

# REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION ASSEMBLY

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, 19-20 MARCH 2010



## **KEY MESSAGES**

This report documents the proceedings of UN-HABITAT'S Gender Equality Action Assembly, 19-20 March 2010, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, prior to the fifth World Urban Forum. Attended by 361 participants from 35 countries, the Gender Equality Action Assembly united UN-HABITAT partners and staff in assessing progress on the implementation of UN-HABITAT's [Gender Equality Action Plan \(2008-2013\)](#). The Plan is a global strategy to promote gender equality in towns and cities through the integration of gender perspectives in all projects and programmes that strive for sustainable urbanization and adequate shelter for all.

Participants of the Gender Equality Action Assembly included government ministers, councillors, mayors, urban planners, architects, researchers, campaigners, UN-HABITAT staff, representatives of non-governmental organizations (including grassroots women's networks) and other gender experts.

Key recommendations emerging from workshops and dialogues within the Gender Equality Action Assembly are summarized below, according to action areas within the Gender Equality Action Plan:

### **ADVOCACY AND MONITORING OF GENDER EQUALITY IN CITIES**

- a) Governments should provide more sex-disaggregated urban data to promote better understanding of gender issues in urban development and to enable informed policy making. Global alliances for sharing data and best practices should also be developed.
- b) Multisectoral and inclusive partnerships to promote gender equality and empower women—including different cultures, ages, indigenous groups and other areas of diversity—should be fostered. Men and boys should be encouraged to take a greater role and acknowledged for their contributions.
- c) Gender equality should be promoted as part of a larger vision of inclusive cities for all people, with considerations around race, age (from young to old), social status, disability and other factors that may intersect with gender concerns and lead to further exclusion.
- d) Grassroots women should play a greater role in research and advocacy on urban issues, and their skills in this area should be developed through training and capacity-building. The stories and voices of real women should be taken into account for comprehensive analysis of the gender-responsiveness of urban governance.
- e) Women's Councils and gender bureaus at the national, city and local government levels should be institutionalized to ensure continuity of their work, even after changes in government.

### **URBAN PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY**

- f) Cities and governments should increase representation of women in parliaments, city halls and among urban planners and managers in order to develop urban services that are more gender-responsive. Resources should be allocated to address women's underrepresentation.
- g) Governments should plan for long-term change, with gender equality principles imbedded deeply and broadly into policy. Gender analysis and gender budgeting are key to this process.

- h) Urban planners, politicians and civil society should undertake gender training, and consider the involvement of grassroots women.
- i) Collaboration between central, regional and municipal governments should be strengthened to improve urban services for women and men equitably.
- j) Cities should link efforts to prevent violence against women with improved urban service provision that ensures women's safety, such as improved safety on public transportation and measures to make streets, public toilets and other public spaces safer.

#### **LAND AND HOUSING RIGHTS TO EMPOWER WOMEN, PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY, AND PROTECT THE POOR**

- k) Governments and development agencies should protect the right to adequate housing and ensure access to services, livelihoods and resources (including land, property, capital and credit) as part of this mandate.
- l) The development community should increase efforts to address housing rights and domestic violence together. If access to housing for women improves, they are less vulnerable to domestic violence.
- m) The development community should promote sensitivity to culture, religion and customary laws in evaluating how the right to adequate housing can be implemented and gender equality promoted. Shared-tenure options and alternatives to individual property-ownership should be considered.
- n) To improve access to housing, partnerships between communities, grassroots women, women land access trusts, financial institutions, academia, the private sector, governments and international organizations should be formed.
- o) Governments should promote and facilitate access to affordable housing loans for women, enhance women's access to banking services and finances more generally, and invest in programmes to strengthen women's economic status and ability to afford better housing.

#### **ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND URBAN SERVICES—ENSURING EQUITABLE BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO WOMEN AND MEN**

- p) In implementing and planning projects on environmentally sound urban services, efforts should be made to involve women from the start to the finish.
- q) Strategies to implement urban services and to empower women need to respond sensitively to additional considerations (such as class, culture, tradition and religion) and to acknowledge that different groups of women can have different needs.
- r) Women and low-income groups should be empowered to benefit economically from becoming providers of urban services themselves, for example through micro-credit programmes for providers of water and sanitation services.
- s) Governments and urban planners should implement gender mainstreaming into urban climate change initiatives and ensure that women have equitable involvement in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- t) Planning of environmentally sound urban services should consider the different impacts of climate change on women and men, and the gender differences in their needs, priorities, economic status, and use of energy, transportation and energy.

### **STRENGTHENED HUMAN SETTLEMENTS FINANCE SYSTEMS—ADDRESSING PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES FACED BY LOW-INCOME WOMEN, PARTICULARLY IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS**

- u) Capacity-building and training programmes should be developed and strengthened to empower women entrepreneurs in the informal sector with better business skills, and also to strengthen the leadership of microfinance providers with better technical skills and social acumen.
- v) The development community should mobilize more funds and involve diverse stakeholders to scale up housing finance projects for low-income women.
- w) Holistic approaches need to be adopted in housing finance programmes. These should consider how social contexts, such as crime and poor security, place further limits on women's access to land and housing. Loans may need to be accompanied by other programmes to protect residents.
- x) In promoting affordable housing finance, governments and stakeholders need to think creatively about various ways to enable women to access land. Collective land ownership through women's cooperatives is an option.
- y) Housing finance programmes need to be sensitive to issues of equity and affordability of access. Programmes should include analysis of how costs can be reduced—for example by using different types of building technology.

Delegates from partner organizations who attended the Gender Equality Action Assembly generally expressed strong commitment to continued and strengthened involvement in implementing and monitoring progress on the Gender Equality Action Plan. There was general agreement that more efforts are needed to raise awareness about the Gender Equality Action Plan, since its use as a reference point in urban development and housing projects is still limited. The need for greater involvement of grassroots women in housing and urban development projects was a recurring theme highlighted across the proceedings, but participants also highlighted a need for their increased participation to be made possible by financial support and technical training.

Finally, participants emphasized the importance of follow-up mechanisms to spur continued actions and progress in the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan. At the conclusion of the Gender Assembly, delegates made recommendations for action that could be taken by various groups of stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, architects and planners, training institutions and local and national government officials. Section H of this report gives a summary of their recommendations. There was agreement that the progress of partners' contributions and their challenges in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan should be integrated into UN-HABITAT's progress reporting on the Gender Plan before the next Gender Equality Action Assembly in 2011 at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN-HABITAT Governing Council in 2011.

Following the conclusion of the 2010 Gender Equality Action Assembly and the launch of the World Urban Campaign at the end of the 2010 World Urban Forum, UN-HABITAT will continue to liaise with partners on promoting gender equality within the campaign, drawing on emerging recommendations from the Assembly. UN-HABITAT will also continue dialogue with partners on the possibility of establishing a network of women mayors, local government representatives, parliamentarians and ministers of housing and urban development, who would work together on incorporating gender issues in policies and decisions on urbanization and regional development.

# GENDER EQUALITY ACTION ASSEMBLY 19-20 MARCH 2010

*MONITORING PROGRESS, SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND FORGING PARTNERSHIPS TO BRIDGE  
THE URBAN GENDER DIVIDE*



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## A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Gender Equality Action Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 19-20 March 2010, was the first session of the Gender Assembly organized and convened by the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), in conjunction with the World Urban Forum. The purpose of the Assembly was for partners to discuss progress on the implementation of UN-HABITAT's [Gender Equality Action Plan \(2008-2013\)](#), pursuant to Resolution 22/7 on UN-HABITAT's Work Programme and Budget for 2010-11, which was passed by UN-HABITAT's Governing Council during its 22<sup>nd</sup> session in April 2009. In this resolution, the Governing Council had requested UN-HABITAT's Executive Director to facilitate a partners' forum to meet, in conjunction with the sessions of the Governing Council and the World Urban Forum, to assess progress of the Plan's implementation. The theme of the 2010 Gender Assembly was "Bridging the Gender Divide in Cities," matching the overarching theme of the fifth World Urban Forum, "Bridging the Urban Divide."
2. The Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) was developed through a participatory process, uniting all UN-HABITAT programmes and partners to improve gender equality and advance women's rights and empowerment across all policies and programmes. The Plan was divided into six action areas: (1) advocacy and monitoring, (2) participatory urban planning, governance and management, (3) land and housing, (4) access to environmentally sound urban services, (5) access to finance for housing and infrastructure and (6) gender mainstreaming in all UN-HABITAT programmes.
3. UN-HABITAT's Gender Plan is designed to contribute to the attainment of international commitments from a perspective focusing simultaneously on the goals of sustainable urbanization, better housing and gender equality. The Plan's mandates include the Habitat Agenda, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Millennium Development Goals, the third of which is, explicitly, to promote gender equality and empower women. The other the rest of the Millennium Development Goals also benefit from gender equality, especially around achieving poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.
4. The UN-HABITAT Gender Equality Action Plan is a strategy for gender mainstreaming, which, accordingly, involves the inclusion of gender perspectives in all policies and programmes, within the overarching United Nations framework for gender mainstreaming. In 1997, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations General Assembly (ECOSOC) adopted gender mainstreaming as the methodology by which the entire United Nations system would work towards the advancement of women and gender equality goals (ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2).
5. Participants of the Gender Equality Action Assembly included government ministers, councillors, mayors, urban planners, architects, researchers, campaigners, UN-HABITAT staff, representatives of non-governmental organizations (including grassroots women's networks) and other gender experts. The three principle chairs of the Gender Assembly were Ms. Christine Platt, President of the Commonwealth Association of Planners; Ms. Lucia Maiera, Special Advisor to Brazil's Special Secretariat of Policies for Women; and Mrs. Inga Björk Klevby, Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT. The workshop facilitators were Ms. Magdalene Kannae, Lecturer at the Institute of Local Government Studies, and Mrs. Sylvia Ordonez, Executive Director for the Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics.

## B. OPENING CEREMONY

6. A ceremony took place to launch the Gender Equality Action Assembly and the World Urban Youth Assembly jointly. Before the delivery of official statements by dignitaries and key partners, Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, welcomed all guests and asked them to rise and share a minute's silence for people who perished in recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, in landslides in Uganda and in disasters in other places.



Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT (left) with Ms. Lucia Kiwala, Chief of UN-HABITAT's Gender Mainstreaming Unit

## 7. OPENING STATEMENT BY MRS. ANNA TIBAIJUKA, UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN-HABITAT

Mrs. Tibaijuka described the Gender Equality Action Assembly as a unique space for women decision-makers, local government representatives, grassroots women, gender experts and the academic sectors to mark progress towards implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan in towns and cities worldwide. The Plan was the result of a collaborative effort, she said, and the Gender Assembly was about holding UN-HABITAT and its partners to account, in the spirit of being humble enough to accept and learn where improvements needed to be made.

