

## **THEMATIC NGO REPORTS**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations Delivered at the UN ECE Preparatory Meeting on Beijing + 15**

#### **Care Economy, Unpaid Work and Decent Work, Macroeconomics and Gender Budgeting**

**Speakers: Tatiana Isoo, (ANFDUR); Daniela Terzi-Barbăroie, (Center Partnership for Development)**

1. Undertake European-wide study to determine quantitative and qualitative economic value of unpaid work, especially in transition economies, including girls working domestically in care economy.
2. Develop special qualitative methodology to determine gender equality based on a multitude of indicators that take into account the lack of recognition of unpaid work and undervaluing of care economy.
3. Access to education is not sufficient to gender equality, but must evaluate content of textbook materials and curriculum, to build attitudes and behaviours to empower young girls to become future leaders and eradicate the male paradigm.
4. Create a workplace environment of equality that promotes paternal leave and changes the male breadwinner model.
5. Workplace must have effective punitive mechanism that prevent sexual harassment and promote human resources management that prevents exploitation of women's care giving responsibilities.
6. Qualify employment statistics by noting significant gender gap in part time and lower level jobs.
7. Quantify cost of domestic violence and enact legislation to stop violence against women.
8. Ensure gender mainstreaming in government policy that protects social services and social security and provides decent work to decrease and prevent the feminisation of poverty.
9. Raise awareness and increase knowledge in governments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and significance of the interdependence of economic, social and cultural rights with civil and political rights as underscored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially relevant during the economic crisis.
10. Provide social services and protect all human rights for gay and lesbian families that suffer from multiple forms of discrimination including in the workplace.
11. Continue to promote micro-credit for small and medium enterprises, especially start-up enterprises, to empower women and encourage entrepreneurship development.
12. Promote the pursuit of employment outside of "traditional" female professions and safeguard decent work for women.
13. We call on governments to be aware of and avoid the protection of so-called "traditional values and customs" as a societal concept that could be used to justify the oppression of women and exclusion from the active labour force and which reinforces the unpaid care responsibilities for women.
14. Create a Europe-wide Equal Pay Day to protest the gender pay gap and demand legislation for income equality.
15. Reduce military expenditures and reallocate tax payer money to social services and education for a more sustainable future.

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16. Mandate a 50-50 gender balance in government decision making on all levels and increased gender sensitivity within civil workplaces.
17. Use gender budgeting to raise awareness of the plight of poor and marginalized women in transitional governments and conflict areas.
18. Use gender budgeting as a means to highlight the economic contributions of women in macroeconomics and make visible their roles in paid and unpaid work as smart business practice and not a welfare concept.
19. Educate rural women and girls in new forms of technology including agriculture sciences, communication, computer sciences, etc.
20. Provide preferential credit to increase female entrepreneurship and ownership, including the women from rural areas.
21. Create national campaigns to eliminate alcoholism and domestic violence.
22. Reduce government agricultural subsidies to benefit the livelihood of female field workers in poorer countries.
23. Use international networks to create mentor partnerships for girls to learn from the experiences of successful women in “non-traditional” careers.

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#### **Migrant and Displaced Women and Trafficking**

**Speaker: Miriam Freudenberg, (WAVE Network office)**

Given that the current economic/financial crisis increased women's poverty, we earnestly ask that the governments of the region promote the economic empowerment of all women and urge governments to consider the following points;

- The ECE should take measures to eliminate the economic exploitation of women coming from developing countries.
- Governments of the ECE region should condemn all forms of violence against women worldwide, including under the pretext of: tradition, customs, religion or culture.
- Governments of the region should recognize that prostitution is a violation of women's human rights and put in place legislation that criminalizes the clients and decriminalizes victims of prostitution. We further call for governments to establish, implement, and adequately fund services to enable women to leave prostitution.
- Introduce legislation in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings should be fully implemented and its adoption promoted as a minimum standard in our region.
- Member states of the ECE region should give priority to the centrality of a rights-based approach to international migration. The humanity and dignity of 200 million migrants in the world must be the primary concern of all State's and other actors. We urge that the governments of the region ensure that migrant and displaced women have access to:
  - Proper documentation (such as birth registration, marriage documents, working permits)
  - Adequate housing
  - The right to equal work for equal pay
  - Education
  - Health services
  - Social protection (including proper information service in a language they can understand)
  - Unemployment insurance
  - Services protecting their human rights and delivered with respect
  - Free legal assistance
- In addition, we request that governments implement support evaluation mechanisms of the before mentioned measures and provide regular reports on these evaluations.
- We insist that the governments of the region take proactive steps to sanction racist and discriminatory practices against migrant and displaced women.
- Finally, we would like to recall that in the Beijing Platform of Action for Equality, Development and Peace in its section on Human Rights of Women Diagnosis and Actions to be taken in paragraph 233 h it is mentioned
- Take appropriate measures to ensure that refugee and displaced women migrant women and women migrant workers are made aware of their human rights and of the recourse mechanisms available to them.

