



IFUW Update – 1 February 2012

56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2012

The Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) will meet in New York from 27 February to 9 March. It will consider the priority theme of “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges”.



Education and rural girls & women

Education is a human right that is fundamental to the achievement of many other human rights. Equal access to education at all levels is also necessary to achieve equality between men and women.

In spite of achievements in providing access to universal primary education, insufficient progress and persistent educational inequalities remain, especially for girls in secondary education.

Rural women and girls face particular challenges in attaining full access to quality education. They include:

- wide-spread poverty;
- long distances between home and school;
- lack of safe school environments;
- shortage of qualified teaching personnel and equipment; and
- an absence of positive role models, due to persistent, high rates of illiteracy in adult rural women and an under-representation of female teachers in rural areas.



Significant progress in overcoming these types of challenges has been noted in countries that have an integrated approach that includes:

- abolishing school fees;
- improving financial incentives;
- improving sanitation facilities;
- recruiting female teachers; and
- reforming the curricula.

What can we do?

NFAs can contact the relevant Government Ministries in their countries and/or the National Government Delegates coming to New York, before they leave home for the CSW, to ask them to ensure that, within the context of discussions on rural women, policies and programmes are put in place to ensure that girls can enjoy full access to quality secondary education, and that the necessary financial resources for this are made available.

NFAs can also highlight these issues with the press at the national level and with other NGOs.

For advice on advocacy, you can read the [IFUW Advocacy Paper](#), written by Susan Russell, CIR, CFUW, in collaboration with Phyllis Scott.

IFUW at CSW

IFUW [submitted a written statement](#), co-signed by the Worldwide Organization for Women.

IFUW is involved in a number of parallel events. [Please visit the IFUW website for full details.](#)

Key UN Documents

- [E/CN.6/2012/1](#)
Annotated provisional agenda
- [E/CN.6/2012/3](#)
Report of the Secretary-General on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges
- [E/CN.6/2012/4](#)
Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions - Report of the Secretary-General
- [E/CN.6/2012/10](#)
Report of the Secretary-General on women's economic empowerment

Useful Links

- [Official CSW website](#)
Information on: organization of the session, themes, NGO participation and side events.
- [The NGO Committee on the Status of Women](#)
Information and dates for NGO events, parallel events, and the NGO CSW Forum

We look forward to hearing from our members so we can know how we can continue to move our message forward. If any NFAs have been involved in lobbying activities leading up to CSW, please share your news with us at updates@ifuw.org.