

CSW62 Multi-Stakeholder Forum, 25 January 2018
UN Women, 10-1 and 3-6

Panel 3: Ensuring access to healthcare and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to infrastructure, water and sanitation.

Susan O'Malley

Questions:

- What policies and programme measures have resulted in providing affordable and accessible healthcare services for rural women and girls?
- What are examples of national policies and partnerships that have ensured universal access to sexual and reproductive rights in rural areas?
- How can government and other actors work together to enhance rural infrastructure development and ensure rural women's and girls' access to safe and reliable water and sanitation?

H.E. Mr. Jouni Laaksonen, Deputy PR of Finland to UN

Dr. Isha Ray, Professor, U. of California, Berkeley

Susan O'Malley, Chair, NGO CSW/NY

Civil Society is essential to the implementation of the SDGs and the realization of the CSW62 Priority Theme "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls."

For it is rural women's groups when they are listened to, and NGOs that work with rural women, that are on the ground moving the agenda forward. I like to think that NGOs provide much of the expertise, energy, and conscience to the UN.

At CSW57 when Rural Women was the priority theme, there was no outcome document. Civil society, therefore, determined that this time we would educate ourselves about the concerns of rural women so that we could intervene more effectively in the process. About 80 members of NGO CSW/NY representing 50 organizations formed what we called the Zero Draft Subcommittee in September 2017 to learn from rural women what their concerns were and to develop a document with facts, recommendations linked to the SDGs, and best practices on these concerns. The co-facilitators of the Zero Draft Subcommittee are Winifred Doherty, Good Shepherd Sisters, and Jourdan Williams from Columbia University.

We began by reading the SG report, the UN Women's Concept Note and the Expert Group papers. Through a series of bimonthly meetings and international phone conferences, we put together a document with different groups of women taking the lead on researching different concerns of rural women. The document, entitled **Systemic Barriers, Sustainable Development and the Diversity of Rural Women and Girls**, has been sent to our list serve of 12,000 and to UN Women, the CSW62 Bureau, and to Gender Experts at UN Missions.

Currently each group is working on knowing the existing agreed language on their concern to strengthen our reading when the Zero Draft is released and for possible interventions.

Every year NGO CSW/NY organizes parallel events for the two weeks of CSW. This year we had about 500 applications with over 400 scheduled. In the area of access to healthcare and sexual and reproductive health and rights we have 19 events including Medical Women of Nigeria; maternal and paternal leave policies in Asia, Africa, Latin America; Concern Health that develops community health workers; World Federation of Mental Health, and the Nightingale Initiative for Global Health on childbirth. Addressing sexual and reproductive health are Women Deliver, Pathfinder International, Beyond Beijing Committee of Nepal, Forum for Reproductive Rights in Rural Communities, and the Caribbean Sisters in Unity that provides education on reproductive rights. In water and sanitation there are only two parallel events: the Salesian Fathers and the Ugandan Women's Network on Water.