Commission on the Status of Women

The sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 12 to 23 March 2018. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all regions of the world are welcome to attend the session.

The Priority Theme for the 62nd sessions is Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

NIWEP’s member Northern Ireland Rural Women’s Network (NIRWN) with its expertise on women and girls in rural areas will be attending. Preparations have begun by NIRWN and includes drafting the statement to the Secretary General of the UN, sharing information with the UK CSW Alliance Group and attending meetings with government officials. Once at CSW, NIRWN will have the opportunity to participate in and deliver side events relating to the theme – the bringing the voices of women from NI to the table. If any organisation would like to consider attending CSW Contact niwep@btconnect.com

Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)

OECD aims to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. In 2013 and 2015 OECD made gender recommendations as guidance on how to advance gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life. In its new publication The Pursuit of Gender Equality – An Uphill Battle OECD discusses recent developments in these areas. Topics include violence against women, gender budgeting, the unequal sharing of unpaid work, labour market outcomes and migration. The book presents a range of indicators illustrating gender gaps. It also discusses recent policy initiatives, such as pay transparency measures to reduce gender wage gaps and policy reform aimed at fathers taking parental leave. Overall, progress has been slow and there is a strong need for further policy action to close gender gaps in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life.

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Almost 22 years have passed since the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, marking a turning point for women’s rights activists around the world. For many, the approved Declaration and Platform for Action represented a moment of vindication for the rights, living experiences, and human dignity of women everywhere.

But the promises made in Beijing regarding human rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls were not fulfilled, and it is in the socioeconomic field where this deficit strikes one of its hardest blows. The economic system does not take into consideration the disadvantages faced every day by women, especially by those from the most vulnerable sections of society, in fact, it rather deepens existing inequalities and power disparities.

Austerity measures taken against vital services—such as childcare, transportation, health, education, and other social services—affect women in particular, exacerbating the differences imposed by a gendered division of labour and relegating women’s role in the formal economy.

In the study “Closing the Gender Gap: Advancing Equality through International Institutions,” UN experts Barbara Adams and Karen Judd offer an informed and detailed analysis of the present and future of women’s economic empowerment.