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#### Contribution from the NGO caucus on minority women in the ECE region

#### Item 5 – Gender-sensitive economic policies in the context of the economic crisis

**Speaker: H el ene Sackstein, (International Alliance of Women)**

NGOs participating in the caucus began by including in the category of minority women all those who are different in some way from the majority of women in their country because of their ethnicity, their religion, their culture, their extreme poverty, their real or perceived disabilities, their sexual orientation and gender identity, their marital status or their life style. The list is far from exhaustive, but the recommendations made are relevant to most minorities women victim of marginalization and/or social exclusion in the UNECE Member States.

Lack of access to education, health and status, an absence of legal rights along with the inability to have their voices heard has marginalized these women and girls and resulted in the inter-generational transmission of lives in poverty - a vicious cycle that can only be broken through an effort to develop anti-poverty policies and programmes that reach all members of society. This state of affairs is exacerbated by the financial crisis.

It has been shown over and over that gender roles are key in either hindering or facilitating the integration of minority communities and it would prove cost-effective to invest in their women and girls

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provides a road map and already 15 years ago identified some of the shortcomings of economic policies.

In addition to acknowledging the need for social justice and noting the structural causes of poverty, Point 4 of the **Declaration**, among others, specifically invokes the need to listen to voices of women everywhere taking note of their diversity, their roles and circumstances.

Again, among many others, Point 18 of the Global framework of the **Platform for Action** in a specially relevant passage acknowledges that economic programmes are not designed to minimize their negative effects on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups or women, nor have they been designed to assure positive effect on them by preventing their further marginalization in economic and social activities but point 45 of the Strategic objectives emphasizes that the Platform of Action is intended to improve the situation of all women without exception while special attention should be paid to groups that are most disadvantaged.

15 years after The Women's World Conference in Beijing emphasized the shortcomings of economic programmes for millions of disadvantaged and marginalized women and girls and the need to heed their voices, both the states reviews and this meeting agenda appear to treat women as a monolithic mass with essentially similar demands. Little attention is paid to those who are more concerned by the need to put some food on the family table or place a roof above their head than by equal pay.

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As a simple example of lack of progress in this area, there are some 8 million Roma in European region and, although they have been identified in every country, they are likely to be more prevalent in Central and Eastern Europe.

Most are poorer than their non-Roma neighbours; their children die twice as fast as the children of their neighbours; Maternal mortality statistics are equally dismal. Along with many other poor people, the Roma have difficulties maintaining property, paying rent, mortgages or utility bills and this has led to increasing homelessness, displacement, tensions with local authorities. They suffer conspicuous disadvantages in relation to the criminal justice system, are grossly over-represented among the region's prison population and are often the main victims of racial violence and discrimination.

These problems are partially related to declines in the quality and accessibility of public services - exacerbated by the financial crisis. In Eastern and Central Europe the introduction of a market economy has severely constrained their ability to cope by depriving them of income and employment. A World Bank study found an extensive impoverishment with a long-term and structural unemployment range between 45% and 70% and even 100% in some communities.

We can assume that these problems have grown exponentially with the financial crisis. We can also assume that they share them with many other minorities.

Minority women are further victimized by multiple disadvantages and discrimination, often within their own community as well as outside of it, by their female status.

Even a minority of 8 million people in the European region – over 4 million women and girls - with the problems we have just outlined receives little attention in the states reviews or in this regional review agenda.

In an attempt to provide some remedies, we urge governments to, at the very least,

- Develop and implement impact assessments on minority populations, particularly women and girls before putting in place any new economic programme
- Review existing European and national legislation and socio-economic policies in the light of their impact on reducing gender inequalities, by addressing all forms of discrimination and social exclusion
- Ensure the participation of minority women in the development of more effective economic and social policies and programmes, giving real weight to their inputs; they are, after all the ones who know best the obstacles that they face and the type of support they need.
- Ensure that poverty reduction policies and programmes reach disadvantaged and vulnerable populations who may have few qualifications and little formal work experience
- Develop campaigns against violence, including homophobia, in business and industry as it has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of employees and their productivity

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- Ensure equality of social protection for lesbian families, including in cases of immigration linked to employment
- In view of the increased numbers of widows of all ages, ensure that policies address not just their needs but also acknowledge and support their positive roles in society
- Ensure adequate funding for minority women organizations to enhance their collective voice and participation at all levels of decision-making regarding their status and needs
- Pay special attention to the situation of minority women during the 2010 European year to combat poverty and social exclusion

Finally, we reaffirm that, in spite of the financial crisis, woman's rights remain human rights as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and need to be mainstreamed throughout all socio-economic policies and programmes of the region.