She said that gender inequalities are a dimension of urban inequality—restricting economic progress and preventing citizens from enjoying equitable opportunities to decent housing, health, safety and well-being. However, the two-day proceedings of the Gender Assembly, and the resulting follow-up actions, would help to narrow the urban divide, she stated.

Next, she drew attention to the pervasive nature of urbanization and inadequate responses in rapidly growing towns and cities of the developing world. Half the world's people already live in urban areas, and the proportion is expected to reach 70 percent in the next two generations. She said that rapid and poorly planned urbanization is contributing to high proportions of people living in unhygienic, insecure, and often demeaning conditions in slums and informal settlements, with UN-HABITAT's State of the World' Cities 2010/11 report citing the estimated number of the world's slum dwellers as 828 million in 2010.

She added that for women, poor housing conditions and urban poverty pose added challenges, due in part to discrimination at home and within their communities, but also because policy makers fail to recognize that women have needs and priorities that are not always the same as those for men. She cited three examples of how women and girls in slums and poor urban areas are often the most disadvantaged in cities.

She then shared examples of progress in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan. These included improved advocacy on gender equality and monitoring of gender gaps in cities (for example through new web projects and publications); capacity building for local governments on gender mainstreaming and on improving dialogue with grassroots women; programmes to address gender inequalities in accessing and owning land and property; water and sanitation programmes that maximize women's involvement and create income-generation opportunities; and housing finance initiatives that are helping more women than ever before.



In concluding, she announced the launch of a new UN-HABITAT publication, [Gender Equality for Smarter Cities: Challenges and Progress](#), which was published in English and Spanish. She also invited ministers, parliamentarians and mayors to form a new Women's Urban Policy Makers' Network as part of the new World Urban Campaign. [Mrs. Tibajjuka's full speech](#) can be downloaded from UN-HABITAT's website.

#### **8. STATEMENT BY MS. NILCÉA FREIRE, MINISTER OF THE SPECIAL SECRETARIAT OF POLICIES FOR WOMEN, BRAZIL, DELIVERED ON HER BEHALF BY MS. LUCIA MAIERÁ, SPECIAL ADVISOR AT THE SPECIAL SECRETARIAT**

Ms. Freire stated there is a need for greater women's involvement in creating more democratic and sustainable cities. She explained that Brazil works in a coordinated manner within the federal government to promote gender equality, and that there are gender units within the various government offices from the national through to the local levels. She stressed the importance of broad participation by civil society in the building of the National Plans of Policies for Women, and in the monitoring of its implementation through the numerous Councils on Women's Rights. She said that violence in cities, including violence against women, does not only have to do with police, but with policies, and that gender-responsive policies are also related to access to justice and housing. She also stated that the Gender Assembly was an important event to open up effective dialogue on gender and urbanization.

#### **9. STATEMENT BY MRS. JAN PETERSON, CHAIR OF THE HUIROU COMMISSION AND UN-HABITAT SCROLL OF HONOUR LAUREATE**

Mrs. Peterson spoke about the history of the Huairou Commission and its role in helping to draft the Habitat Agenda at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul in 1996. She said that in the beginning many people considered the organization to be a fringe group, but over time, the organization gained increasing credibility, working not only with the Gender Mainstreaming Unit of UN-HABITAT, but with various UN-HABITAT programmes and networks, including the Safer Cities Programme and the Global Land Tool Network.

She said the World Urban Forum was “an incredible opportunity” for grassroots women to make contacts with local governments, urban planners and academics. She urged grassroots women to be ready not only to talk, but to be prepared to do, naming disaster recovery and mitigation after the earthquake in Haiti as an opportunity for involvement of grassroots women. She also urged professionals to respect the ability of grassroots women to conduct their own research and make their own impact, either on their own or in partnership with others.

### **C. REVIEW OF OBJECTIVES AND VIDEO SCREENING**

11. Ms. Christine Platt, the President of the Commonwealth Association of Planner, and Chair of the first day of proceedings of the Gender Equality Action Assembly, reviewed the objectives of the Assembly. She reminded participants that the Assembly was sanctioned by the 22nd Session of UN-HABITAT's Governing Council. The objectives of the Gender Equality Action Assembly were to:

- Enhance learning and sharing on implementation of the GEAP by partners and key policy-makers and make recommendations for accelerating progress;
- Promote a deeper understanding and knowledge of gender and urbanization issues and identify opportunities for increasing action at the global, country and city level; and to
- Explore the possibility for establishing a network of women mayors, parliamentarians and ministers of housing and urban development, as well as local governments in support of incorporation of gender issues in policies and decisions on urbanization and regional development.

12. Ms. Platt introduced the video “Bread and Roses,” produced by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and coordinated by the Seoul Women and Family Foundation, in partnership with UN-HABITAT. The 4-minute video was first aired at the 2009 2nd Metropolis Women International Network Forum in Korea. She said “bread” could be interpreted as the bare essentials for survival, such as shelter, food and clean drinking water. “Roses” represent women’s rights—such as freedom of expression and the right not only to work, but to make a decent living. Ms. Platt said that a key message in the film is that dynamic cities need women, which is why the Gender Assembly was pushing for continued progress through the Gender Equality Action Plan.

## **D. WORKSHOPS ON THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN**

13. Ms. Magdelene Kanna, a lecturer at the Institute of Local Government Studies in Ghana and facilitator of the Gender Assembly workshops, explained that six simultaneous workshops on action areas of the Gender Equality Action Plan would take place in separate rooms, each with a panel of experts. Participants were to choose which workshop they wished to attend. The six workshops were:

- Workshop 1: *Advocacy and monitoring of gender equality in cities*
- Workshop 2: *Urban planning, governance and management*
- Workshop 3: *Land and housing*
- Workshop 4: *Access to environmentally sound urban services*
- Workshop 5: *Strengthened housing finance systems*
- Workshop 6: *Introduction to the Gender Equality Action Plan*

With the exception of the sixth workshop, which was for participants previously unfamiliar with the Gender Equality Action Plan, each workshop would begin with introductions of each panellist and a presentation from each on their experience of implementing the Plan within the relevant action area. Where time permitted, this was followed by interactive discussions and open questions and answers from participants.

After the workshops, a representative from each of the six workshops reported the main emerging themes to the entire Assembly. This report lists these themes at the end of each workshop entry.

### **14. WORKSHOP 1: ADVOCACY AND MONITORING GENDER EQUALITY IN CITIES**

**Moderator:** Ms. Dory Reeves, Deputy Head, Professional Planning Programmes, University of Auckland, New Zealand

**Panellists:**

Ms. Charlotte Thibault, President, Conseil des Montréalaises, Canada

Ms. Jackie Leavitt, Professor of Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles; Member, Huairou Commission, United States of America

Ms. Alison Brown, Course Director, School of Regional Planning, Cardiff University; Researcher, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), United Kingdom

Ms. Angela Fontes, Coordinator, Interagency Program for the Promotion of Gender, Race and Ethnic Equality, UNIFEM, Brazil

Mr. Francisco Cos-Monteil, Senior Program Specialist, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada

Ms. Emily Wong, Communications and Knowledge Management Consultant, UN-HABITAT

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Cilla Ng, Associate Human Settlements Officer, UN-HABITAT

Workshop 1 highlighted the important role of evidence-based information, including sex-disaggregated data and gender research, to improve knowledge and gender analysis on the relationships between gender equality, sustainable urbanization and poverty reduction. The session focused on actions taken at the local and global level, including examples from Canada, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Ms Thibault described the history, formation, and the role of the Conseil de Montréalaises, an advisory body to the municipal administration on all issues concerning gender equality and the status of women. The organization aims to increase women's participation in the city's public life and to find answers to the needs and concerns of women in Montreal. Through reviewing her experience with the Conseil, she pointed out the importance of institutionalizing governmental bodies in the promotion of gender equality. For example, since the Conseil des Montréalaises is included in the mandate of the city, the agency's status and continuity is not affected by any changes in the governing party.

Ms. Leavitt spoke about linking up advocacy and research efforts between professional urban planners and grassroots women. She stressed the importance of documenting the real life stories of grassroots women and their role in documenting and sharing these stories widely. She said the vivid accounts of grassroots women can capture the attention of policy makers. She emphasized that grassroots women are capable of conducting research and said that collecting data for monitoring should begin with the grassroots.

Ms. Fontes used examples from her work with UNIFEM in the Interagency Program for the Promotion of Gender, Race and Ethnic Equality to discuss the importance of sex-disaggregated data in facilitating the



Ms. Angela Fontes, Coordinator, Interagency Program for the Promotion of Gender, Race and Ethnic Equality, UNIFEM, Brazil

planning of municipal governments. As an example, she described the experiences of Brazil to illustrate how municipal and local government can design better policies in accordance to the needs of people with different social backgrounds—such as ethnicity, gender and age—in different localities.

Ms. Brown presented the challenges faced by women in the informal economy amidst urbanization and globalization; they have a central economic role, yet their work is under-recognized, they are rarely in leadership positions and their land and housing rights are often ignored. She said that owing to their greater participation in the informal economy, women are more heavily affected by the impact of the global economic downturn and changes in global trade patterns. For instance, greater trade between African countries and China has brought forth new challenges to some African informal workers selling traditional goods. She said research must be combined with action to inform advocacy, facilitate policy debate and build alliances.

Ms. Brown described the work of Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and its involvement in the Inclusive Cities initiative, which addresses urban poverty by supporting and building the capacity of member-based organizations of the poor. Through organizing, advocacy and policy analysis, the Inclusive Cities project helps urban informal workers to make their needs heard within urban planning processes.

Mr. Cos-Montiel emphasized the importance of gender research and the collection and use of empirical information and sex disaggregated data. His presentation was based on the findings of research supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), as well the policy recommendations from an international conference, “Decentralization, Local Power and Women's Rights,” held by IDRC in Mexico City, November 2008, in collaboration with UN-HABITAT and a number of international agencies.

Policy recommendations from the conference in Mexico included ensuring that specific institutions are mandated and funded within decentralized systems to collect gender-disaggregated data and to monitor, regularly evaluate and report on the various aspects of the decentralized system, including local budget performance in relation to addressing gender gaps. There was further emphasis on strengthening women’s movements and a recommendation for policy makers to integrate systematically the views and proposals of citizens and civil society groups in monitoring and evaluating of decentralized systems. Since 2004, IDRC’s Women’s Rights and Citizenship programme has supported 13 research projects in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America to explore how decentralization affects women’s access to services, resources, and local power.

