PROJECT REPORT:
62\textsuperscript{ND} COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The 62\textsuperscript{nd} Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 12-23 March 2018. Hosted by UN Women and held annually in New York, CSW is the world’s largest, dedicated policy-making space for women’s rights. Each year CSW brings together government representatives, national decision makers, civil society organisations and activists for Member States to negotiate Agreed Conclusions on different themes and discuss the rights of women and girls.

For CSW62 the Priority theme was: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

The review theme was: Participation in and access of women to the media, information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women.

You can read more about CSW on the WAGGGS website

WAGGGS delegation to CSW62

WAGGGS attends CSW each year to lobby decision makers and highlight the unique needs of girls and young women in relation to the priority theme. As an organisation representing 10 million girls and young women in 150 countries it is critical to engage in policy making spaces to highlight the unique vulnerabilities girls and young women around the world face.

WAGGGS does this by taking young women as delegates to CSW, so they have the opportunity to engage with decision makers, share their reality and demand recognition and implementation of policies and practices that meet their needs.

Our delegation to CSW62 comprised of two groups: Youth Delegates who attended the conference in New York and Remote Delegates who supported WAGGGS’ participation in the conference.

Our Youth Delegates were from Tanzania, Costa Rica, South Africa, Ireland, Ghana, United Kingdom, Argentina, Portugal, Malaysia and Tunisia. Our Remote Delegates were from Mexico, Rwanda, United Kingdom, Colombia, Ghana, Italy and Madagascar.

You can learn more about our delegation on our website.
Delegate training and preparation for CSW62

In preparation for CSW delegates completed three months of training through a series of webinars on advocacy, policy relating to rural girls and women, communications and WAGGGS programmes. Delegates were split into three Working Groups focused on Policy, Communications and Events. In these groups delegates learnt more about their individual areas and provided support to WAGGGS staff in preparing for CSW. In New York, delegates completed a further two days of face-to-face training before CSW.

Prior to CSW, delegates were required to meet with their national government representatives who were attending CSW to discuss policy concerns and recommendations. Delegates also connected with civil society organisations in their countries to discuss priorities, network and build relationships with potential partners.

Our delegates told us:

“The events have been incredible and I have learnt a lot and gained new perspectives on certain issues. Being able to do speeches was also a highlight as it was an opportunity to speak out, but also to push myself beyond my limits which has given me more confidence and has developed me more as a person”

“I’ve learnt so much and developed so many new strong friendships. Before CSW I felt lost and not sure where my life was heading. But now after CSW and meeting all the delegates and staff and experience, I feel I’ve found myself and my purpose in life.”

“Thinking back to my journey I never did a lot of speaking out, more like an observer but now it is different I want to speak out more. There are so many issues I am going to advocate on. It is an incredible feeling.”

“I have got to speak out about issues I care about and make actual policy recommendations”

WAGGGS Events at CSW62

Through Her Eyes: Girls are Unsafe
Hosted by: WAGGGS in partnership with Unicef
Panellists:
- Tebogo Tosane, WAGGGS Youth Delegate from Girls Guides South Africa
- Patty Alleman, Senior Gender and Development Advisor, UNICEF
- Dina Deligiorgis, Specialist, Ending Violence against Women, UN Women.
- Ms P. Sobahle, Commissioner, South Africa Commission for Gender Equality
- Christa Stewart, Programme Manager, End Sexual Violence and Justice for Girls, Equality Now
Using Body Confidence Advocacy to Empower Rural Girls
Hosted by: WAGGGS in partnership with Dove
Panellists:
- Dre Brown, Influencer Dove Self Esteem Project
- Lucy Agyeman, WAGGGS delegate from Ghana Girl Girls Association
- Lena Maria Rojas Segura, WAGGGS delegate from Costa Rica Girl Guides
- Nyeni Thiyagarajah, Filmmaker
- Dena Mekawi, Youth Representative for the United Nations Department of Public Information

Official launch of WAGGGS and Nutrition International programme on Nutrition
WAGGGS officially launched our Nutrition Programme on 12 March 2018 at a meeting with Honourable Marie Claude Bibeau, the Canadian Minister for International Development and La Francophonie and our Youth Delegates from Tanzania, Argentina, South Africa and Malaysia.