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#### **Environment and Climate Change**

##### **Item 6- Gender and the Corporate Sector**

###### **Speaker: Renée Girard (French Association of University Women)**

Although climate change affects the whole population, women and men, and its consequences will be disastrous for the economic crisis and will increase poverty and mass migration, it can be devised that women are disproportionately affected by it due to their gender role in protecting the livelihood of the family. Women are not equally represented in all decision making bodies, yet they are still powerful agents of change. The ecological footprints of women are significantly lighter than those of men. Therefore, strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change **must** recognize women's abilities and include them in the research, development and implementation process.

We want to recall the forthcoming meeting of CPCCC in Copenhagen in December and also the statement of CEDAW Committee in August 2009 on climate change and gender.

Pursuant to this, we urge the member states to:

- Include the woman perspective in the Treaty on Climate Change
- Include women in all phases of negotiating, planning, and implementation of policies to stop global warming
- Empower women on local, regional and national levels in all decision making bodies to ensure that women's voices are heard strongly in the incorporation of gender aspects in climate change
- Increase transparency in budgeting and policies which could have negative effects on climate change, including the Member States' military operations
- Give budgetary priorities to face the effect of climate change on women and children's health and to guarantee access to clean water
- Reallocate financial, technical and human resources from the military budget to increase funding for gender-sensitive disaster preparedness and adaptation programs and the awareness and knowledge of the gender perspective in the effects of climate change.

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#### **Employability, Education and Training**

#### **Item 5- Gender-sensitive economic policies in the context of the economic and financial crisis**

##### **Written statement only**

- Education is fundamental to sound economic development, peaceful societies and public health.
- The current economic and financial crisis has caused governments to cut duets and change priorities. Unfortunately many of these cuts, as in education, have affected women disproportionately. We urge that education at all levels- formal, informal and non-formal, must be excluded from financial cuts as governments try to manage their debt.
- Education at all levels, whether single sex or co-educational, must, from the beginning, have a gender aware curriculum, to enable women' full participation in the economy and men's' participation in the household.
- Formal education should prepare women and girls for responsible and informed citizenship as well as academic preparation for the career of their choice.
- Governments and corporations must offer skills training including knowledge in micro-financing, use of new technologies, literacy and numeracy to women at all levels to improve their standard of living.
- Corporation must be responsible actors and address the social and ethical obligations in the communities in which they operate, through programmes that enhance women's' education and economic advancement.

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#### Human Rights and a Culture of Responsibilities

##### Item 7: New partnerships, networks, and alliances for gender equality

Speaker: Elly Pradervand, (WWSF)

**The implementation of Human Rights principles is the core responsibility of all governments; they must underpin the development of all legislation and policy and ensure its implementation, as well as being accountable to civil society.**

**Women's rights as human rights are not bargaining terms.** Evidence shows that ensuring women's rights through policies enables a stronger impact on employment, economic growth, and the development of democratic societies and the lives of families.

If governments fail to adopt human rights legislation then their inaction is perpetuating all forms of violence against women. Since the Beijing conference in 1995, some governments of the region have demonstrated a lack of commitment to embed women's rights into all policies and legislation.

Women must not be seen as a homogenous group. We, the women of their world, urge the ECE governments to work in partnership with women's groups, human rights groups, trade unions and international agencies to:

1. **Adopt** policies addressing traditional customs and religious practices that will not impede upon human rights core values, particularly those in relation to women and reproductive health.
2. **Impose** stronger legislation and adopt relevant policies with regards to the private sector, who continue to ignore the rights of women around the world by not complying with international employment legislation or exploiting the lack of legislation.
3. **Assist** governments within a limited time frame to develop relevant policies for the emerging issue of the older world population that are mostly women. This should include protection through the adoption of a UN convention for older people.
4. **Collect, analyze and publish** data for government gender budgeting to comply with human rights obligations under the various international human rights treaties, conventions, etc...
5. **Ensure** full implementation of the UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 by all UN member states along with national action plans, which are measurable and time bound. The development of legislation and policy to implement these conventions needs to include women in the decision-making and implementation processes to foster the emergence of a culture of peace.

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6. All ECE governments should **ratify**, and put pressure on other states that have not yet ratified, treaties and conventions that comply with universal human rights standards.