Ms. Wong gave examples of UN-HABITAT’s recent advocacy work, including web-based projects, production of sex-disaggregated statistics and publications to promote gender equality and sustainable urbanization. These included a web feature on the UN-interagency website *Womenwatch* and the publication *Gender Equality for Smarter Cities*. UN-HABITAT’s 2010/11 *State of the World’s Cities* report includes a statistical annex of sex-disaggregated data that enables gendered comparisons between slum, urban and rural dwellers. Over the last year, UN-HABITAT has also commissioned gender research on urban planning and the effects of climate change on cities for the 2009 and 2011 editions of the *Global Report on Human Settlements*.

For improved advocacy, Ms. Wong mentioned a need for better documentation and dissemination of good practices at the city and country level. Her presentation also highlighted the important role of partnerships and a need for greater involvement of men and boys in advocacy about gender equality and women’s empowerment. She said better gender training of policy makers and UN-HABITAT staff would help them to develop a deeper understanding of gender issues, of their responsibilities to promote gender equality and of effective approaches for gender mainstreaming.

In reporting back to the Plenary about the workshop, Ms. Reeves listed the following emerging themes about advocacy and monitoring of gender equality in cities:

- a) Better evidence-based information is needed for gender analysis about cities and to promote informed policy making. Governments need to provide more sex-disaggregated urban data, and organizations across all sectors should develop global alliances for sharing data and best practices.
- b) Grassroots women should play a greater role in research and advocacy on urban issues.

- c) Cities of tomorrow need to be cities for all people, with considerations around gender, race, age and other factors that may lead to social exclusion.
- d) There should be equality in representation of women and men in politics and resources should be allocated to address women's underrepresentation.
- e) Councils or institutions to promote gender equality should be institutionalized to ensure continuity of their work, even after changes in government.

## **15. WORKSHOP 2: URBAN PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Moderator:** Ms. Rita Rachele Dandavino, Coordinator, Metropolis Women International Network Project; Director, International Institute for the Management of Major Metropolises, Canada

### **Panellists:**

Ms. Magdalene Kannaë, Lecturer, Institute of Local Government Studies, Ghana

Ms. Olga Segovia, Researcher, SUR Corporation of Social Studies and Education, Chile; Member, Latin America Women and Habitat Network

Ms. Hyunkyung Park, President, Seoul Foundation of Women and Family, Korea

Ms. Kathryn Travers, Analyst and Project Officer, Women in Cities International, Canada

Ms. Nancy Boxill, Commissioner, Fulton County, United States of America

Mr. Bernhard Barth, Human Settlements Officer, UN-HABITAT

**Rapporteur:** Ms Lily Hutjes, Member, Huairou Commission, the Netherlands

Workshop 2 explored how gender equality can be achieved through better local governance in urban areas. Panellists discussed various aspects of gender mainstreaming in local governance, covering gender analysis, women's safety and security, gender budgeting, climate change initiatives, and women's participation in urban planning and policy making.

Ms. Kannaë emphasized the strategic importance of governance at the city or local level. She described how local government can have the most immediate impact on people's livelihoods and other economic, social, security and political concerns. Furthermore, bridging gender divides would require partnerships between cities, vibrant citizen's groupings and other civil actors, including traditional authorities, media, and labour organizations. The Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS), where Ms. Kannaë is a lecturer, promotes gender analysis in every aspect of urban governance, and its work with UN-HABITAT has involved training local government workers on strategies to ensure that the needs of women and men are taken into account equitably, and on how to identify gender gaps. ILGS trainings on gender mainstreaming for Ghana's District Assemblies took place in June and July 2009.

Ms. Kannaë suggested that governments should consider affirmative action, conduct advocacy to discourage gender stereotyping, facilitate gender training, and analyze the effectiveness of public services with the

participation of stakeholders. She also pointed to a need for gender analysis on access to benefits and resources in cities, and on how governments can create equitable policies.

Ms. Segovia's presentation focused on urban planning and governance issues related to violence against women in cities, which, she explained, does not refer solely to traditional crimes but also to how urban development is carried out, the lack of participation by citizens and difficulties related to accessing services. She highlighted the important role of public policies that incorporate the rights of women and contribute to a more harmonious co-existence of different groups in urban spaces. She then described UNIFEM's Latin America programme "Cities without Violence—Safe Cities for All," which is implemented by the region's Women and Habitat Network.

The four strategic action areas in the Cities without Violence programme are: a) generation of knowledge to make an impact on public agendas and politics; b) development of strategies of participatory intervention in cities; c) awareness raising and capacity-building of actors to promote public debate; and (d) strengthening of networks. The regional programme is increasing discussion, analysis and proposals for inclusive approaches to urban safety in several cities in Latin America, taking a holistic approach that addresses gender inequalities with other problems, such as poverty, economic inequalities and territorial segregation.

Ms. Park described the Women Friendly City Project of the Seoul Foundation of Women and Family. The project aims to promote gender equality in all aspects of urban life and improve the quality of life for women—for example by helping them to acquire better housing, more work, and better access to cultural activities, healthcare and efficient transportation systems. According to Ms. Park, certification of institutions that are effective in promoting women-friendly urban services and programmes are a good way to publicize and encourage good practices. The key to creating liveable and sustainable cities, she said, is in expanding opportunities for women's participation in city policy making and urban planning.

She highlighted the following areas to improve gender-responsiveness in governance: women's safety in the city, women's participation in decision making and development of urban policies, capacity building of local grassroots women's groups, and gender training for local government officials. She also described how the Seoul Foundation for Women and Family has mobilized local women to participate in the local government's safety audits of public spaces, such as streets, public restrooms, parks and parking lots. This included monitoring accessibility issues (such as elevators, low-floor buses and separate-sex restrooms) for women with disabilities. The Foundation offers consulting and advisory activities for local government, including gender training to public officials, which has reportedly trained 2,780 people in six courses since 2008.

Ms. Travers described the work of Women in Cities International (WICI) in building partnerships between local women's organizations and their municipalities, so that women and girls can participate meaningfully in city life. WICI facilitates knowledge and experience sharing to create safer, more inclusive cities for women and girls. She said that women's safety is important for achieving gender equality because if women are unsafe, they have limited mobility and limited ability to exercise their right to the city.



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Under the Gender Inclusive Cities programme (2009-2012), WICI is conducting research on women's safety in four cities: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Rosario, Argentina; Petrosovac, Russia and Delhi, India. The Programme seeks to identify the factors that cause and perpetuate inequalities and exclusion, as well as enhance women's inclusion and "right to the city." In the second stage of this project, WICI will work with local governments and non-governmental organisations in using the findings of the study to pilot interventions.



Commissioner Nancy Boxill of  
Fulton County, Georgia, USA

Ms. Boxill drew from her experience as a Commissioner for Fulton County, Georgia to talk about gender budgeting. She said a gender-responsive budget accounts for the effects of government expenditures and revenues on women, men, girls and boys and serves as an instrument for holding a government accountable to its gender equality commitments. The steps she named for success included keeping the gender budget policy in the foreground, seeking to understand the budget decision-making process and how the process can be influenced, and being clear and persistent about the message. Some of the challenges she mentioned involved sustaining political will and leadership, active employee participation, and evaluation and assessment.

Mr. Barth gave an overview of UN-HABITAT's activities to promote gender-responsive urban governance. He said making cities responsive to the needs of women and men depends on how spaces are built, managed and governed. He named the following entry points: urban planning (with a focus on urban safety); management (with a focus on the urban environment); and climate change and governance (with a focus on participation and local government capacity building). Challenges included women's inadequate access to safe and affordable homes, inadequate services and resources for women, lack of gender-based policies or poor urban infrastructure, illiteracy, economic inequalities, restrictive cultural norms and substance abuse.

He then reviewed several brief case studies of UN-HABITAT's work around gender and local governance. In Santiago, Chile, a project promoted awareness of how gender affects experiences of mobility in cities. In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, UN-HABITAT helped to introduce a safety audit tool to the local government. In Kingston, Jamaica, a project drew awareness to urban crime and safety and empowered local residents to "reclaim" their streets through street dances. In Nairobi, Kenya, UN-HABITAT supported participatory safety assessments, in which local residents assessed and advised local authorities on how to improve community safety. In Delhi, India, UN-HABITAT is supporting youth-led initiatives to improve urban safety, especially for women and girls. UN-HABITAT has also developed a sourcebook for trainers called [\*Gender in Local Government\*](#), which is being widely used to introduce gender concepts and key areas of local government responsibility.

Finally, Mr. Barth described the Cities in Climate Change Initiative (CCI), which promotes gender mainstreaming of local and national policies and plans on climate change. Before the climate change responses are developed, CCI supports gendered climate change vulnerability assessments, looking at assets, knowledge, participation, rights and power. A corresponding climate change response would then be developed.

After the workshop, Ms. Dandavino reported back to the Plenary on the emerging themes from the workshop's presentations and ensuing discussions as follows:

- a) There is a need for comprehensive analysis of the gender-responsiveness of urban governance, with consideration of the 5W's (who, when, what, where and why). This should include the stories and voices of actual women to illustrate priorities and what works.
- b) Multisectoral and inclusive partnerships—including both women and men, different cultures, people with disabilities, indigenous groups and other areas of diversity should be fostered.
- c) Successes in gender mainstreaming need to be publicized. Enlisting of community champions for advocacy and the certification for organizations that achieve good gender mainstreaming are recommended to stimulate and sustain action.
- d) Governments need to plan for long-term change, with gender equality principles imbedded deeply and broadly into policy.
- e) Gender training is needed for urban planners and other local government staff, politicians and civil society.

## **16. WORKSHOP 3: LAND AND HOUSING**

**Moderator:** Ms. Fides Bagasao, Leaders and Organizers of Community Organizers in Asia (LOCOA), South Korea

**Panellists:**

Ms. Esupat Ngulupa, Board Member, MWEDO; Member, Huairou Commission, Tanzania

Ms. Victoria Ricciardi, Programme Officer for the Americas, Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) Americas, Argentina

Mrs. Raquel Rolnik, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Brazil

Ms. Lorna Juliet Amutojo, Advocate, AA Legal Consultants & Co.; Executive Trustee, Uganda Women's Land Access Trust

Ms Clarissa Augustinus, Chief of Land Tenure and Property Administration Section, UN-HABITAT

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Saskia Ruijsink, Urban planning and policy specialist, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, the Netherlands

Workshop 3 focused on progress in promoting women's rights to land and housing. Initiatives discussed included the building of networks for information sharing between grassroots women on land and housing issues, research on housing rights and domestic violence, the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, and tools for evaluating the gender-responsiveness of land policies and reforms.



