

## 56<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN** is holding its fifty-sixth session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from Monday, 27 February to Friday, 9 March 2012. Established in 1946 by a group of 15 government representatives, all women, the Commission works towards its original guiding principle: “To raise the status of women, irrespective of nationality, race, language or religion to equality with men in all fields of human enterprise, and to eliminate all discrimination against women in the provisions of statutory law, in legal maxims or the interpretation of customary law”. This year the priority theme to be addressed is: *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.*



A draft resolution was made available to the NGO Community in the second week of February. This document addresses aspects such as laws, policies and practices which need to be revised; and the resources, investment and services that are essential in order to achieve real advance and empowerment of rural women and girls.

The document is studied and the members of NGOs, such as our own, submit amendments or additions to important aspects that are not mentioned in the document. For example, the *Working Group on Girls* in which the IBVM is involved made suggestions about the imperative need to insist on the education of rural girls and to address the phenomenon of child-headed households as a result of HIV/AIDS. The *Working Group on Human Trafficking*, in which Anne also participates, expressed its concern about the need to educate and inform around the exploitation in rural contexts which leads to the trafficking of rural people, especially women and girls.

Representatives of members States will discuss the final draft document during the coming two weeks and will hopefully come to consensus on ways of moving forward. Members of NGOs with ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) status can ask questions and make observations during the sessions.

### Bringing voices and concerns to the United Nations



Ana Stakaj, Albania

An important aspect of an international gathering such as CWS is that of bringing the voice of people on the ground and their experience to the United Nations. This year, **Ana Stakaj** from Albania will do that task for the women with whom she works and networks in her country. Ana, who works closely with Imelda Poole ibvm in Albania will also have the opportunity to learn about the role of civil society within the United Nations system and international networking, while absorbing much information which she will share on her return. The English Province and Mary Ward International Australia have provided funds for the initiative.

Cecilia O'Dwyer ibvm