



Highlights of WomenNC's Successful Trip to United Nation's CSW 55

WomenNC had another productive, fruitful trip to the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 55 with our four fellows and three chaperones. We are pleased to share some highlights from the trip with you all in this document. Thank you for your support!

I. WomenNC's Team

WomenNC's team consisted of fellowship recipients Kristen Brugh, Annie Clark, and Kimmie Garner, all from UNC-Chapel Hill, and Katie Starr from N.C. State. WomenNC's President, Anita Sivakumar, also attended as a chaperone and worked hard to capture the presentations and events through photography and video. Dr. Joanne Hershfield, WomenNC's Fellowship Chair and Professor and Chair of the Department of Women's Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, also attended to presented her documentary about domestic violence in Thailand. WomenNC's Founder and Executive Director, Beth Dehghan, was also present and provided tremendous leadership and support to the fellowship recipients through daily meetings, networking with relevant organizations, and facilitating in the student's attendance at the U.N.'s governmental sessions.

The team departed Sunday morning, February 20, 2011 for New York City in order to register early for the week's events. They returned on Friday, February 25, 2011.

II. NGO Consultation Day

The team attended and participated in CSW's NGO Consultation Day on Monday, February 21, 2011. Distinguished speakers, including Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile and current Under-Secretary-General for UN Women, Dr. Kaosar Afsana, Associate Director of the Health Programme on behalf of BRAC Bangladesh, and Dr. Vivian Pender, Chair of NGO CSW/NY, introduced the fellows to the priority theme of CSW 55, which was "access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science, and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work." The fellows participated in breakout sessions during the afternoon to delve deeper into the priority theme. During these sessions, groups of women formulated recommendations pertaining to the theme to be given to the Commission on the Status of Women and reported these back to the hundreds of NGO representatives gathered at the Salvation Army. This orientation day not only allowed the WomenNC team to advertise their upcoming sessions on Tuesday,



February 22, 2011 but also provided an opportunity for the fellows to understand the structure and content of CSW.

III. Fellowship Recipients' Presentations

The students presented their research projects at the Church Center on Tuesday, February 22, 2011 between 2:00 and 3:30pm in a panel titled "CEDAW and Human Rights of the Girl-Child in the Southern USA." The students had already rehearsed these presentations at the Woman's Club of Raleigh on Thursday, February 3, 2011, which provided time for feedback from community members and leaders prior to their presentations in New York. The students' presentations covered the topics of interpersonal violence prevention and policy in U.S. higher education, sex education policies and adolescent pregnancy in the U.S. and North Carolina, sex trafficking in North Carolina, and child labor in North Carolina agriculture. The students' presentations lasted for about an hour, after which moderator Dr. Hershfield opened up the floor to questions. The audience asked a lot of questions both during the Q & A session, as well as after the session had ended. At least one hundred people attended the panel and the students were congratulated for their professionalism, preparation, and poise.

IV. Joanne Hershfield's Presentation

Dr. Hershfield's presentation took place directly after the students' presentations on Tuesday, February 22, 2011 between 4:00 and 5:30pm. Dr. Hershfield presented her film *Men Are Human, Women Are Buffalo* to an audience of at least ninety people. She then opened up the last half hour to discussion amongst the audience members. The audience responded positively to Dr. Hershfield's film and women from a number of different countries, from Thailand to Bahrain, spoke of violence against women within their own contexts. The women and men who attended the session shared ideas for how to improve educational programs and domestic violence services on a global level and discussed the multiple stakeholders – families, law enforcement officials, and governments – that need to be involved in this effort.

V. Attendance at Parallel Events and U.S. Mission

For the remainder of the week, the fellows and chaperones attended sessions organized by NGOs and the government at the Church Center and in the U.N. that related to their research topics and interests. There were not many sessions related to farmworkers, but Kristen was able to attend a number of other sessions related to her graduate research on sexual and reproductive health and maternal and infant mortality. Katie and Annie attended sessions about sex trafficking and domestic violence respectively, while Kimmie attended sessions



primarily about sexual and reproductive health and underrepresented minorities. Anita attended sessions related to the priority theme of engaging women and girls in science and technology.

The fellows participated in the official CSW meeting organized by the CSW Committee, as well as two meetings at the U.S. Mission. At the U.S. Mission, the fellows listened to and met national officials and celebrities, such as Peggy Kerry, NGO Liaison to the U.N., Ambassador Melanne Verweir, Ambassador-at-Large for Women's Global Issues, and Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor and Assistant to President Obama for Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs. The fellows were attentive asked questions during both governmental and non-governmental sessions and raised the issue of the U.S.'s non-ratification of CEDAW to governmental officials.

VI. Attendance at Ms. Foundation Review Meeting

On Thursday, February 24, 2011, Beth, Annie, and Kimmie attended a luncheon at the Ms. Foundation in Brooklyn to review CSW 55 and brainstorm best practices for the technical and logistical coordination of CSW 56 in 2012. They had the opportunity to meet Anika Rahman, President and CEO of Ms. Foundation, as well as Marilyn Fowler, President and CEO of Women's Intercultural Network. Beth, Annie, and Kimmie were grateful to take part in this meeting of women from diverse backgrounds and make action steps for the organization of CSW 56.

VII. UN Women Launch

WomenNC also attended the launch of UN Women on Thursday, February 24, 2011. UN Women consolidates the four entities previously committed to gender equity and women's empowerment, which included the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This event was attended by over 2,000 people and included distinguished speakers such as Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the U.N., Michelle Bachelet, Geena Davis, and Ted Turner. This was an exciting moment for the U.N., WomenNC, and thousands of others present who are committed to gender equity and the empowerment of women.



VIII. Concluding Remarks and Future Plans

WomenNC's attendance at CSW 55 was a major success in terms of our presentation events, networking, and the information we absorbed. The fellows were able to participate in and understand the importance of this global gathering of women and men from all over the world who are committed to women's human rights issues. They have a stronger understanding of the organization and purpose of the U.N. and CSW and the connection between local and global contexts for their research topics. Over the next month, they will be formulating reports of their findings at CSW 55 for their specific topics to report to the North Carolina community. Please keep the following presentation dates and times in mind:

*1. Student Global Health Committee, Health and Human Rights Sub-Committee
Presents: WomenNC Reflections from the 55th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women*

When: Monday, March 28, 2011 from 7-8pm

Where: UNC-Chapel Hill, Michael Hooker Research Building, Room 0001

2. WomenNC Reflections from the 55th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women

When: Monday, April 25, 2011 from 6-8pm

Where: UNA-Wake

Thank you for your continued support of our program and our vision for the ratification of CEDAW and stronger mechanisms for the enforcement of women's rights in local and global contexts!

Warm regards,

Beth Dehghan

Founder and Executive Director, WomenNC

CEDAW/CSW Committee