

CSW60 – The Commission on the Situation of Women, New York City, USA

Report on Parallel event: ***Sustainable Development Workshop***

“The Engagement of Rural / Grassroots women is needed for the SDGs to succeed”.

Date: Thursday 17 March 2016 from 8:30 – 10 am

Hosted by: Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad & Tobago –NRWPTT- and the Jamaican Network of Rural Women Producers –JNRWP.

To prepare for the session we referenced the SDGs in the following manner:

Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – A/RES/70/1 - pgs 18 - 32

Which Sustainable Development Goals relate specifically to rural women producers & agriculturalists?

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishermen, including

through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seeds and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge as internationally agreed.

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

Given that these SDGs are directly of concern to rural women, the program was thus organized according to these lines:



The Engagement of Rural/Grass roots women is needed for the SDGs to succeed”. Four speakers were invited to each give an introductory presentation; each would end with a question for the participants to reflect on. After these presentations participants were asked to sit in small groups and

each would share their response to the questions from the perspective of their local organizations' activities back home.

To wrap up the workshop, all the small working groups shared their response about the four reflection questions.

The Speakers:

- Graciela Coy Maas: Asociacion Ak' Tenamit, Guatemala [Caribbean Coast]
- Sharon Hatton: Associated Country Women of the World – ACWW
- Gia Gaspard Taylor: Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad & Tobago
- Cynthia R. de Windt: Associated Country Women of the World - ACWW

There were approximate 24 – 30 participants in the room and when time was given to work in the small groups, each had between 4 – 7 people, with the Spanish speakers all grouped together for ease of interaction without an interpreter.

* The first speaker Graciela [with interpreter: Maite from the Haeirou Commission] focused on a very dynamic approach: **Community Resilience Building** – they work with local youth groups to provide opportunity in skills development for the service sector, tourism and self-employment. The program starts on a wide basis of schooling and literacy training; The Rio Dulce river basin consists of an area of 4 conservation protectorates. The geographical area in which they operate does not benefit from conventional education system so they need to fill that gap. Many of their programs are co-designed by the actual stakeholders who it intends to collaborate with; needless to say that this influences positively on ownership and compliance of the young people who are prepared to take on dignified employment. Even in an often grueling 3000 hours practical training in vocational education, sustainable tourism, offering technical tools and methodology to encourage conservation, mitigate environmental degradation, there is a wide-spread interest and they have been operational for the past 24 years in this river basin.

Question: *How can we allocate more resources to the Grassroots women leaders' organizations?*

* Sharon's presentation was centered on **Empowerment**. She explored various definitions, also Economic empowerment and what the concept would mean in a practical settings, both rural and urban. Important was the distinction of Fairness and Equality. On the former: Fairness is not about everyone getting the same thing, Fair means everyone getting what they need to be successful at what they do. Equality does not mean that everybody gets a shirt; it means that everybody gets a shirt that fits. For an overview of the presentation see file attached. [ACWW -events/CSW 60 - New York 2016/17 March - Sharon H. CSW 2016 presentation.pptx](#)

Question: *Who inspired your sense of empowerment?*

* Gia took us on a Bird's eye overview of the Network or Rural Women Producers of Trinidad & Tobago and its activities over the past 20 years. Her historical overview did not only cover Trinidad and Tobago, but she also gave a helpful reflection of the **Network's collaboration and regional affiliations in the Caribbean** with other organizations of similar outlook and objectives. Thus far they have held entrepreneurial skills training, facilitated women's empowerment and leadership development, organized Mango Festivals, Bread baking, Soap making and other income generating craft learning opportunities, Youth employment, etc. A copy of the presentation is attached. [ACWW -events/CSW 60 - New York 2016/17 March Gia -NRWPTT presentation Mar1,2015 UPDATED2 - MOD sh.pptx](#)

Question: *How will we work together?*

* Cynthia took the meeting over another tack: **Why Participation Matters** i.e. all of us here in the room are Change Makers. We provide services, we network, and we train, coach and mentor. Given the new SDGs we all want to work for change and when asked for a show of hands to the question: "Who wants

Change?" all raise their hands. Now on another question: "Who wants to change?" most are now more reluctant to raise hands.

What does it take for change to come about, what do we need? Someone says patience, YES, yet we need not only patience with our stakeholders, more to the point, we need patience to reflect on the changes we ourselves need to make to accommodate a new perception of our stakeholders. WHY, why, why, why and W.H.Y?

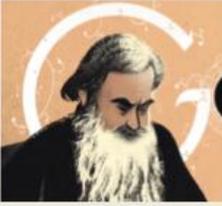
She introduced a model describing the different *Modes of Participation* ranging from tokenism and no ownership to total involvement and participatory ownership of all engaged in new development. She walked the participants through slides of this model, which is normally used as an active participatory card game to give all a handle on improving participation with their stakeholders. Note: See slide 9 in the following presentation. [ACWW -events/CSW 60 - New York 2016/17 March16 Cynthia -CSW60 parallel event.pptx](#)

Question: How will implementation of the SDGs take into account: the priorities of and the participation of rural/ grassroots women?

Overview of Questions and Answers from small groups:

The Questions the groups reflected on:	Responses from the working groups
<p>1. <i>How can we allocate more resources to the Grassroots women leaders' organizations?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the needs of the local people... • Find out what <u>their priorities</u> are, be it latrines, tools, training? • Then assist them in identifying sources and resources within their reach and beyond...
<p>2. <i>Who inspired your sense of empowerment?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in the immediate surroundings, who have achieved their own goals/ objectives • Also self-empowered, by following sense of purpose
<p>3. <i>How will we work together?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at and work on projects that engage people to get involved, that build on partnership and stimulate ongoing collaboration
<p>4. <i>How will implementation of the SDGs take into account: the priorities of and the participation of rural/ grass roots women?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Especially in the rural areas, there is poverty, which is not documented. Since the past 90 days [in Argentina] there is a new government, which hopefully will look for new approaches; we can advocate to them. • Also our organization collects evidence and we will work with rural people on their efforts to identify and determine their real, their actual problems...

Proposed schedule for parallel session on Thursday, 17 March @ the UN Church Center – Rm. Hadin

Introduction by Representative from: Asociacion Ak' Tenamit / Huairou Commission, Guatemala: <i>ENGAGING Rural Youth in training for Dignified employment and Environmental stewardship</i>	10 min.	<p>30 minutes <i>Small working group conversations addressing questions from the four presenters</i></p> <div data-bbox="760 331 1463 856"> <p>Leo Tolstoy [1828 – 1910]</p>  <p><i>“Everyone thinks of changing the world, But nobody thinks of changing himself...”</i></p> </div>
Presentation by Sharon Hatten, ACWW on: <i>Empowerment</i>	10 min.	
Introduction by Gia Gaspard-Taylor from NRWPTT: <i>Change and 20 years of Networking</i>	10 min.	
Presentation by Cynthia R. de Windt: ACWW: <i>Why participation matters?</i>	10 min.	
<p>5 minutes Wrap up, summing up ideas from working groups for the way forward – with JNRWP [To be presented on next event of 22 March]</p>		

A quote from Mahatma Gandhi, which figures prominently in the approach of the NRWPTT:

Creating a Legacy

*“You may never
 know what
 results come
 from your
 action. But if
 you do nothing,
 there will be no
 result.”*

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)



Follow-up event, 22nd March 2016 UN Women Offices, 220 East 42nd Street, NYC:

On the 22nd March a follow-up meeting was organized with support from the UN Women Headquarters. Unfortunately the Development Partner Organizations, OAS and FES apologized for not being able to be present and the meeting continued with JNRWP- Mildred Crawford, the NRWPTT- Gia Gaspard Taylor and ACWW- Cynthia R. de Windt.

Hard copies of the notes, documenting the event of the 17th March were duly reviewed, with the suggestion that it be shared digitally, so that it can be disseminated with various other stakeholders back home. Mildred also presented a Concept note to which a more detailed description of activities still needs to be added so as to also reflect the interest and suggestions received during the workshop and in other relevant conversations here at CSW60.

In addition there was an effort to strategize which other partners could be contacted to engage with the way forward as well as events, where important allies could be mobilized.

Here is a short list:

UN Habitat, with its multi-country offices in Barbados [where all Caribbean projects are vetted] seems a relevant example. E.g. for “The Road to Quito” there are possibilities to form a strategic group to participate at this event.

UWE Barbados is always a willing partner, favouring Gender Development activities.

Jamaica – Social Welfare and training Center could be rallied to follow up with training on Leadership, Teambuilding and Policy issues. Moreover the Trinidad Minister of Gender Affairs is very keen to collaborate and support this work also with the Caribbean Network of Women Producers.

Furthermore look into:

- UN Women on “Decent work” for women farmers,
- FAO on farmers’ land rights,
- UNEP on environmental issues affect rural women producers.

Topics of interest to follow through:

- Framing the issues relevant to Gender Development; now that the rights of rural women are specifically recognized in the CEDAW, there is a clear point of departure for strategizing.
- The role of evidence and fact finding; special training in collecting and using rural socio-economical data for developing strategies and for advocacy.
- Skills building in writing proposals to donors and foundations, to apply for grants and thus acquire much needed resources. Attention is to be given to the various criteria considered to qualify for grants.
- The rural/urban divide: when emerging cities expand into rural areas, the loss of productive land has limiting effects on the livelihood of rural women producers. Moreover efforts are required to look into the rights of Market stall vendors, mostly women from rural areas, who require urgently arrangements for sanitary and safety/security regulations that are gender sensitive.
- When concerns are being raised for urban slum dwellers, similar concerns for rural women producers does not figure with same gravitas.
- When organizing training or capacity development events, it is recommended to join resources and offer these for a combined group of allies who have similar interests and outlooks; this stimulates collaboration across organizations, cross fertilizes efforts by

bringing a variety of perspectives together to affect the whole system in an integrated manner.