

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women – 57th session 852/ 784 735

Oral Statement, March 14, 2013

Read by Linda MacDonald on behalf of the
Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) and National Council of Women
Canada (NCWC)

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. Many member states have reported progress in their efforts to end violence against women and girls, including a good number that have developed national action plans or strategies. However, many of these plans and strategies are not comprehensive or coordinated and are lacking sufficient human and financial resources to ensure their success. Still, there are several Member States who have yet to develop comprehensive and holistic national action plans, including our own country, Canada.

It is clear from what we have heard during this session, that much more must be done in all Member States to strengthen and enforce legal frameworks, improve access to justice, expand the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and most importantly enhance prevention efforts by addressing poverty, gender discrimination and inequality. Therefore, we wish to express our support for the recommendations presented in the Secretary-General's reports on *The Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls* and *Multisectoral Services and Responses for Women and Girls Subjected to Violence*. In particular, we wish to join in calling on all Member States to adopt and implement coordinated, comprehensive, and adequately resourced, multi-sectoral national action plans as means of preventing and responding to the continuum of violence against women and girls. In addition to the recommendations found in the Secretary General's reports, we urge member states to include:

- Distinct strategies to prevent and respond to **all forms of violence**, including torture by non-state actors and enforced prostitution, which are not specifically mentioned in the Secretary General's reports;
- Access to mental health programming and services for survivors and perpetrators of violence;
- Access to safe, accessible and affordable housing to ensure that women and girls are better able to avoid and escape violent living situations;
- Among the strategies to prevent and address violence against women in disproportionately affected communities, include women/persons who are lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual and/or queer. The Secretary General's reports do not specifically mention this community.

- Ratification and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as part of the strategies to end violence against Indigenous women. In Canada, a disproportionate number of Indigenous women and girls have suffered violence, gone missing, or been murdered over the past three decades. Much of this violence is a reflection of the underlying conditions of poverty, racism and colonial history; the full implementation of the UNDRIP is an integral part of the solution.

Finally, we further urge Member States to:

- Make the elimination of violence against women a priority for international development programming and assistance, including contributing to the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women; and
- Implement and provide action plans for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions on women, peace and security in conflict-affected settings.

In closing we commend Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon for bringing together governments, the UN system and key stakeholders to address violence against women and girls through the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign. The launch of the Secretary-General's 2009 database on violence against women has helped Member States and civil society advocates to share information, assess and respond to the global epidemic of violence against women and girls. We urge the United Nations will continue to play a leadership role through this important campaign and other initiatives beyond 2015.