Our delegates shared the need for girls to have access to good nutrition in order to thrive and discussed the way in which food inequality impacts girls where they live.

Young Women’s Caucus
WAGGGS hosted a Young Women’s Caucus which brought together young women attending CSW to network, draft an Oral Statement and share their experiences on the topic of rural girls and young women.

High level speaking engagements
- High-level interactive dialogue among Ministers on the priority theme, Intervention on behalf of the Major Group on Children and Youth, ‘Building alliances to achieve gender equality and empower rural women and girls’
- Intervention on behalf of the Young Women’s Caucus to the Commission
- Inter Parliamentary Union, Amplifying the voices of rural women and girls

Speaking Engagements at CSW62
- GAGE, From girls to women gender based violence across the life course National Alliance of Women’s Organisation, Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and empowerment of rural women and girls
- National Alliance of Women’s Organisation, “Making the media female: action to make the face and feeling of the media female”
- Girl Scouts USA, Voices of Rural girls, empowerment through leadership development
- Oversees Development Institute, Shifting norms for gender justice: evidence on what works
- Salvation Army, UN Women and partners, What Happens Now? Discussing Women and Girls’ Issues Once the Mainstream Media Has “Moved On”
- ACWW, Launch of survey on rural women

Youth Dialogue
The third annual Youth Dialogue took place on 17 March 2018 and was organised in partnership with UN Women and organisation working with youth. WAGGGS was part
of the Task Force for the planning and delivery of the event. The Dialogue brought together young people from around the world to explore the priority theme of CSW for the drafting of an outcome document that sets out the needs of young people from rural communities and particularly young women and girls.

*You can read the outcome document here*

**Partnership Meetings**

CSW provides an important opportunity for WAGGGS to meet with potential partner organisations to discuss shared objectives and opportunities. The WAGGGS team met with The Centre for Women’s Global Leadership, Rutgers University, Plan International, Soroptomist International, the UK Government and the Government Equalities Office and with the United Nations Youth Envoy.

**Media Coverage**

- **Scoutisme : Fanilon’i Madagasikara représentée au CSW à New York**

- **Huffington Post Tunisia**

- **Malaysia**

- **Madagascar**

- **Portugal**

- **Scotland**
Agreed Conclusions

Our policy priority areas of concern for CSW were:

- Tackling harmful stereotypes and discriminatory social norms
- Ending all forms of violence against women
- Recognising and investing in girls agency, leadership and voice
- Empowering rural girls through education
- Ensuring equal access to productive employment and ownership of land
- Ensuring good nutrition for every girl
- Improving rural infrastructure so girls can access technology, services and quality healthcare

Following a lengthy negotiation process between 45 Member States, lobbying of Civil Society Organisations, Regional Caucuses and activism the Agreed Conclusions for CSW62 were adopted on 23 March 2018. There was inclusion of language on our key areas of concern including education, non-formal education, unpaid labour, indigenous girls and women, sexual violence, education financing, menstruation, pregnant young mothers, public harassment, ICT and STEM, discrimination and violence, disability. See Annex for the full text of the Agreed Conclusion in relation to these topics.
ANNEX

Education

20. The Commission reaffirms the right to education and stresses that equal access to high quality and inclusive education contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls including those in rural areas. It notes with concern the lack of progress in closing gender gaps in access to, retention in and completion of secondary and tertiary education and emphasizes the importance of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities. It recognizes that new technologies are, inter alia, changing the structure of labour markets and provide new and different employment opportunities that require skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, and in this regard, emphasizes the importance of all rural women and girls having the opportunity to acquire them.

21. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, rural girls are still more likely than rural boys, and urban girls and boys, to remain excluded from education, and recognizes also that among gender-specific barriers to girls’ equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour that girls undertake, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence in and outside of school, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than boys.