Ms. Ngulupa stressed the importance of opportunities for grassroots women to share information and experiences with other groups, so that they can learn from each other. She explained how the grassroots organization she represents, MWEDO, is exchanging information with grassroots women in Brazil on addressing issues related to gender and land. Around the world women face immense difficulties accessing housing and land, especially women from indigenous groups, she said, but grassroots organizations play a crucial role in building the capacity of women to improve their situation and claim their rights. A challenge is in finding ways to promote more exchanges and to work on a larger scale, she said.

Ms. Ricciardi discussed the link between domestic violence and the right of women to adequate housing. She described COHRE's research in Brazil, Colombia and Argentina on women in informal settlements and their vulnerability to domestic violence. The research showed that women with limited access to housing found it especially hard to break away from violent relationships. They had no place to go and were often economically dependent on their partner. She said policy formulation is hindered by limited data about domestic violence and women's access to land and housing. She highlighted a need to put domestic violence on the agenda of housing rights and vice versa, and to develop both short and long-term strategies to assist women.

Ms. Rolnik explained that the UN Special Rapporteur is an independent professional in charge of monitoring and evaluation of international laws on human rights. She said that although adequate housing is formally accepted as a human right, in practice, governments do not see adequate housing as a human right. Another difficulty she described is that housing and land are mainly considered as a commodity and hence governments try to optimize their value, rather than focusing on providing access for all to land and housing. She had two ideas for her work in 2011: 1) development of a report for promoting women's access to land or 2) development of specific guidelines for women's protection against forced evictions. She was also seeking suggestions on what support the special rapporteur should give to help grassroots women to improve access to adequate housing and land.

Ms. Amutojo introduced herself as an advocate and founding member of Uganda Women's Land Access Trust. The Uganda Women's Land Access Trust (UWLAT) is helping women entrepreneurs in informal settlements to access affordable finance for housing and infrastructure. Government-donated land in the municipality of Jinja has been allocated for the construction of more homes, following a successful pilot in 2006. Ms. Amutojo said that women's unequal access to land is caused by legislative and policy issues for land and housing, and also non-policy issues, such as socio-economic and political forces.

She said that in Uganda, land was traditionally held under customary tenure, but land is now being commercialized and investors are competing for land for development. This is linked to conflict over mineral and oil. She suggested that Uganda's rapid population growth adds to further competition for land and increases the need for improved land policies and implementation frameworks to protect the rights of women and the poor. Corruption and poor administration would need to be tackled. She said that ownership of housing as an economic resource could contribute to poverty reduction, food security and economic development; accordingly, land funds for the poor should be utilized.



Ms. Juliet Amutojo of Uganda Women's Land Access Trust

Ms. Augustinus presented on the work of Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) to promote women rights to land. The Global Land Tool Network is a partner's network, with its secretariat in UN-HABITAT. It was established in 2006 to develop and promote land tools to facilitate the implementation of pro-poor land policies and regulations. As part of this, GLTN partners—including the University of East London (UEL), the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) and the Huairou Commission—have developed a set of Gender Evaluation Criteria to assess the gender responsiveness of land tools. Grassroots women in the Huairou Commission had been carrying out a pilot to test the Gender Evaluation Criteria in Brazil, Ghana and Nepal.

According to Ms. Augustinus, the key lessons from the pilot are: i) that the evaluation criteria are useful for assessing land tools; ii) land professionals, governments and communities are the key stakeholders; iii) carrying out a land and gender assessment is complicated and a team carrying out such an evaluation needs guidance on how to run a pilot, how to do a gender analysis, how to use gender evaluation criteria and how to link the evaluation with existing projects. GLTN will now focus on the next phase by developing a brochure, a 'how to guide,' by setting up capacity building workshops on how to use the gender evaluation criteria, and by providing technical assistance for more pilots.

Following the presentations from the panellists, discussions took place between the audience and the panel. Points of discussion included the following:

- Indigenous communities, women and children are vulnerable to relocation and losing their livelihoods when they live in areas with resources such as minerals or oil;
- Women's land ownership is often a driving force for social and economic improvements to families and communities;
- Many land reforms have reformed customary law and adopted a market oriented system, but land and housing are mainly considered as a commodity and not as a human right, thus often leaving the poor still unable to access or own land;
- Although customary law can exclude women, it has potential for offering many solutions. Working within customary law, joint ownership offers a good alternative for those who cannot afford an individual house or plot, including many women;
- To make a large impact on improving access and ownership of land and housing, it is important to assess what residents can afford and also what procedures governments can afford (eg. cheaper registration systems with lower standards).

Ms. Bagasao summarized the main points of the workshop for the Plenary as follows:

- a) People have a right not just to housing, but to adequate housing. Protecting the right to adequate housing includes ensuring access to services, livelihoods and resources.
- b) More needs to be done to address housing rights and domestic violence together. If access to housing for women improves, they are less vulnerable to domestic violence.
- c) There is a need for sensitivity to culture, religion and customary laws in evaluating how the right to adequate housing can be implemented. Tenure can take many forms and there are good options for joint ownership.

- d) In order to improve access to housing, partnerships between communities, grassroots women, academia, the private sector, governments and international organizations should be formed.
- e) Access to adequate housing needs to be affordable, and programmes that help women to improve their economic position should be promoted.

## **17. WORKSHOP 4: ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND URBAN SERVICES**

**Moderator:** Ms. Lowie Rosales, Human Settlements Officer, UN-HABITAT

**Panellists:**

Ms. Carmen Griffiths, Director, Construction Resource and Development Centre, Jamaica

Ms. Daniela Nogueira, Member, Gender and Water Alliance: Public Policy Analyst, Chamber of Regional Programs, Ministry of National Integration, Brazil.

Mr. Yusto Muchuruza, Executive Director, Kagera Development and Credit Revolving Fund (KADETFU), Tanzania

Ms. Winrose Nyaguthie, Programme Officer, Women and property programme, GROOTS, Kenya

Mr. Laban Onongno, National Chief Technical Adviser, Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative, UN-HABITAT

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Lusungu Kayani, Associate Human Settlement Officer, UN-HABITAT

Workshop 4 focused on improving women's access to basic urban services and their level of participation in the management of the urban environment at local and national levels. The session also offered concrete examples on what works in developing community led strategies to monitor, develop, and sustain basic services and infrastructure, including pro-poor and gender responsive water and sanitation programmes and strategies. Participants agreed that when sanitation and water facilitations are poor, women and girls suffer more.

Ms. Griffiths shared the experience of the Construction Resource and Development Centre (CRDC) on promoting community-led environmental services that help women to exercise their right to the city. Work has included promoting access to water, sanitation, waste management, public safety and health and education. She stated that in Jamaica, 90 per cent of people have water and sanitation coverage, but services are often poor in informal settlements. CRDC partnered with USAID, local government agencies and elected leaders to improve sanitation in several towns and cities in Jamaica. Using mapping and training programmes, the focus of CRDC has been on the role of women in the management of solid waste and on training women to create sanitation strategies and to identify skilled builders in their area.

Ms. Nogueira said that in Brazil, 91 per cent of households have water, but over 3 million people still do not have access to water in Brazil's informal settlements. She emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming and of consideration to racial issues in water and sanitation programmes. She explained that insufficient distribution and access to water is driving inequality and class divisions. Regionally, access to water in Africa is the most challenged, she said, and time spent collecting water has devastating effects on the development of countries.

Ms. Nogueira noted that progress has been made, but commented on the need to examine the power dynamics in water management. According to Ms. Nogueira, the absence of sufficient data and indicators makes it impossible to compare women and men globally, underscoring a need for gender-disaggregated data to inform policy making.



Mr. Laban Onongno, National Chief Technical Adviser of the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative, UN-HABITAT (left) and Mr. Mr. Yusto Muchuruza, Executive Director of KADETFU

Mr. Muchuruza described the work of the Kagera Development and Credit Revolving Fund (KADETFU) in Tanzania in bridging the urban divide through sanitation and micro-credit for women. He presented findings in several cities around Lake Victoria and other regions in Tanzania. In some areas, only 10 per cent of households have access to improved sanitation and services. The Fund managed by KADETFU uses a social marketing approach to improve sanitation facilities for women-headed households. He presented the methodology and approach used by the fund to provide better access to sanitation for women and commented that social marketing is a useful approach to help people to improve their lives. He concluded by stating that sanitation is a gender right.

Ms. Nyaguthie presented the work of GROOTS Kenya, done in collaboration with the Huairou Commission. With more than 100 members, GROOTS focuses on community mobilization and collective responses to promote basic urban services, such as water and sanitation, and to enhance the living conditions of those living and working in slums. She spoke of new partnerships with government and international organizations in local advocacy. Highlighting a specific programme in Nanyuki, Kenya, she spoke of the organization's gender-related activities on access and ownership of land. She also described the hazards of unsafe human waste disposal and dumping. In conclusion, she highlighted the need to involve grassroots women in housing and sanitation decisions.

Mr. Onongno described the work of the Lake Victoria Sanitation Programme (LVSP) in providing pro-poor sanitation. LVSP covers East Africa, including Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. The main problems identified in the towns are low income, high water vendor prices, lack of hand washing facilities and diarrhoea. The programme puts a strong focus on consultation with women and their participation in all stages of work. It also includes micro-credit schemes targeting women-headed households and training that is building the capacity of women and young people to be involved in water and sanitation management and service provision. Mr. Onongno said that much work in the area still needs to be done to reach targets within the Millennium Development Goals, but by the end of 2010, over 200,000 people will have benefited from the Programme.

Following the presentations, discussions on several topics took place. Ms. Griffiths commented that women have a lot of power to mobilize and demand from local leaders, who in turn recognize this power as an incentive to work with women. Ms. Nogueira commented on water and social policies and the need to address huge divisions between social classes.

In reporting back to the Plenary, Ms. Rosales highlighted the following themes from the the workshop:

- a) Implementing projects on urban services must involve women from the start.
- b) Strategies to implement urban services and to empower women need to respond sensitively to additional considerations (such as class, culture, tradition, religion and history) and to acknowledge that different groups of women can have different needs.
- c) Women and low-income groups can benefit economically from becoming providers of water and sanitation efforts themselves, especially with the support of micro-credit programmes.
- d) Grassroots women must be involved in the planning of urban services and have access to platforms, such as the World Urban Forum, to make their voice heard.
- e) It is important to be strategic and balanced about achieving quick wins and long-term goals.