**It is the responsibility of governments to be accountable for their obligations and shortcomings under UN conventions and treaties.** It should be the policy of all states to support and encourage human rights through education and particularly women's rights through education and implementation in legislation and policy. This should be the embodiment of their responsibilities. Through the acceptance of responsibilities, states therefore empower their citizens to regard women's rights as a right to dignity.

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#### **The New Gender Architecture and one UN entity on Women: A Partnership between the United Nations and the Women's Movement**

##### **Item 7: New partnerships, networks, and alliances for gender equality**

##### **Speaker: June Zeitlin, GEAR Campaign Consultant**

On 14 September 2009, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/63/L.103 on System-wide Coherence which supports the creation of a new UN gender equality entity, headed by an Under Secretary-General. The GEAR Campaign considers the UNGA resolution a historic moment, which has the potential to start a new era for women's rights globally. The ECE Regional consultation at the fifteen-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) will discuss, under Agenda Item 7 "New partnerships, networks, and alliances for gender equality". These recommendations are targeted towards that discussion, as well as the overall review of the BPfA especially in regards to Critical Area H- Institutional Mechanisms.

Women around the world have waited for the United Nations and member states to fulfill the promises made since the first International Women's Year in 1975, the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) thirty years ago, as well as the UN World Conferences in Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995).

#### **Overall Recommendation**

Given the current economic and financial crisis and the disproportionate impact it is having on women, especially lower income women in every part of the world, the swift creation of a strong composite UN entity (combining policy and operational activities) focused on gender equality and women's empowerment that is well-resourced and led by an Under Secretary-General is critical. The new gender equality entity with its higher level leadership is necessary to ensure that gender equality issues are addressed and women's voices are heard at every decision making level, including globally at UN headquarters and the Bretton Woods institutions, regionally and at country level. While the crisis is having negative impacts on women's situation and the existing women's machineries, the creation of the new UN women's rights entity is critical as it will advance the economic empowerment of women as called for in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

#### **Key Points**

The resolution's provisions on the new UN women's rights entity need to be implemented swiftly and effectively. In order to make this happen, the UN Secretary General has put a process in place that calls for a comprehensive report specifying the mission statement and organizational arrangement for the new gender entity by the end of the year 2009. We urge the SG to stay committed to this timetable.

UN member states still face a number of key issues concerning the mandate, mission, organizational structure, governance and funding which need to be addressed during the 64<sup>th</sup> General Assembly session. We call on UN Member States to stay committed to this process

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and ensure that the establishment of the much needed single women's UN agency is moving ahead without any further delay.

The President of the UN General Assembly (PGA) needs to ensure that the formal intergovernmental process is ready to begin expeditiously once the report is finalized.

#### **The New UN Women's Rights Entity Must Play a Transformative Role**

The current UN women's agencies must be consolidated to establish a transformative and visionary new gender equality entity. Combining and enhancing the normative and operational functions that will enhance synergies and promote an expanded field presence is essential to the success of the new entity. The entity must hold all countries, including countries in ECE regions, accountable for women's rights.

In addition, the new gender entity should take the lead in promoting gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and women in decision-making in the entire UN system, and should hold other agencies accountable to their commitments to women (UNICEF serves as a model for this in how they hold other agencies accountable to their responsibilities for children).

#### **The New UN Women's Rights Entity Has to be Ambitiously Funded**

Existing funding for gender equality within the UN is completely inadequate.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we believe that the new gender equality entity needs to have an initial **budget of \$ 1 billion USD per year** with annual increases. The new entity should be funded from both voluntary and assessed contributions. Ensuring ambitious funding requires a broad donor basis involving all UN member states and countries that may not be part of the usual group of donors with the largest contributions coming from the ECE region.

#### **The New Women's Rights Entity Needs the Participation of Civil Society**

The systematic and meaningful participation of civil society, especially women's organizations, needs to be part of the governance and the accountability structures of the new entity. This means that civil society should be represented on the Executive Board of the new entity. Of equal importance is a strong formal CSO involvement with the entity at country and regional level. The role of NGOs on the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS is a precedent that should be a model in the governance board of this new entity.

#### **Select the Under-Secretary General to Lead the New Entity by March 2010**

The UN Secretary-General should immediately initiate a transparent global recruitment process for the Under Secretary-General who will lead the new entity. We urge that the USG should be appointed by March 2010.

Candidates for this important post that includes securing funding and leading the transition towards the creation of the composite entity must have a vision for and demonstrated

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<sup>1</sup> The existing UN gender equality architecture comprises the following: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). In 2008 the income of these entities was the following: UNIFEM \$215.4 million, DAW \$1.15 million, OSAGI \$0.418 million, and INSTRAW \$4.12 million.

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commitment to achieving gender equality and securing women's human rights. (See the selection criteria of the GEAR Campaign).