

Expectations of CSW 51 follow-up

**Remarks by Carolyn Hannan, Director
UN Division for the Advancement of Women**

**At the parallel event
FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY:
TOOLKIT FOR FOLLOW-UP TO CSW 51**

**Organized by the NGO Committee on UNICEF, Working Group on Girls
29 February, 1.30 – 2.45
Hardin Room, Church Centre**

I am delighted to have the opportunity to participate in this panel to promote more active follow-up to the 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women and utilization of its outcomes at national level for the benefit of women and girls and increased attention to the empowerment of girls.

The Commission on the Status of Women increasingly focuses on ensuring national level implementation of its outcomes. To achieve this, the Commission requires the active participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including NGOs and networks and groups in civil society.

Active and effective participation in the work of the Commission goes far beyond simply attending the annual sessions of the Commission. Although these sessions are very well attended compared with other intergovernmental processes, the roughly 2,000 NGO participants who gather in New York for the sessions represent only a fraction of those who would benefit from involvement in the work of the Commission. Many stakeholders will never have the opportunity to attend the annual sessions. This should not mean they cannot be involved and benefit from the work of the Commission.

Ways are being sought to increase the involvement of stakeholders from non-governmental organizations and networks and groups in civil society from around the world in the work of the Commission and to enhance the ways in which the outcomes of the Commission can make a difference in their lives. Those groups and networks which have the privilege to be represented at the annual sessions have a responsibility to ensure that when they come to the Commission they are representing the views of the broadest group of constituents possible, and that they take the outcomes of the discussions back to these constituents and support them in effectively utilizing them.

It is extremely encouraging to see how many organizations at international, regional and national levels are guided in their work by the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women. Last year, as you will recall, the Division for the Advancement of Women initiated close collaboration with UNICEF and with the Working Group on Girls to ensure that their constituencies in all parts of the world were informed and involved in preparing for the Commission. Efforts were made to engage girls in the preparatory process, and many innovative good practice examples were developed, such as consultation meetings at national or even regional levels and development of specific materials.

Implementation of the outcomes of the Commission can, of course, only be successful at national level if these outcomes are well known and systematically and effectively used. The Division for the Advancement of Women therefore encourages NGOs to engage their constituencies around the world in follow-up activities, and is looking for innovative approaches to ensure that the outcome of the Commission on the priority theme is broadly disseminated and utilized at national level.

The fact that the Commission at each session now reviews implementation of the agreed conclusions adopted at a previous session provides a new opportunity for ensuring effective follow-up and implementation, which we should fully utilize.

Last year at the NGO consultation meeting, we discussed the need to actively work to disseminate and support implementation of the agreed conclusions on the girl child and to identify continuing gaps and challenges in preparation for the review process to be held in two to three years.

Following the 51st session, the Division discussed with UNICEF ways in which the agreed conclusions could be effectively used in UNICEF's on-going work. To support dissemination and utilization of the agreed conclusions, the Division has, for the first time, published them as a brochure. (At present these are only available in English but will be made available in all languages in the near future.) The availability of the agreed conclusions in this form will support efforts to make them widely known and facilitate implementation and reporting back. UNICEF will disseminate them broadly through their regional and national offices.

It has been particularly encouraging to see the very active role played over the past year by the Working Group on Girls of the NGO Committee on UNICEF. They have met frequently since the 51st session and have already produced very concrete results. The Working Group on Girls has translated the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission into "girl-friendly" language so that girls around the world can learn what the Commission discussed and agreed on. The Working Group has also developed indicators to assist different actors in assessing how well they are living up to the agreed recommendations.

One way keep the issue of the girl child on the agenda of the Commission in the period before the Commission reviews implementation of the agreed conclusions is to identify the implications for the girl child of each priority theme the Commission takes up, and to prepare a position paper which identifies the key issues, achievements, gaps and challenges and provides concrete recommendations which could be incorporated into the agreed conclusions.

I know that the Working Group on Girls has already been very active in identifying relevant issues that need to be considered this year under the theme of "*Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women*". And UNICEF has prepared a position paper and distributed it very effectively this session.

At the 53rd session in 2009, the Commission will consider the priority theme: "*The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS*". Earlier this week, there was an expert panel discussion on the theme of the next session, to provide information on the critical issues to be addressed. If you were

unable to attend, please try to get a copy of the issues paper which was prepared to guide the discussions. This will facilitate your preparations for the next session. There are many issues related to the girl child which should be given attention under this theme.

NGOs will be, as usual, involved in the Expert Group Meeting on the priority theme for next year organized by the Division in September 2008. The Division will also organize an on-line discussion on the priority theme in June/July 2008. I would encourage you to check the DAW website around April/May to get information on the on-line discussion and to spread this information and encourage participation from among your constituencies. This is an important way to raise issues related to the girl child which can then be included in the Expert Group Meeting agenda.

A further way to increase attention to the girl child in the context of the Commission is to hold parallel events, such as this one. DAW held a parallel event to launch its new publication on women, gender equality and sport yesterday. We made an effort to focus attention on girls, including by inviting two girl athletes to participate in the conversation we held on women and sport. Among other things we discussed the lack of support for girls interested in sport and the problem of harassment against girls in sport. I would encourage you to take a copy of the publication. There are copies at the back of the room.

Let me conclude by again congratulating the NGO Working Group on Girls for the initiative to organize this event and for their overall excellent work in taking the outcome of the 51st session of the Commission back to national level, and back to girls themselves, and for working to ensure that there will be a difference in the lives of girls because the Commission has addressed the discrimination and violence against them. The Division is pleased to support their work in whatever way we can.

Thank you.