Education and unpaid labour

29. The Commission recognizes that rural women and girls undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and that such uneven distribution of responsibilities is a significant constraint on women’s and girls’ completion of or progress in education and training, on women’s entry and re-entry and advancement in the paid labour market and on their economic opportunities and entrepreneurial activities, and can result in gaps in social protection, pay and pensions. It also recognizes that addressing attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys at the household and community levels creates an enabling environment for the social and economic empowerment of all rural women and girls. The Commission stresses the need to recognize and adopt measures to reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within
the household and by prioritizing, inter alia, infrastructure development, social protection policies and accessible, affordable and quality social services, including care services, child-care, maternity, paternity or parental leave.

Indigenous women and girls
36. The Commission recognizes that indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas, regardless of age, often face violence and higher rates of poverty, limited access to health care services, information and communication technologies (ICT), infrastructure, financial services, education and employment, while also recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Sexual violence
y. Promote women’s leadership and their full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation and household energy management and to ensure that a gender-based approach is adopted in relation to water and sanitation and energy programmes, through measures, inter alia, to reduce the time spent by women and girls in collecting household water and fuel, and to address the negative impact of inadequate water and sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education as well as to protect women and girls from being physically threatened or assaulted and from sexual violence while collecting household water and fuel and when accessing sanitation facilities outside of their home or practising open defecation.

Education
jj. Promote and respect women’s and girls’ right to education at all levels, throughout the life cycle, including women and girls living in rural areas and those who have been left furthest behind, by providing universal access to quality education, and free and compulsory primary and secondary education, ensuring inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy, and striving to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary, and secondary education and expanding vocational and technical education for rural women and girls; and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all; and

Education financing
kk. Eliminate gender disparities and commit to scale up financing and investments in public education systems to fulfill the right to education for women and girls in rural areas by addressing gender-based discrimination, negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, including in curricula, textbooks and teaching methodologies; combat gender norms that devalue girls’ education and prevent women and girls from accessing education; provide inclusive, safe, non-violent and accessible schools with gender- and
disability-sensitive infrastructure, including lighting, and safe, accessible and affordable transportation to school; maintain separate and adequate sanitation facilities; train, recruit and retain qualified teachers in rural areas, especially women teachers where they are underrepresented; support rural women and girls with disabilities at all levels of education and training; ensure that rural women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and promote an effective transition from education or unemployment to decent work and active participation in public life;

Menstruation
II. Take steps to promote educational and health practices in order to foster a culture in which menstruation is recognized as healthy and natural, and girls are not stigmatised on this basis, recognising that girls’ attendance at school can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools that meet the needs of girls;

Pregnant young mothers
mm. Ensure that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education, and in this regard, design, implement and, where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to remain in and return to school, providing them with access to health-care and social services and support, including childcare and breastfeeding facilities and crèches, and to education programmes with accessible locations, flexible schedules and distance education, including e-learning, and bearing in mind the important role and responsibilities of, and challenges faced by, fathers, including young fathers, in this regard;

Public harassment
nn. Intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate violence and sexual harassment against girls at, and on the way to, school, including, inter alia, by implementing effective violence prevention and response activities in schools and communities, engaging men and boys, educating children from a young age regarding the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect, designing educational programmes and teaching materials that support gender equality, respectful relationships and nonviolent behaviour;

Non-formal education
oo. Develop policies and programmes with the support, where appropriate, of international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, giving priority to formal, informal and non-formal education programmes, including scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education, relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young
women and men in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women’s empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to, inter alia, enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection and other risks;

**ICT and STEM**

Address the digital divide, which disproportionately affects rural women and girls, by facilitating their access to ICT and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to promote their empowerment and to develop skills, information and knowledge that are needed to support their labour market entry, livelihoods, well-being and resilience and expand the scope of ICT-enabled mobile learning and literacy training while promoting a safe and secure cyberspace for women and girls;

**Discrimination and violence**

Promote and protect the rights of indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, health care, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and women’s access to decent work, and promoting their meaningful participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, and noting the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for indigenous women and girls;

**Disability**

Promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring access on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education and productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, as well as by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes;