

**Presentation by Carolyn Hannan,  
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**at the New York Soroptimist Lunch  
Saturday 9 February 2008**

Let me begin by thanking you for inviting me to this lunch and providing me the opportunity t

to gender equality. An important breakthrough was the establishment of the strategy of “gender mainstreaming” in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, as it required attention to gender equality and empowerment of women by all actors in all sectors. Gender mainstreaming requires that Governments, United Nations bodies and other institutions give attention to gender perspectives in all areas of their work – on, for example, the economy, agriculture, statistics, energy, transport and wealth

10 percent. In Norway, the percentage of women in corporate boards was so low that the Government recently threatened to legislate unless there was a significant improvement.

The human rights of women and girls in many parts of the world are systematically violated. Any serious development thinker/practitioner would have to recognize that this is not just devastating for individual women and their families but extremely serious for the achievement of the whole development agenda, and the achievement of universal human rights and peace and security.

### **What is being done to rectify this situation**

As I already mentioned, the Commission on the Status of Women has been working on gender equality and empowerment of women for over 60 years. Since the Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995, the Commission has increased its efforts to monitor implementation of global agreements at national level. The Commission plays an important role as a global forum for exchange and sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices. Member States increasingly share both achievements and gaps and

girl child. NGOs are very active during the session, submitting written statements, making oral statements, organizing parallel events, and lobbying/advocating for particular issues. Prior to the sessions, NGOs participate in the in-line discussion and Expert Group Meeting organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women on the priority theme.

NGOs prepare very well for the Commission. The NGO Committee on the Status of Women and the Division organize two joint panels in the weeks prior to the session to stimulate discussion on the themes to be considered by the Commission. The NGO Committee also organizes a consultation day for NGOs from around the world held just prior to the session. Daily briefings are also organized during the session which provide both practical and substantive information. Caucuses are held on different themes.

A number of individual NGOs are undertaking impressive work in preparing for and following up participation in the Commission. For example, in recent years around 100 Anglican women from around the world have gone through a preparatory programme; been briefed and mentored during the session; and encouraged and supported to incorporate the recommendations from the Commission in their day-to-day work following the session. Other organizations are beginning to use a similar methodology. This means that NGO representatives are better prepared for participation; are clear about the changes they want to advocate for; and better able to follow-up to ensure change on the ground as a result of the work of the Commission.

NGOs can support the Commission in addressing the implementation gap by working to ensure the recommendations adopted have an impact at national level. NGOs should play a strong leadership role through advocacy, awareness raising, development of innovative methods and piloting of new approaches, and strengthened monitoring of government efforts to implement commitments. It is my hope that NGOs will develop innovative ways to incorporate the outcomes of the Commission into their day-to-day work and share their experiences and lessons learned.

We already have one emerging good practice in the work of the NGO Working Group on Girls. This group was very active in disseminating information about the priority theme of the Commission on the girl child in 2007, prior to the session. Since the Commission they have remained active in follow-up to the recommendations. They have translated the recommendations into “girl-friendly” language so that girls around the world can also know what the Commission discussed and agreed on, and they have developed indicators to assist different actors in assessing how well they are living up to the agreed recommendations.

requested by Member States to prepare an in-depth study on violence against women, on the basis of which a strong resolution on intensifying action in this area was adopted by the General Assembly in 2006. As a further follow-up, the Secretary-General will initiate a multi-year campaign on violence against women which will increase the leadership of the United Nations in this area, increase advocacy and support development of partnerships at national level to eradicate such violence by 2015. There are a number of other critical areas where NGOs can show similar leadership, for example on gender perspectives on climate change (which the Commission is considering as its emerging issue this year) and in relation to women in decision-making (where progress will be reviewed in the 2009 Commission).

Given the gap between the policy commitments on gender equality made over the past six decades and actual implementation on the ground, it is clearly a development imperative to acknowledge and act on this. An important but simple framework for the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women has been developed which can be utilized in all countries, in all policy areas and at all levels. It requires addressing the following elements, within a human rights framework: development of *capabilities* of women and girls through, for example health and education; increased access to *resources* for women and girls, such as employment, credit and land and property rights; strengthened *agency/voice* for women and girls, through for example increased access to information and to decision-making in all areas; and enhanced *safety and security* of women and girls, for example through eradication of violence against women. The successful utilization of this framework requires that we work together with men and boys. Gender equality cannot be achieved in a vacuum – men and boys must be involved in and influenced by the process of change for gender equality.

We should keep attention focused on the clear message of the Heads of State when they met in 2000 and again in 2005, and make governments accountable for upholding this commitment in practice: Gender equality and empowerment of women is essential for development in any area, and equality and justice for women is necessary for equality and justice for all.

Thank you.