public understanding.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This matter was not addressed by the expert group meeting papers.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

37. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the importance of robust, and well-funded, individual and systemic anti-discrimination mechanisms, particularly those addressing discrimination on the grounds of family responsibilities.

b. Recognise the importance of affirmative action mechanisms in contributing to the realisation of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be supported by the existence of affirmative action measures, particularly those which seek to increase the participation of women in the private-corporate and public-government sphere.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This matter was not addressed by the expert group meeting papers.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

38. The Australian Government should seek to include reference to the importance of affirmative action measures as a means of achieving the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

2.6.2 Recommendations on actions that can be taken

a. Actions which address the vital importance of robust anti-discrimination and equality mechanisms in contributing to the realisation of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by the adoption of robust, well-funded anti-discrimination mechanisms, as discussed at 2.6.1.a above.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This matter was not addressed by the expert group meeting papers.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

39. See recommendation 35.

b. Actions which address the importance of affirmative action mechanisms in contributing to the realisation of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men

WomenSpeak and S4W view

It is the view of WomenSpeak and S4W that the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can only be achieved by supporting affirmative action measures, as addressed in 2.6.1.b above.

UN Expert Group meeting view

This matter was not addressed by the expert group meeting papers.

Precedent language from the UN system

WomenSpeak and S4W note that this matter has been addressed in previous UN forums, inter alia,

- PFA and Plus Five
- AC
- CEDAW General Recommendation

Recommendation

40. See recommendation 36.

3. Recommendations for substantive matters to be raised in the Country Statement

WomenSpeak and S4W are of the view that the Country Statement provides a significant opportunity for the Australian Government to

1. Highlight recent actions to strengthen the domestic realisation of women's human rights, particularly during a time of global financial crisis including through
 - a. Steps to introduce paid parental leave and to address the gender pay gap
 - b. The ratification of the OP to CEDAW
 - c. The funding of women's participation through the National Women's Secretariat model and the Women's Leadership and Development Grants
 - d. The review of the SDA and possible steps to strengthen the work of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner
 - e. The articulation of a vision for Gender Equality
 - f. The adoption of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Girls
2. Show international leadership to strengthen the international gender architecture, particularly during a time of global financial crisis including through
 - a. Promotion of a new UN Agency for Women
 - b. Promotion of the accreditation of national human rights institutions to the CSW
3. Promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels
 - a. Promotion of affirmative action mechanisms to achieve 50-50 participation of women and men in decision-making

4. Reflections on process prior to, during and following on from CSW

Funding for and appointment of community sector representatives

WomenSpeak and S4W welcome the Australian Government funding of two community sector representatives to participate in the work of the Australian Government delegation. This is a tremendous achievement.

We welcome the open and transparent selection process developed for the community sector representative, particularly noting with appreciation that the application was not overly burdensome, making it possible for interested delegates to prepare their application in a reasonably short period of time, important given the competing demands of a daily work schedule.

We note that there was considerable disquiet amongst the sector that a similar process was not followed for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative and would welcome an open and transparent selection process in future years.

Pre-CSW Roundtables and Expert Group Meetings

WomenSpeak and S4W welcome the emerging practice of increased collaboration between the Australian Government and the Alliances in preparing for CSW. In particular we welcome the opportunity to meet with the Australian Government at a pre-CSW Roundtable.

In our view this work could be strengthened by gaining a clearer understanding of the schedule for the preparations undertaken by the CSW Bureau in New York. In particular, it would be useful to ensure that our preparatory processes can inform the inter-sessional meetings of the CSW Bureau in New York, particularly as they meet to begin the drafting work on the Agreed Conclusions. We are concerned that our current timelines run behind the work of the CSW Bureau.

Pre-approved government negotiating position

WomenSpeak and S4W warmly welcome the steps taken by OFW to adopt a negotiating framework for the CSW. In our view this step will facilitate the participation of the Australian Government in the negotiations and will contribute to the Government's commitment to strengthened leadership at the UN.

Australian Delegation to the CSW

WomenSpeak and S4W urge the Australian Government to send a high level delegation to the CSW meeting, to be led by the Minister for the Status of Women. In the event the Minister is unable to attend we urge her to appoint a Parliamentary delegate. We also welcome the active participation in the delegation of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner.

Meetings between NGOs and Government at CSW

WomenSpeak and S4W welcome the strong engagement between NGOs and Government at CSW. We note that while there have historically been strong links between the Australian Government delegation and NGOs participating in the CSW there is no formal agreement on the nature of liaison.

We encourage the Australian Government to codify this practice, and in doing so to recognise the value of daily Australian Government-NGO briefing sessions.

We also note that the innovation of meeting for dinner, away from the UN, on the Sunday immediately prior to the commencement of CSW enabled those Australians present to meet each other and establish contacts, something that the size of the UN can sometimes make difficult!

Strategies to bring the CSW outcomes home

WomenSpeak and S4W are of the view that the energy and time devoted to the CSW, by both the Australian Government and the Alliances, is only of value if we "bring the CSW

outcomes home”. In particular, we would like to explore how the Agreed Conclusions can be integrated into the work of the Australian Government and the Alliances. Steps we could take include:

- A media strategy to publicise the outcomes of the Agreed Conclusions, particularly as they relate to the domestic political agenda
- A communications strategy across government/s to enable relevant line departments to learn more about the CSW Agreed Conclusions and positive impacts on their workplans
- Inclusion of a CSW report back at the Joint Secretariats meeting

5. Common recommendations from the four Alliances

In the preparation of our reports, the four Alliances have agreed to collectively support the common recommendations. These recommendations have been integrated into our report, but in summary we all agreed that we would recommend that the Australian Government

- Promote the adoption of strong anti-discrimination and equality frameworks, particularly measures to support workers with family responsibilities
- Promote the adoption of paid parental leave schemes
- Recognise the detrimental impact of violence against women on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men
- Recognise the importance of an intersectional discrimination analysis in addressing the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men
- GFC
- 50-50 representation in decision making
- Promote strong mechanisms to achieve the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including through reference to Australian agencies and procedures such as the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities at Work Agency
- Promote the accreditation of national human rights institutions to the CSW
- Promote the establishment of a new UN Agency for Women