

Notes on Meetings
UN Commission on the Status of Women and
Various UN and NGO organized sub meetings
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The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established in 1956. The meetings this year were the fifty-second meeting of the commission. In 1975 the UN instigated the launching of the international movement for women's rights with the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City where a plan for action was prepared. This was followed by three subsequent world conferences – Copenhagen (1980 – program for action), Nairobi (1985 - forward-looking strategies), Beijing (1995 – platform for action). The Beijing Platform for Action specified twelve critical areas of concern whose solutions were necessary for women's advancement. The areas were:

- Women and poverty
- Women and health
- Women and armed conflict
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl child
- Education and training of women
- Violence against women
- Women and the economy

The annual meetings of the UN CSW have focused on one of these areas or a related theme. The theme for the 2008 CSW was “Financing for Success and Security”. Thus the focus of the final statement would be on this theme. Each year the Commission also revisits themes from previous years. This discussion occurs through sessions organized by various UN and governmental organizations and by many Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) addressing women's issues. During this meeting there were seminars and sessions particularly addressed to the last five areas – women and the environment, the girl child, education and training of women, violence against women, and women and the economy.

Of particular interest to the ISI Committee on Women in Statistics was a joint meeting between the UN CSW and the UN Statistics Commission addressing progress on indicators of violence against women. At a previous joint meeting of the two commissions in 2007, participants had noted the difficulty of collecting data on various forms of violence against women at the national level through comprehensive surveys. To further this work several international organizations commissioned a meeting of experts in Geneva in October of 2007 to propose a set of international indicators to measure violence against women. The linked document provides the indicators: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/issues%20paperVAW_final.pdf. The 2008 joint meeting reported on the recommendations of the expert group. That included

indicators relating to physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and harmful practices (e.g. female genital mutilation, early marriage). The full report is at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/indicatorsVAW_EGM-report.pdf .

Subsequent to that meeting the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN sponsored a seminar through the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UN DAW) entitled “Getting the facts to make the change: how violence against women surveys lead to change”, where a report was provided on an international survey (International Violence Survey) that was conducted in 2003 in 11 countries – Philippines, Greece, Denmark, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Australia, Poland, Switzerland, Mozambique. Representatives from Finland and Canada provided context for the effort that led to the survey. Questions on the survey addressed issues of both physical and sexual violence. There are numerous methodological issues to be addressed in multi-country research; these are compounded by the difficulties in collecting data on sensitive topics as this is. The methodological issues include: culture, political, subjectivity, translation, differences in mode of interviewing, and response related issues.

The results of the survey have recently being issued in a book published by Springer (). Some countries who would likely be interested in participating in a comparative survey already have there own surveys that incorporate information on violence against women. In particular, these include both Canada and Finland – two countries very involved in the design of this international survey, as well as the U.S. and Australia. Sansao Buque (Mozambique) and Monserrat Sagat (Costa Rico) reported on how useful the results of the survey have been in establishing programs and policies in their countries. This was followed by questions and comments from the audience. The ISI Committee on Women in Statistics will be following up on this topic.