## **18. WORKSHOP 5: STRENGTHENED HUMAN SETTLEMENTS FINANCE SYSTEMS**

**Moderator:** Ms. Cecilia Njenga-Kinuthia, Human Settlement Officer, UN-HABITAT

**Panellists:**

Mrs. Kakra Hayford, Consultant, Housing Finance, Ghana/United States of America

Ms. Catherine Khisa-Yegon, Executive Secretary and Trustee, Kenya Women Land Access Trusts (KEWLAT), Kenya

Ms. Cleonice Dias de Almeida, Community Committee of 'Cidade de Deus' (City of God), Brazil



Ms. Kakra Hayford, Housing Finance Consultant

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Sarah Silliman, Governance Campaign Coordinator, Huairou Commission

Workshop 5 explored developments in programmes and initiatives to facilitate women's access to affordable finance for housing and infrastructure in urban areas. While formal banking sectors dominate financing for housing, many women in cities work in the informal sector and experience difficulty meeting the requirements of formal banks, such as proof of assets and address, and loan repayments with high rates of interest. The workshop presentations examined holistic and community-based approaches to increase women's access to finance, while also promoting security of tenure and secure livelihoods through public and private partnerships.

Mrs Hayford provided a broad overview of the role of housing finance in empowering women and reviewed UN-HABITAT initiatives following resolution 21/9, adopted by the UN-HABITAT Governing Council in 2007, to promote women's property and access to housing finance as individuals, cooperatives or associations. Initiatives included the Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF), which helps to broker local loan facilities for the urban poor, including women's savings groups. SUF also helps to unite community stakeholders to work with governments in achieving tenure security. Mrs. Hayford also described UN-HABITAT's support of Women Land Access Trusts, which help women entrepreneurs to access land and affordable loans for improved housing. She emphasized the importance of scaling up and increasing funding of pilot programmes, and the need for sustained advocacy on women's housing rights.

Ms. Khisa-Yegon represented Kenya Women Land Access Trust, one of the organizations supported by UN-HABITAT to help grassroots women and men to access housing finance. The Women Land Access Trusts also operate in Uganda, Burundi, Ghana and Tanzania, with more being developed in other countries. Women Land Access Trusts are created as Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV), which are legal entities (such as a limited company or a Trust) to act as facilitators between women's housing cooperatives, banking institutions, governments, the private sector and communities. Ms. Khisa-Yegon said the SPV's have helped women to have a stronger voice in order to access affordable mortgages. Women have gained land collectively and overcome traditional dependence on men for land and housing. She said KEWLAT's successes include helping women to develop a culture of savings, to gain land (formerly owned by the Kenyan government) and to participate in business training.

Ms. Dias de Almeda spoke about her experience as a community leader in Cidade de Deus ("City of God"). She referred to the 2003 film which bore the city's name and depicted the reality of crime, violence and drug trafficking in the majority of slums in Brazil, but Ms. Dias de Almeda said the film failed to tell about the majority of slum dwellers that live with dignity outside of crime. In 2002, the Community Committee developed a plan to restructure the community and relieve extreme poverty and presented it to Brazil's various ministries. The Community partnered with Caixa Economica Federal, the federally backed bank, to build 618 homes. It selected the most vulnerable community, Rocina 2, which was overrun by drug traffickers and where many women tended to be poor and with many children. Ms. Dias de Almeda described how, with mobilization by the Community Committee, grassroots people were able to set their own agenda, to bring that agenda to the government and to negotiate financing for housing. The Committee is now trying to help women to gain title deeds to the new homes.

Open discussions followed the workshop. Participants highlighted the struggle of women working in the informal sector in accessing loans. They also spoke about the need for well-governed, credible and competent organizations and institutions or SPV's to facilitate the brokering of funding for the community. Further discussion centred on the need to regularize land rights as part of housing projects involving women's housing finance programmes. Participants also emphasized that the houses need to be affordable and that the use of local and indigenous technologies can decrease costs and increase access to home ownership.

Ms. Njenga-Kinuthia summarized the main themes of the workshop in reporting to the Plenary:

- a) Capacity-building and training are key to success, both in empowering women entrepreneurs in the informal sector with better business skills, and strengthening the leadership of microfinance operators with better technical skills and social acumen.
- b) There is a need for more funding and continued involvement of diverse stakeholders to scale up housing finance projects for low-income women.
- c) Holistic approaches need to be adopted in housing finance programmes. These should consider how social contexts, such as crime and poor security, place further limits on women's access to land and housing. Loans may need to be accompanied by other programmes to protect residents.
- d) In promoting affordable housing finance, governments and stakeholders need to think creatively about various ways to enable women to access land. Collective land ownership through women's cooperatives is an option.
- e) Housing finance programmes need to be sensitive to issues of equity and affordability of access. Programmes should include analysis of how costs can be reduced—for example by using different types of building technology.

## 19. WORKSHOP 6: OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

### Facilitator:

Mrs Lucia Kiwala, Chief, Gender Mainstreaming Unit, UN-HABITAT

Workshop 6 was a general briefing session for participants who were new to the Gender Equality Action Plan. Ms. Kiwala gave an overview of each of the plan's six action areas: (1) advocacy and monitoring, (2) participatory urban planning, governance and management, (3) land and housing, (4) access to environmentally sound urban services, (5) access to finance for housing and infrastructure and (6) gender mainstreaming in all UN-HABITAT programmes. She provided examples of UN-HABITAT's work in each area.



Ms. Lucia Kiwala, Chief of UN-HABITAT's Gender Unit

After Ms. Kiwala's presentation, participants discussed the interface between rural and urban issues, the dynamics of rural-urban migration, and the need to look at linkages between rural and urban areas when examining urbanization as a process: people and resources can move back and forth, and social, environmental and economic factors between rural and urban areas are interconnected. There was also debate on whether certain gender reports, such as the upcoming *Women in Cities 2010-2011* report should focus exclusively on women—who are still generally more disadvantaged—or whether the report should be reframed to depict the degree of gender equity in cities and to discuss relevant barriers to gender equality. Workshop participants acknowledged a general need to be more strategic in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan and to further progress in practical ways. Ms. Kiwala clarified that the upcoming *Women in Cities* would provide evidence-based information on the gender urban divide—highlighting inequalities experienced by women and men in a range of cities.

## E. CLOSING PLENARY DISCUSSIONS FOR DAY 1

20. This session enabled participants to share experiences about diverse approaches to promoting gender equality in cities. The following ideas were expressed:

- a) Women should be part and parcel of the entire planning process.
- b) Training of urban planners and government leaders would help them to engage with grassroots community groups and ensure women's voices are heard and represented in decision making.
- c) Training of grassroots women on engaging with local leaders, such as the Huairou Commission's Local-to-Local Dialogue approach, can empower women to be more effective in influencing public policy and programmes.
- d) Women need to consider the context of district plans when considering how to engage with policy makers. For example, they need to consider relationships already existing and what resources are available.
- e) Grassroots women should be at the centre of development and they should be able to determine their own processes.
- f) In assessing women's involvement, there is a need to go beyond assessing the numbers of women involved and to consider also the quality of the work and the investment in women's projects.

- g) Partners of UN-HABITAT should take a stronger role in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan and reporting back on progress.
- h) More awareness-raising on the Gender Equality Action Plan would help with implementation and monitoring of gender equality initiatives.
- i) Feminists and urban development interest groups are often operating separately, but the two should collaborate more since there are many overlapping issues.
- j) Gender perspectives need to be embedded into urban planning. Some urban planners are women, but are still unfamiliar with gender perspectives. More training and advocacy on gender perspectives and rights-based approaches can increase awareness.
- k) There is a need to engage more young people on gender issues.
- l) UN-HABITAT should consider making the Gender Equality Action Assembly part of the official World Urban Forum, instead of a pre-Forum event, to raise the profile and status of gender work.
- m) In discussing women's access to land, there needs to be more engagement with social and cultural leaders and men who control land.
- n) The Gender Assembly should consider how partners can cooperate and solidify their collaboration.

## **F. GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION: EMERGING ISSUES**

21. Ms. Lucia Maierá, Special Advisor at Brazil's Special Secretariat of Policies for Women, was the Chair of the session on Gender and Sustainable Urbanization, the first session of Day 2 of the Gender Equality Action Assembly. Three speakers presented their research on gender equality issues in the urban context. Their presentations were on Gender, Cities and Climate Change; Gender and Urban Planning and the Empowerment of Girls in Cities.

**Rapporteurs:** Mr. Laban Onongno, National Chief Technical Adviser, Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative, UN-HABITAT; Emily Wong, Communications and Knowledge Management Consultant, UN-HABITAT

### **22. GENDER, CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Speaker:** Ms. Gotelind Alber, Independent Advisor and Researcher on Sustainable Energy and Climate Change; Board Member, GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice

Ms. Alber presented on topics related to her report for UN-HABITAT "Gender, Cities and Climate Change"—a background paper for the 2013 *Global Report on Human Settlements*, the theme of which is on climate change. She began by explaining that gender, cities and climate change are each topics that are independently well-established, but their linkages are often neglected. She described the impact of climate change on cities, including climate-related disasters, rises in sea levels and drought. Women in cities can be more vulnerable because of their greater degrees of poverty (compared to men), and their overrepresentation in care work and in the informal sector. Their capacity to cope could also be affected by having less mobility than men and less education, but more concerns for personal safety.



Ms. Alber discussed gender differences in energy consumption patterns between men and women and between the rich and the poor. She cited research that found that in Europe, on average, the carbon footprint of a single man living on his own was 9-40 per cent larger than for a single woman. In terms of housing and domestic energy use, she noted problems with over-consumption contributing to climate change among the rich. On the other hand, existing inequalities, including gender inequality and divisions between the rich and poor, are exacerbated by climate change and the depletion of natural resources.

She noted that key areas to consider in gender-responsive policy-making on climate change in cities include gender differences in mobility and the use of transport. For example, social and cultural factors affect how women and men travel. Women are more likely to be dependent on public transport, and they may face specific cultural constraints about travelling in public.

