

Concept note

Event: Fifty-third Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

Date: March 2- 14, 2009

Theme: The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS

Background

The World YWCA has participated at CSW since the start of the commission in 1948. As the leading international platform for advancing women's human right, CSW continues to be an important event for the World YWCA. The World YWCA has successfully contributed to the agreed conclusions of the CSW in the past and hopes to do so again this year.

The theme for this year's session is 'The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS'. The Commission's Expert Group Meeting met in October 2008 to deliberate on the theme, the World YWCA attended as an observer. The Group concluded that governments, in partnership with civil society, international organisations and donors, could play a critical role in promoting equal sharing of responsibilities. Through the body of national and international legal instruments for the achievements of gender equality, systematic and institutional inequalities can be challenged in order to achieve fairness and justice in the distribution of responsibilities.

This year's theme also address caregiving in the context of HIV and AIDS—an issue that ties in with the World YWCA strategic plan as it addresses HIV and AIDS (one of our priority areas) and caregiving (one of our leading services). With over 150 years worth of experience in providing care and support to women and young women, the World YWCA is well placed to advice and guide policy on caregiving.

HIV and AIDS caregivers, a majority of whom are women and girls, are not officially recognised as an extension of the health care system, therefore their contributions are not mentioned nor included in the national accounts. Community based caregivers are also not provided with incentive or sustained support to enable them to continue with their unpaid work.

In the context of HIV and AIDS, the World YWCA has witnessed how innovative and committed women of all ages have been—they have risen to fill the gaps created by inadequate health care systems. These efforts must be recognised and supported. The International Women's Summit convened by the World YWCA in 2007 brought together many women caregivers. At the Summit, the women shared their experiences and how they could be supported to continue their work in the community. Gender equality and women's empowerment will be difficult to attain unless policies and programmes are put in place to recognise and support women's role in caregiving.

Objectives

A. To advocate for solutions that work for women

The World YWCA delegation will call on the Commission to remain focused on the impact HIV and AIDS has on caregiving and ensure solutions that work for women are adopted in the agreed conclusions and resolutions. The World YWCA will call on member states to:

- » Recognise and affirm community caregivers
- » Reduce household poverty and the cost of care
- » Increase quality of accessible funding for caregivers
- » Properly resource health systems strengthening and the continuum of care
- » Ensure women's land inheritance rights are upheld

B. To provide leadership and raise voice of marginalised groups

The delegation will collaborate with NGO partners, member states and UN agencies to promote women's participation, particular that of:

- » young women
- » women living with HIV
- » grassroots women caregivers

C. To build partnerships and outreach

The World YWCA delegation will be exposed to emerging trends and challenges in caregiving and HIV and AIDS and in turn share these with the movement. In addition, the delegation will have the opportunity to build partnerships, advocate and network. The World YWCA will also use the opportunity to raise the profile of the movement's work in caregiving and HIV and AIDS.

Strategy

A. In order to successfully contribute to the agreed conclusions, the World YWCA delegation will:

- » **Submit written statement:** a joint statement has been submitted to the Commission expounding on the five key areas for action
- » **Present oral statement:** delegation will work with partner NGOs and relevant caucus to deliver an oral statement
- » **Lobby:** delegation will lobby with member states particularly targeting chairs of regional bodies, regional caucus, NGO women's caucus

B. To provide leadership and raise voice of marginalised groups:

- » Participate/host **side events:** the World YWCA will host a YWCA meeting to discuss partnerships and a side event on care and VAW; will participate in a side event hosted by UNIFEM and a side event hosted by Ecumenical women. In all events, the World YWCA will ensure either young, HIV-positive or grassroots delegate participates on panel.
- » Convene/participate in **Youth Caucus:** WAGGGS is taking the lead in hosting a youth caucus for young people and representatives of youth organisations. The delegation will actively participate in planning caucus and in the work of the caucus once the event starts.

C. To build partnership and outreach:

- » Participate in **training** on UN system (Ecumenical Women at the UN)
- » **Publish** articles on website to keep movement up-to-date on trends, outcomes
- » **Publish** blog, vblog: offer an inside view of the UN and how it works through candid interviews and intern's blog
- » **Partner** with UN agencies: delegation will set up meetings with key partners to develop long term partnership/collaborations on HIV, VAW, caregiving

Key partners:

UN agencies, ecumenical groups, organisations and networks working with and for women and youth, organisations working in HIV and AIDS, violence against women.

Delegation

Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda	General Secretary	March 1 – 4
Susan Brennan	President	March 1 – 4
Kaburo Kobia	Communications Director	Feb 27 – March 14
Juli Dugdale	Programme Director for Asia and the Pacific	Feb 27 – March 14
Ar Ram Lee (Korea)	Short term intern	Feb 27 – March 14
Margaret Nakakande (Uganda)	Short term intern	Feb 27 – March 14
Jessica Notwell (Canada)	World YWCA Board member	Feb 27 – March 10
Jacqueline Mukamusana	YWCA Rwanda	Feb 27 – March 6
Alice Abok, Caroline Maneno-Oketch	YWCA of Kenya	Feb 27 – March 6
Lady Comfort Ani (World YWCA Board member) + 13 women	YWCA of Nigeria	
Piirjo Liisa Penttinen	YWCA of Finland	

Jessica Notwell (World YWCA Board member), Paulette Senior, Ann Decter	YWCA Canada	
Caroline Lambert	YWCA of Australia	
Kerry Healey	YWCA USA	
Karen Mehra, Mildred Persinger, Mary Wolf, Doris Salah, Muna Kaldawi-Killingback, Sue Howarth	World YWCA Volunteers	