



GLOBALHAWC

Helping to Advance Women and Children

Global HAWC Recommendations for NGO Consultation on the Future Role and Organization of the Commission on Population and Development

Global HAWC welcomes the opportunity to participate in this important consultation. We believe this process creates a real opportunity for the Commission to explore and adopt a new set of reasonable negotiation guidelines to facilitate more fair and transparent negotiations that are respectful of all Member States' views. In this regard we offer our responses to the following questions on CPD methods of work.

Question 1: Given that the Commission is the only intergovernmental forum focused on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in the United Nations, how can we improve its work to better assist Member States and the international community at large in advancing the ICPD agenda while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

GLOBAL HAWC RECOMMENDATION:

Background

The United Nations should serve as a model of integrity where UN Member States and UN agency officials exhibit the deepest respect for the views of every Member State and ensure the negotiation process is transparent, fair and impartial. Unfortunately, the process of negotiating social policies at the UN, especially at CPD, has often spun out of control, and as a result, can be blatantly biased in favor of the views of States with large delegations and budgets.

The following harmful tactics have impeded fair and transparent negotiations in past CPD sessions:

- Bullying and harassment of UN delegates, making unfair claims and threatening to get their respective capitals to pull them off the negotiations if they did not agree to highly controversial provisions;
- Chairs/Facilitators have deliberately ignored redlines expressed by States and have used deceptive and manipulative tactics to coerce delegations into accepting them;
- Chairs/Facilitators have deliberately left the most controversial provisions until the last day of the Commission meetings resulting in rushed negotiations that continue into the

wee hours of the morning. This is a monumental disadvantage to small delegations that oppose controversial provisions;

- Due to the late hour of the negotiations, often even on the last day, translators have not been available—a problem characterized by previous Chairs as a mere “inconvenience,” even when occurring at critical junctures in negotiations or when documents are being finalized or adopted with contested provisions remaining intact.

Since in recent years, the Commission on Population and Development has failed to produce a negotiated outcome document more often than not, we would suggest adopting some helpful procedures that can serve to eliminate elements that have contributed to disagreements among states resulting in the rejection of past CPD outcome documents.

Indeed, the upcoming CPD session represents a window of opportunity where negotiation parameters can be reformed to create a respectful, fair environment for all delegations, thus maximizing the possibility this year for a successful consensus outcome document that all nations can be proud to support.

Suggested Negotiation Guidelines to Facilitate Fairness and Transparency for CPD Proceedings

Member States, the Chair, Facilitators and others involved in the negotiation process could agree to the following:

1. All official negotiations will be conducted in a full, open and transparent manner in the full, open view of all Member States. If smaller groups are created to work on sub-issues, their work will be reported to the full group with ample time (24 hours) for other States to consider and respond to what may have been worked out in smaller groups.
2. At no time should a Member State be required to accept suggestions from a smaller group simply because it did not participate in a smaller group discussion. When multiple discussion groups are held simultaneously, nations with smaller delegations are forced to pick and choose the topics to which they can contribute, thus putting them at an unfair disadvantage.
3. No text shall be presented for adoption unless distributed electronically to members of the Commission at least 48 hours before its consideration to allow adequate time for Member States to consult with their capitals.
4. At no time will Member States be asked if they would be willing to continue negotiations without translation. This puts Member States in the position of appearing weak or inflexible if they do not agree to continue without translation. Moreover, the right of Member States

to fully understand, through adequate translation, the issues being negotiated is fundamental to the process.

5. If at any time, the quality of translation is subpar, to the extent that a State could not grasp the full meaning of the communication, they can call for a point of order requesting time to receive the necessary clarifications vital to their full participation in negotiations.
6. If any Member State rejects a controversial provision either in a zero draft or offered as a proposal by another state, a period of 48 hours will be given for Member States to resolve differences and come to consensus or to a compromise. If no compromise is reached, the controversial provisions shall be permanently deleted from the document by the facilitator.
7. No Member State, UN agency or UN officer shall make threatening statements or communications to UN negotiators, ambassadors, or government entities within a Member State government with regard to positions taken by delegates in UN negotiations.
8. Except in cases of extreme emergency or in times of war, no UN negotiations (either formal or informal) will continue past 10:00 p.m. or extend for more than 10 hours in one 24-hour period of time.

Question 2: Population and development issues and trends, including drivers and impacts, have important implications for the further implementation of the Programme of Action and the achievement of the SDGs. What role can the Commission play in guiding Member States and the international community in responding to these issues and trends?

GLOBAL HAWC RECOMMENDATION:

The adoption before the start of the Commission of just and fair parameters for negotiations as outlined above would go a long way toward the elimination of the constant controversies and arguments around contested language making for the better use of the negotiators' time and allowing for greater focus on the most pressing issues that countries have agreed upon in the SDG's.

Question 3: In order to address the above questions and issues, would it be desirable or feasible for the Commission to adjust its methods of work (organizational aspects, substantive elements, outcome)? If so, could the practices and experiences of other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) provide any guidance?

GLOBAL HAWC RECOMMENDATION: It is our position that the working methods of the Commission do not need substantial change if they are followed closely by the Commission. However, we take a strong position on the need for the CPD to bring about fairer negotiation practices and greater respect for each Member State within the negotiation process as we have outlined above in our suggested negotiation parameters.

We recommend that all references to outcomes of regional review conferences be kept to the regional areas for which they were intended as they do not apply to all Member States, and we strongly recommend that all CPD outcome documents be fully negotiated and free from references to documents that have not been negotiated by Commission members.

Further, Global HAWC believes it would not be advisable to bring other ECOSOC subsidiary bodies into the CPD process as this could undermine the purpose of having a specialized Commission. Doing so could also divert and further fragment the CPD process as other ECOSOC bodies are likely to encourage the Commission to put emphasis on their own particular areas of focus.