The presentation described how women can be allies for climate policy. Ms. Alber elaborated by explaining that women can help change attitudes about the risks of climate change, and they are often more willing, in principal, to change their own lifestyles to reduce their carbon footprint. Furthermore, women can contribute to community-based actions to tackle climate change. Ms. Alber emphasized a need to sensitize cities on gender and climate changes linkages. Climate change responses and methodologies should include a gender dimension, and these needed to be adequately supported by guidance, funding and legal and policy frameworks. She concluded by saying that significant funds for climate change, especially for mitigation and adaptation, will be available in the near future, and it should be ensured that women benefit from these funds.

### **23. GENDER AND URBAN PLANNING**

**Speaker:** Ms. Dory Reeves, Deputy Head, Professional Planning Programmes, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Ms. Reeves worked on a background paper on Gender and Urban Planning for UN-HABITAT, which was used in the 2009 *Global Report on Human Settlements*. She explained that the report involved a series of literature searches and drew on existing work of UN-HABITAT and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She said that a key reason why it is important to consider urban planning from a gender perspective is that the everyday lives of women and men are different; this affects what they do, how they gain a livelihood, where they need to go and how they get there. According to Ms. Reeves, new urban planning initiatives provide a critical opportunity to ensure that gender becomes mainstreamed in the planning of cities in the future.

Ms. Reeves described urban planning as a complex activity and process. To work, it needs to integrate transport, housing, economic development and environmental management. Each of these areas often has its own statutory frameworks, and so gender needs to be mainstreamed into each of these. She said that planners need to consider how women and men are represented in the planning process, how financial and human resources are distributed in addressing the different priorities and needs of women and men, and whether outcomes adequately and equitably reflect different gender needs and priorities.

She gave several examples of how women are often more severely affected by urban poverty and why gender-responsive interventions are needed. Women are more likely than men to be in poverty and more likely to live in the worst housing, within slums and informal settlements. She added that this includes temporary shelter, which is often designed with no consideration for women. Women and girls are more likely to be collectors of water, firewood and food, and to be managers of waste disposal, and yet they are

underrepresented in decision-making about urban services. Women are more likely to work in the informal sector, but these places generally lack facilities and security, precisely because they are informal.

For more gender-responsive urban planning, Ms. Reeves recommended better documentation of good practice, gender-disaggregated data to be featured in household surveys, greater involvement of both women and men in all aspects of programming, and gender training for urban planners. Finally, helping decision makers to appreciate the benefits and added value of incorporating gender into their work is also important.

## 24. EMPOWERMENT OF GIRLS IN CITIES

**Speaker:** Ms. Emily Lundell, Campaigns and Policy Coordinator, Plan International, United States of America

Ms. Lundell's presentation was about the economic empowerment of girls to ensure they emerge into young adulthood as successful economic citizens in cities. She began her presentation with a short promotional video on Plan International's "Because I am a Girl" campaign for girls' rights. Much of the presentation drew on findings and recommendations from Plan International's 2009 *Because I am a Girl* report which focused on girls in the global economy.



Ms. Emily Lundell of Plan International (right)

She said that economic opportunities and decent work are needed for the cohort of 500 million adolescent girls and young women who are poised to play a critical economic role in the households, communities and labour markets of their countries. Women reportedly re-invested more of their income in their families, compared to men. Investment in girls' economic empowerment should be at the heart of plans for inclusive cities and the poverty reduction agenda, she said. Furthermore, girls needed a range of assets and capabilities at specific stages throughout their lifecycle in order to become economically empowered, aiding in the reduction of special and opportunity divides in cities.

Ms. Lundell mentioned four pillars for empowering girls in global urban economies: 1) building the foundations for girls' economic future in the early years; 2) assuring girls have time and access to space to develop their networks and skills; 3) equipping girls with economic tools and skills during adolescence; and 4) ensuring that markets and business opportunities work for young women.

She said that development programmes need to address the unpaid care work undertaken by girls and women as a core development issue. For example, investing in labour-saving infrastructure reduces time and work burdens. She also recommended investment in girls' education and the creation of safe spaces for girls so that they could develop self-confidence and build communication skills and social networks. Ensuring that inheritance, land and property laws treat girls fairly would also give them greater financial security. She stated that support to young women as entrepreneurs and expanding access to credit and savings, including microfinance programmes, would help expand economic opportunities for young women. Towards the end of her presentation, she recommended that young women should be educated about their economic and social rights.

## 25. PLENARY DISCUSSIONS ON THE PRESENTATIONS

After the three presentations on emerging issues on Gender and Sustainable Urbanization were completed, an open and participatory session enabled participants to ask questions and seek clarification from the panellists, while also sharing their own experiences. Emerging issues included the following:



Participants in the Gender Equality Action Assembly

- There should be more exploration of ways and means to create or enhance partnership between planners and grassroots communities.
- Women's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation is vital, and the development community must take up the challenge on how women's involvement can be promoted in influencing policies and actions.
- In empowering girls, there should be consideration of quantitative measures and also of the quality of opportunities being provided or supported.
- There is an urgent need for the United Nations to consider supporting and setting up model institutions and targeted interventions for girls.
- Public bodies should improve gender mainstreaming and climate change initiatives, which were noted to be more effective at local levels.

This session was followed by dialogues with policy makers. These provided an opportunity for practitioners and grassroots women to interact with policy makers on what works and on the challenges of bridging the urban gender divide.

## G. DIALOGUES WITH POLICY MAKERS

26. The Gender Equality Action Assembly hosted three simultaneous dialogues with policy makers. These were panel discussions with ministers, parliamentarians, mayors and gender or urban planning experts. Each dialogue session was guided by a set of questions on trends, strategies and policies for gender equality and sustainable urbanization. Panellists responded with examples from country-specific interventions and experiences and answered questions from participants.

Ms. Silvia Ordonez, Executive Director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP), a non-governmental organization in the Philippines, gave a brief introduction to the three dialogue themes: 1) Land and housing rights; 2) Making Cities Work for Women: Access to Basic Services and 3) Economic Empowerment of Women in Cities.

As with the workshops on Day 1, the outcomes of each Dialogue on Day 2 were reported back to all participants after the Plenary reconvened. This report includes the summaries of emerging themes from the dialogues at the end of each dialogue entry.

**Rapporteur for dialogue feedback session:** Mr. Yusto Muchuruza, Executive Director, Kagera Development and Credit Revolving Fund, Tanzania

## **27. DIALOGUE 1: LAND AND HOUSING RIGHTS**

**Moderator:** Mr. Mohamed El-Sioufi, Head, Shelter Branch, UN-HABITAT

### **Panellists:**

Ms. Nancy Boxill, Commissioner, Fulton County, United States of America

Mr. Siraj Sait, Senior Lecturer, University of East London, United Kingdom

Ms. Patricia Chaves, Director, Espacio Feminista, Brazil

Mr. João da Costa Bezerra Filho, Mayor of Recife, Brazil

Ms. Tubwita Grace Bagaya, Member of Parliament; Chair of the parliamentary group on land, Uganda

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Saskia Ruijsink, Urban Planning and Policy Specialist, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, the Netherlands

The purpose of Dialogue 1 was to discuss and debate how policy makers can contribute towards addressing gender inequalities and ensure land and housing rights for women.

Mr. El-Sioufi described the actualization of women's rights to land and housing as one of the more difficult challenges facing the world today, yet equal property rights for women and men are fundamental to social and economic gender equality. Women often face discrimination in formal, informal and customary systems of land tenure and access to land is generally gained through male relatives. In a number of countries, many women are forced to move from their rural homes to informal settlements in the city. He said women often exercise only subordinate land rights which are vulnerable to breakdowns in relationships, divorce and to the changing priorities of male land owners.

Mr. Sait spoke about the importance and the challenges of public-private partnerships to improve living conditions for the urban poor and to advance women's access to and ownership of land and housing. He explained that private-sector partnerships can be controversial since the private sector is profit-oriented while communities and the public sector have a social development objective.



From left to right: Ms. Patricia Chaves of Espacio Feminista, Mr. Mohammed El-Sioufi of UN-HABITAT and Mayor João da Costa Bezerra Filho of Recife

He also said that partnerships are valuable, but the processes can be difficult and time consuming. He pointed out that academics can contribute through analysis by showing how issues relate to one another. In addressing a question about laws, cultures and traditions that impede women's access to land, he said that discrimination is also related to religion, but land administration programmes can also find ways to improve the position of women by building on specific elements of the religion. He mentioned opportunities to achieve this in Muslim societies.



Panelists discussed and debated a set of fixed questions during the policy dialogue.

Ms. Boxill spoke about public-private partnerships in the United States and how these have helped women and the urban poor to acquire housing or to experience improvements to deprived or environmentally degraded neighbourhoods. For example, under the Community Reinvestment Act, banks receive tax incentives for investing in low-income housing projects. Community Development Corporations have also played a key role in housing low-income residents. Their development plans are based on assessments of local housing needs. She added that land bank authorities can also acquire land that is abandoned and sell it at a low rate to non-profit organizations committed to building social housing.

Ms. Chaves explained how the grassroots women's organization she represents, Espacio Feminista, was able to form partnerships with politicians, professionals, academics and other grassroots women to conduct a gender evaluation of land and housing laws, policies and practices in the Brazilian municipality of Recife. Espacio Feminista worked on the piloting of the gender evaluation criteria as part of a partnership project coordinated by the Global Land Tool Network and facilitated by the Huairou Commission. She emphasized that gender-responsive land and housing policies are important for minimising the mismatch between supply and demand for housing. She mentioned Brazil's State of the City and affirmative action programmes as important for protecting the land and housing rights of poor women, especially with high competition for housing in urban areas.

Mayor Bezerra Filho said that societies of today are complicated and governments have a responsibility to bring partners together to reduce discrimination, improve housing conditions and promote access to land. He said that Recife has a local housing policy and hundreds of thousands of houses have been built, but this is not enough to solve all the issues. In cities, there is spatial segregation based on race and high degrees of inequality and discrimination, especially in bigger cities. He said that women are often the most vulnerable and suffer from violence. He stated that this is related to culture and to inadequate national and local policies for education, health, economic empowerment and participation in decision making.

Ms. Bagaya said the successful formulation of gender responsive and pro-poor land and housing policies requires community consultation and analysis. She said that women need to be involved in the formulation of laws and that women's representation in parliament helps to ensure that the needs of women are considered. She stressed the importance of education on ensuring that women's rights to land are protected. For example, she said that in Uganda, women and men have equal rights to ownership of land, and before a married man or woman gets a mortgage, he or she needs to have consent by the partner. However, if people are not educated, they do not understand the law, and women's rights can be undermined by compliance to discriminatory customs and traditions.

