

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)

ACC-15 - Report by Rachel Elizabeth Chardon

Since the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946, women have used the UN as a key advocacy space to advance **global policy on women's rights** and to improve the status of women in countries around the world. Women's groups gained a great deal of success in lobbying governments to adopt gender-sensitive policies at key women's conferences in Mexico City 1975; Copenhagen, 1980, Nairobi, 1985; Beijing, 1995; and other development conferences such as Rio, 1992 (environment), Cairo 1994 (human rights), and Copenhagen, 1995 (social development).

Today, women globally represent **more than half of the population living in poverty** and remain the poorest of the poor, **facing increasingly insecure employment and insufficient access** to land, food, water, fuel, training, technology, credit, social protection and public services. Because women make only 25% of the global income and own only 1% of the land, their labor is continually under-valued and under-counted in national statistics. In addition, trade and economic policies that impact their lives rarely consider their needs and actually reinforce gender inequities.

Every year the **Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN)** invites a group of women to participate in the annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW). **The UNCSW is an inter-governmental body that is an ongoing, functional commission** of the Economic and Social Council (**ECOSOC**). The UN Commission on the Status of Women has been and continues to be a key mobilizing point for Anglican women.

The women delegates come **from across the Anglican Communion**. Prior to attending the CSW, they are asked to carry out country-based studies on the priority theme that is set for the current year's CSW session and submit a summary of their research in a "country" report before arrival to New York.

The delegates are trained in the UN system: **its mandate, programs, procedures and governance structures**. They are also trained in **effective and targeted advocacy**. These advocacy skills are put to use when the delegates visit their respective missions. When the two-week session is completed, these women return to their homes energized and with skills and resources learned that they now can pass on.

The delegates are **unanimous** in stating that participation in CSW has been a life changing experience which has impacted their work as **animators in their communities** for the **empowerment of women**.