In open floor discussions, members of the audience highlighted the underrepresentation of women in decision making and the need to consider whether there is a need for new laws to address this, or whether countries need to make existing laws on gender-equitable representation more effective. A point was made that in Brazil, four per cent of investment in urban development plans is set aside for slum improvement, and participation of women plays a key role in this.

On the subject of public-private sector partnerships, a comment from the audience was that the private sector can bring money and expertise to the table while the government can bring their political power to the table. However, the role of the grassroots should also be acknowledged because they bring the needs of the community to the table. It was also suggested that in South Africa, public-private partnerships are promoted by legislation; for example, when developers are legally required to invest in communities when they develop certain projects. Another comment was that women are at the heart of housing issues, and need to work both with the public and with the private sector.

In reporting to the Plenary, Ms. Ruijsink's summary included the following as the dialogue's main emerging themes on women's land and housing rights:

- a) Accelerate the implementation of good laws and policies on equitable access to land and housing for women and men that are already enacted by many countries.
- b) Women are very strong agents of change, not merely recipients of development. Their skills should be utilized to facilitate change on gender equality in access and ownership of land and housing.
- c) Governments cannot and should not do everything by themselves. Partnerships are at the heart of realizing change. Governments are allies and not enemies of communities and the private sector. Partnerships with diverse stakeholders should be formed with for implementation of policies, knowledge development and information sharing.
- d) Public-private partnerships to promote pro-poor and gender-responsive use and development of land and housing can be important, but they should be guided by clear policies and agreements between all parties.
- e) Comprehensive approaches are needed to reduce discrimination in cities—affected for example by gender, race and social status. Policies, governance and cultural considerations need to be addressed in land and housing initiatives.

## 28. DIALOGUE 2: MAKING CITIES WORK FOR WOMEN: ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

**Moderator:** Ms. Amaryllis T. Torres, Commissioner, Academe Philippines Commission of Women

**Panellists:**

Ms. Eun-hee Cho, Assistant Mayor, Women and Family Affairs, Seoul Metropolitan Government, South Korea

Ms. Charlotte Thibault, President, Conseil des Montréalaises, Canada

Ms. Francine Senécal, President, Metropolis Women International Network, Canada

**Rapporteur:** Mr. Bernhard Barth, Human Settlements Officer, UN-HABITAT



From left to right: Ms. Charlotte Thibault, Ms. Amaryllis T. Torres, Assistant Mayor Eun-hee Cho and Ms. Francine Senécal

Dialogue 2 featured discussions on the actions governments need to take to reduce gender inequality through the provision of better urban services for women. There was emphasis on strengthening cooperation between national and local governments and the relationship between better urban services and improvements to urban safety and economic opportunities.

Ms. Torres introduced the dialogue and briefly informed the session participants of the need to develop recommendations for improved basic services, focussing on housing, water and sanitation and livelihoods for women in urban areas. Without a gendered approach to basic services, sustainable urbanization and gender equality was not possible in cities.

Ms. Senécal stressed that women needed to be involved in activities and policy making on the ground and that successful implementation provided the best entry point for replication. She said the objective should be to make cities friendly for all citizens and focusing only on one aspect—whether it was women, children or older people—could be misleading. She emphasized the importance of gender budgeting and the sharing of successes.

Ms. Cho gave examples of gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming in Seoul. She said that in South Korea, the national government and central policy supported a local consultation process with 40,000 women experts to develop a comprehensive programme for mainstreaming gender in a wide range of programmes. In addition, the 25 autonomous districts also developed mechanisms to set up women-friendly administration.

Ms. Thibault emphasized the importance of training women in grassroots organizations to be involved in decision making and the importance of gender analysis at the city level; without gender analysis the city does not know the full needs of its citizens. She added that budgeting can only start after training. She also spoke about Montreal's Gender Equality Action Plan and the related studies on transport, housing and women working in the city.

The speakers acknowledged that a country's level of devolution of powers affected the size of the gap between national and local gender policy, and also the provision of services, but there was a consensus that local government could spearhead innovative initiatives leading to national policy development. Participants pointed out that national and local level collaboration already took place. Whilst local government on provincial and municipal levels were often left to implement national policy, meaningful collaboration between the tiers of government could improve the lives of women and men. Other speakers and participants supported the importance of gender budgeting for developing adequate services for women and men.

The debate on local service provision turned to the financial and economic crisis, how it affected men and women differently and, subsequently, how different approaches were needed to help women and men deal with the long-term impact. Ms. Cho said that in Korea, many women between aged 30 and 50 wanted part-time jobs, which were, however, less secure. She explained that the Happy Mom Project was developed to provide secure and well paid jobs that are responsive to the needs of women, as well as to protect women, particularly in times of economic downturn.



A participant poses a question to the panel.

Ms. Thibault explained that in Montreal, transportation emerged as a key issue for poorer women in the studies commissioned under the city's gender equality action plan. Cheaper public transport catering for the needs of women was needed to ensure that women could look beyond their neighbourhood for work. Montreal is also looking at ways to provide more affordable and decent housing, looking particularly at the needs of migrants and women. She said efforts are also being undertaken to provide better quality, low cost day care. She explained that the combination of such services could help women to find jobs more easily and to retain employment even during a downturn.

The ensuing discussions emphasized that addressing violence against women is as an integral part of achieving sustainable urban development. While women's shelters for emergency housing were important, they needed to be supplemented by long-term support, including vocational training for women. For example, in Montreal, training on gender-based violence is provided for different stakeholders including police and judges. The prevention of violence needed to be linked to service provision, including street lighting, ensuring that women were safe when they fetched water or when they used public toilets. Examples from Brazil and the Lake Victoria Region in East Africa were provided where service provision, including slum upgrading and improvements in safety were successfully combined.

Ms. Torres reported the emerging themes from Dialogue 2 to the Plenary as follows:

- a) Collaboration between central, regional and municipal governments should be strengthened to improve urban services for women and men equitably. While local governments are key to implementing national policies, local governments can also work to influence national policies.
- b) Cities should use gender analysis of urban services as a first step to plan what actions should be taken. This should be sensitive to the diversity of women's needs, which can differ due to factors such as age. Gender budgeting and capacity building of women's organizations should follow.



- c) Cities should link efforts to prevent violence against women with improved urban service provision that ensures women's safety, such as improved safety on public transportation and measures to make streets, public toilets and other public spaces safer.
- d) Urban services should include measures to support the economic empowerment of women. This includes programmes that help businesses led by women and promote decent jobs for them, as well as vocational training, childcare and help to working mothers.
- e) Cities and national governments should increase representation of women in parliament, city halls and among urban planners and managers to develop urban services that are more gender-responsive.

## 29. DIALOGUE 3: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN CITIES

**Moderator:** Ms. Alison Brown, Course Director, School of Regional Planning, Cardiff University; Researcher, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), United Kingdom

### Panellists:

Ms. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, State Minister of Women and Children's Affairs, Bangladesh

Ms. Mary Chinery-Hesse, Vice-Chair, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana; Former Deputy-Director General, International Labour Organization

Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Former Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

**Rapporteur:** Ms. Lorna Juliet Amutojo, Advocate AA Legal Consultants & Co. Advocates and Executive Trustee Uganda Women's Land Access Trust

Dialogue 3 explored how policy makers can help to empower women economically through access to decent work, enterprise development, ownership of land and housing, and access to financial resources for savings and credit. Panellists discussed the high proportion of women working in the informal sector, their lower levels of pay and recommendations for strengthening the inclusion of gender perspectives in economic policies and all areas of governance.

Ms. Shirin noted the need to adapt a holistic and rights-based approach to address human rights challenges affecting women, such as access to land, housing and property rights, economic empowerment and employment. She emphasized the need to break traditional mind sets, using



From left to right: Ms. Mary Chinery-Hesse, Vice-Chair, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana; Ms. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, State Minister of Women and Children's Affairs, Bangladesh; Ms. Alison Brown, Course Director, School of Regional Planning, Cardiff University

concrete measures to ensure women have an adequate standard of housing, access to social services and legal empowerment. She emphasized that economic empowerment forms the basis of achieving women's empowerment—including women's economic rights, rights to employment and equal opportunities, access to and control of resources, and equal rights to inheritance and property rights.

Deprivation, she noted, leads to a lack of equal bargaining power for women. She cited the example of South Asia, where in spite of women's crucial role in government interventions in gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, and programmes for women in governance and leadership, women continue to be discriminated against, denied their rights and form the majority of the disadvantaged. She emphasized that enacting laws gradually helps to eliminate discrimination effectively. Drawing on the experience of Bangladesh, she recommended bringing women into mainstream macro economic reforms. She emphasized the role of good democratic governance and capacity-building of institutions to ensure women have control of resources and to encourage and facilitate women's participation in decision making.

Ms. Chinery-Hesse highlighted the need to promote international labour standards, with an emphasis on decent work—not just jobs, but occupations that respect the dignity of women. She said a country's development is largely dependent on the contingent of its human resources, yet significant improvements are needed to improve conditions for women both in the formal and informal sectors, in terms of working conditions, pay and social security. She spoke of the International Labour Organization's decent work agenda, and the particular vulnerabilities of groups in cities, such as young girls moving to urban centres, migrants and woman-headed households.

She said the low number of women in decision making makes it difficult for women to influence policies, laws and government actions on liberalization of economies, which, in some places, has led to the privatization of water and sanitation and other public services, to the detriment of women. She also noted the challenge for women to innovate different ways of socializing girls, and working with mothers to change the way in which girls perceive their future, encompassing their social, economic and political roles.

Ms. Tallawy spoke of rural-urban linkages, the need to understand problems of rural women. She said some of the major problems of urbanization include the subsequent neglect of rural areas, which have resulted in the lack of opportunities, loss of identity and underdevelopment in rural areas. As an example, she said that in Egypt, villages are now losing their productivity due to migration to urban areas. She called for governments to develop policies and allocate budgets that improve rural areas, within the context of sustainable urbanization. She also noted the need to educate urban planners on gender and urbanization, since many have poor knowledge of women's issues.

She also highlighted the need for knowledge and understanding, urging countries to adapt the practical and good practices that have worked—for example in formalizing labour for women. She advised developing countries to borrow a leaf from Europe and developed countries, which, she said, do not suffer from “the informal sector syndrome,” while women in developing countries are overrepresented in the informal sector. She said ministries of finance should make budgetary allocations to address these issues. Ms. Tallawy stated there was a slump in progress on women's economic empowerment in certain regions, associated with religious fundamentalism and reactions to capitalism and globalization, and restricting efforts to advance the rights of women. She called for advocacy efforts involving the media, with special attention to building support and awareness for gender equality among young people and urban dwellers.

In discussing women's economic empowerment, dialogue panellists and participants highlighted a need to adopt a holistic approach to gender issues. They emphasized a need to institutionalize gender awareness across all government departments and that focusing on only one department alone would not be sufficient. They also spoke of the need to involve grassroots groups in targeted government interventions on improving the economic status and participation of women in cities.



Open floor discussions on Dialogue 3: Economic Empowerment of Women in Cities

In reporting back to the Plenary, Ms. Amutojo's summary included the following points as priority recommendations on women's economic empowerment in cities:

- a) Promote and facilitate access to affordable housing loans to women to improve their living conditions, decrease the number of destitute women and protect them from eviction.
- b) Enhance women's access to banking services and finances as well as establish linkages and networks for women in international markets to promote trade.
- c) Integrate international labour standards and promote decent work, with emphasis on making it more than a job but work that enhances women's social and economic security and dignity.
- d) Adopt best practices on improving women's access to land and housing and advocate for central governments to implement national plans that are gender-inclusive.
- e) Share and replicate the concept of women land access trusts, which empower the urban poor and women entrepreneurs through land and housing ownership and business development.

### **30. REFLECTIONS FROM THE DIALOGUES WITH POLICY MAKERS**

After the three groups in the Dialogues reconvened and reported on the emerging themes for the Plenary, participants had the opportunity to share their reflections. Many gave specific examples from their own cities of good practices. The following list summarizes their main points.

- a) The role of urban services on women's economic contributions:
  - If women have better urban services, such as public transport, they can contribute more to local economies and benefit more from them: they can look for jobs further from home, they can possibly work longer and they can afford to spend more or hire more people;
- b) Data on land and housing for women:
  - There is a shortage of sex-disaggregated data and statistics about housing and land ownership.
  - Women often have little formal or informal access to land.
  - Sex-disaggregated data should be made available to academics and policy makers, but also for more general reference by advocates.

c) Partnerships and innovation for gender-inclusive cities:

- Art and creative disciplines can be used to improve the status of women and promote gender-inclusive cities.
- More partnerships between local governments and civil society are needed.
- For advocacy, women need to know more about innovative tools in marketing, such as polling, web and mobile-based applications, but their reliability needs to be taken into account.
- Making cities more gender-responsive is not only a question for urban planners, but a political process.
- The use of role playing in training and advocacy, for example in gender training on land and housing issues, can help participants to understand different roles and perspectives.

### **31. SUGGESTED THEMES FOR FUTURE EXPLORATION:**

Participants suggested more deliberation on the following issues in the future:

- a) Methods to strengthen joint work between grassroots women and urban planners;
- b) Establishment of a model school of planning that is grassroots centred and scholarships for grassroots women to attend university programmes in urban planning; case studies presented at the Gender Equality Action Assembly in a model school of planning;
- c) Whether it is better to build new cities or work with the existing layout of the city;
- d) Integrating indigenous and other equality issues into gender mainstreaming;
- e) Equality impact assessments;
- f) Making gender and other equality components a formal requirement in local urban planning;
- g) Using informal networking opportunities at the World Urban Forum to seek allies for promoting gender equality in cities and explore future partnerships;
- h) Engaging boys and girls with local decision makers to examine urban safety issues, using both male and female facilitators.

## **H. WAY FORWARD: FROM RIO TO WUF6—ACTIONS BY PARTNERS TO IMPLEMENT THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN**

**Chair:** Ms. Silvia Ordonez, Executive Director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP), Philippines

32. Ms. Ordonez explained that the aim of the session was for partners to agree on actions they can take before the sixth World Urban Forum (WUF6) in 2012 to implement the Gender Equality Action Plan together with UN-HABITAT. She asked participants of the Gender Equality Action Assembly to split up into six groups to discuss priority areas of action, according to their areas of expertise. The six groupings were:

- i) Non-governmental organizations;
- ii) Grassroots organizations;
- iii) Architects and planners;
- iv) Training institutions;
- v) Local and national government officials;
- vi) Policy advisors.



Ms. Silvia Ordonez, Executive Director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP)

### **33. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)**

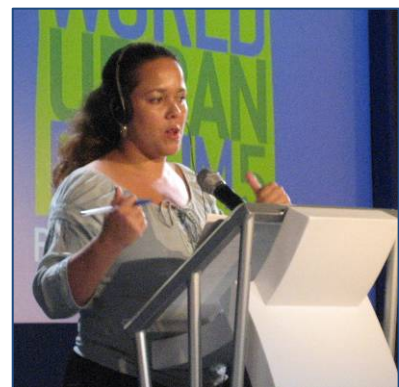
The group consisting of representatives from non-governmental organizations agreed on the following actions they will take to further progress in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP):

- Increase efforts to disseminate and promote the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) among non-governmental organizations, not only to current partners, but other grassroots groups;
- Plan follow up mechanisms and meetings;
- Decide on milestones;
- Feed current work into the GEAP framework and push forth for changes at the national level;
- Encourage more debate about gender equality.

### **34. GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS**

The grassroots organizations represented at the Gender Assembly agreed on the following actions to take:

- Consider holding regional meetings for grassroots women to help them to understand the GEAP and help with its implementation;
- Look for funds for grassroots women's projects in the implementation of GEAP;
- Recommend that 50 per cent of funds towards the GEAP should support participation by grassroots women;
- Find markets for the products of grassroots women;
- Recommend to policy makers the need to link rural and urban development.



Grassroots women emphasized the importance of their participation in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan.

### **35. ARCHITECTS AND URBAN PLANNERS**

In reporting on their proposed actions in further implementation of the GEAP, the group listed the following actions:

- Map out a clear mandate and introduce the GEAP to different social groups;
- Train and build capacity on areas within the GEAP;
- Prioritize actions;
- Encourage the collaboration of urban planners, architects and other groups, such as grassroots organizations;
- Encourage mayors to disseminate the GEAP and encourage decentralization of its implementation.

### **36. TRAINING INSTITUTIONS**

The group representing training institutions in the session named the following as its priority actions:

- Ensure that urban planners and other people understand the GEAP and gender issues, encompassing regional collaboration across different groups and different disciplines;
- Monitor development and follow-up of the GEAP to make sure that progress has been made and reported;

- Train women of all ages on what it means to be a woman;
- Develop good statistics to support advocacy and knowledge sharing on gender equality in urban areas;
- Promote two key messages: organizations at all levels should encourage women's participation in urban life; women should also all work together to advance the status of women.

### **37. LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

The group for local and national government officials recommended the following actions:

- Build cooperation between developed and developing countries on the implementation of the GEAP and increase cooperation within and outside individual countries with UN-HABITAT and donors;
- Promote awareness of gender equality and the implementation of the GEAP, with participation from district and city governments;
- Build the capacity of chiefs (and local leaders) to support gender equality and continue these efforts on a regular basis;
- Increase opportunities for women in politics;
- Ensure proper documentation of achievements within the Gender Equality Action Plan.

### **38. POLICY ADVISORS**

This group of policy advisors recommended the following actions:

- Explore how a network of policy makers can assist in the implementation of the GEAP;
- Maintain momentum in moving the GEAP forward;
- Ensure the voices of grassroots women are included in national and international agendas;
- Put forth ideas on changing ideas into action;
- Promote participation from governments.

## **H. CLOSING CEREMONY**

### **39. SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN UN-HABITAT AND THE SEOUL METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT**

The closing ceremony began with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between UN-HABITAT, represented by Mr. Antoine King, Director of the Programme Support Division, and the Seoul Metropolitan Government, represented by Ms. Eun-hee Cho, Assistant Mayor of Women and Family Affairs for Seoul. The agreement formalized



Ms. Eun-hee Cho, Assistant Mayor of Women and Family Affairs, Seoul (middle) and Mr. Antoine King, Director of UN-HABITAT's Programme Support Division

cooperation in the areas of gender mainstreaming and the promotion of urban safety and good governance, with an emphasis on women's participation in policy and decision-making.

#### **40. STATEMENT BY MR. ERIK BERG, SENIOR ADVISOR, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NORWAY**



Mr. Berg congratulated participants for their work during the Gender Assembly. He said that only a small percentage of foreign development aid goes into urban development and an even smaller share of that into gender issues, underscoring a need for more international donors to support work to promote gender equality initiatives in urban development. Using the example of Norway, he said women's participation in economic activities is important to the economy of countries, and that measures had been introduced to ensure public funds were used towards gender-sensitive activities. He emphasized the importance of pay equity for women and men and equal opportunities to education. In concluding, he highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Gender Assembly and other gender equality initiatives are inclusive of men and more donor countries.

#### **41. STATEMENT BY MS. NILCÉA FREIRE, MINISTER OF THE SPECIAL SECRETARIAT OF POLICIES FOR WOMEN, BRAZIL**

Ms. Freire stated that the theme of the Gender Equality Action Assembly was very important, and that Brazil's Special Secretariat of Policies for Women and gender units in local authorities were working towards the same goal of inclusion of gender initiatives in each and every government policy. Brazil's second and latest National Plan of Policies for Women has two chapters where urban spaces are discussed, covering topics such as the sustainable development of rural and urban areas, food safety, and land and tenure rights. She emphasized the consultative process with women in the development of the National Plan. In conclusion, she said the key to gender mainstreaming in cities is to listen to what women say, adding that it seems simple, but mayors and government authorities should pay attention to the needs of women in the provision of government services and the promotion of safer cities.



**42. STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR INGA BJÖRK-KLEVBY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UN-HABITAT**

Mrs. Björk-Klevby thanked the participants for joining UN-HABITAT to promote gender equality and empower women in cities around the world. While UN-HABITAT had shared with partners the agency's progress in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan, partners—ranging from grassroots women to academic institutions to local governments—had also inspired UN-HABITAT with their efforts. She said that the next edition of the *Gender Equality for Smarter Cities* report should go beyond UN-HABITAT's experiences and also capture the actions and challenges of partners in implementing the Gender Plan.



Furthermore, recommendations from partners would help give direction to UN-HABITAT and all institutions, local and global, on how to incorporate gender in every aspect of housing and urban development. In concluding, she asked all participants of the Assembly to take their actions forward in promoting gender equality as part of the new [World Urban Campaign](#) to be launched in the following week, during the fifth World Urban Forum. She then declared the Gender Equality Action Assembly closed.

**43.** The Gender Assembly ended with a musical performance by the Brazilian young women's percussion ensemble, Fina Batucada.

