

**Read UN Update No.12** for some of the latest activities related to the United Nations and our worldwide network. Learn about the Girls' Survey on the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2015 Commission on the Status of Women. Take a look at your experience of how the present financial system affects us as financial resources for the Post 2015 Development Agenda are being discussed. How do we measure progress? Is it exclusively about money? Look at some alternatives. Read about how we advocate at the United Nations for people forced to live in poverty. And our commitment to Human Trafficking: news from our Network.

## GIRLS' SURVEY

Thanks to all the girls who did the Beijing survey for the Working Group on Girls! They were not born when the IV World Conference on Women was held in 1995.

Girls from our network did the survey which was available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and other languages. How are things for girls today? They were asked if their brothers do the same amount of household chores as they do, if they feel safe going to school, if they experience bullying or violence at school or violence at home. Do they eat two or more meals a day? Can they share their ideas with adults in the community and are their ideas respected?

Thanks to the adults who made the survey available for the girls.



## Commission on the Status of Women

The 59<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place over the last two weeks, from March 9<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> and included representatives from Member States, UN entities and NGOs from across the world. The two weeks kicked off with the International Women's Day 'March in March' held on Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup> when thousands marched the streets of Manhattan carrying and waving the slogan "Planet 50-50: by 2030: Step It Up For Gender Equality and Women's Rights".

Read a very interesting summary of the Commission [here](#).



### Commission on the Status of Women 2015

Sarah (CA) Elena (Sp), Cecilia (NYC) Frances (UCSAC)  
Elena, Kathleen and Liz (8th Day Center for Justice) Georgina (Aus) Stena (Sw)



[Video: What we saw at CSW59](#)

[CSW 59 Information for Students and Youth.](#)

**The Post 2015 Development Agenda** is an ambitious global vision that seeks to tackle extreme poverty, curb climate change, and put the world on a more prosperous path by 2035. It includes four key components:

1. **The Declaration** – a vision statement of what we want to achieve in the next development agenda
2. **Goals and Targets** – a new set of goals and targets to build on and succeed the MDGs;
3. **Financing and Means of Implementation** – the “how” of delivering the Post 2015 Development Agenda, and
4. **Monitoring and Review** – defining a process to track progress on commitments made by all stakeholders.

The 193 member states of the United Nations have been negotiating aspect of the Agenda since February. They have dedicated time to the first two points and are completing sessions on point 3 Financing and means of implementation in the second half of April, As time goes on it becomes more difficult in that agreement on how to finance the Post 2015 Agenda in a way that leaves no one behind is not easy when many interests are at play.

Our **NGO Committee on Financing for Development** invites you to read the Statement we use for advocacy, have some conversations on it and give us some feed-back. We are ordinary people like you who are aware that our present system is not working and want to bring your voices to the conversation at the United Nations. Would you download the document [“Putting People and Planet first: Financing Sustainable Development Requires Political Courage”](#)

**The following questions may help as guidelines for your conversations.**

- Name concrete ways in which the international financial system places economic gains over people and the health of the planet?
- “Civil Society, with its grassroots perspective, is uniquely situated to articulate the moral imperatives of reducing inequalities and keeping our planet healthy”. In what ways is civil society doing this in your country? If you are not aware, perhaps you could do some research on it
- “The need to transform the financial system has been on the development agenda for decades”. The NGO committee suggests that the United Nations is the forum for this process. What, in your opinion makes the United Nations the best forum for this reform process?

We would appreciate if you could use the document [“Putting People and Planet first: Financing Sustainable Development Requires Political Courage”](#) to influence your national government. The Ministry of Finance and the Minister/Chancellor in your country will decide on the position of your government. **I would appreciate your feedback at [ibvmunnngo@gmail.com](mailto:ibvmunnngo@gmail.com) as it is important for our advocacy at the United Nations.**

## Measuring Progress

Economic growth has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty and improved the lives of many more over the last half century. Yet it is increasingly evident that a model of development based on economic progress alone is incomplete. Economic growth alone is not enough. A society that fails to address basic human needs, equip citizens to improve their quality of life, protect the environment, and provide opportunity for many of its citizens is not succeeding. We must widen our understanding of the success of societies beyond economic outcomes. Inclusive growth requires achieving both economic and social progress.

Efforts to integrate aspects such as happiness, human wellbeing and opportunities into the general understanding of “progress” are increasing and in some countries are included in public policy. The United Nations took up the idea and, in 2011, invited member countries to measure the happiness of their people and to use it to help guide their public policies.

The [2015 World Happiness Report](#) is now available online. The 2015 version of the [Social Progress Index](#) is another instrument to consider when we think about progress.



**Beijing at 20**



## **IBVM Network Webcast**

On Saturday March 21, 2015, just as this year's commission on the Status of Women with the Beijing +20 celebration finalized, our Beijing at 20 was webcast. Three of our speakers were at the Beijing conference in 1995 while the fourth speaker was two years old at the time. Chris Burke was online from Manila, Philippines, Ephigenia Kachiri, from Nairobi, Kenya and Pat Murray from Rome, Italy. Georgina Kelly, interning at the NGO Office, spoke from New York. That experience had a major impact on the lives of those who were there. Indeed, the Fourth World Conference

on Women marked a significant turning point for women's empowerment and gender equality. These twenty years have brought change but we are also aware of what remains to be done to have real equality between women and men. Georgina reminded us that although things are different for her, she sees the remains of discrimination everywhere. Men and boys must be part of the process. Noelle Corscadden closed the session highlighting our place in the whole story of women's empowerment. Thanks to those who sent in questions. It was a pleasure for me to facilitate the session. Click on the photo to watch the transmission

## **Advocacy for the Most Vulnerable People**

The **NGO Committee for Social Development (CSocD)** voices our IBVM concerns at the United Nations. It is a network of more than 60 member organizations in over 160 countries. We deliver services for all with a focus on education, health, social problems, and social services, especially among the most vulnerable people on the planet.

### **The content of our advocacy is as follows:**

"Our deepest concern is to ensure that people, especially those most vulnerable, are at the center of the implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda. The tendency of revenue, capital, wealth, and debt to exert undue influence over development discussions must be firmly resisted.

In order for development plans to be effective for all in a rapidly changing world, we encourage all member states to:

- Recognize social protection floors as an essential means of poverty eradication and of addressing the phenomenon of inequality.
- Ensure that the Post 2015 Sustainable Development agenda be based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and respect for planetary boundaries.
- Include people living in poverty and other vulnerable groups in the decisions that affect their lives at local, national, and international levels including the research methods to determine the most appropriate indicators for SDG monitoring and accountability.
- Cancel all external debt and associated conditionalities to vulnerable indebted countries and develop, implement, and monitor means to curb illicit financial flows.



- Expand the sources of financing for sustainable development through progressive taxation that prioritizes public financing over public-private partnerships and through a reallocation of global military expenditure.

As representatives of civil society worldwide, we believe that our recommendations and their appropriate means of implementation are integral to a development agenda that secures “A Life of Dignity For All”.

## Human Trafficking – News from our Network

Recent events in the Mediterranean have scandalized people worldwide. It has been an error of judgment on the part of the European Union to decide to decrease their rescue operations in the hope of limiting the number of persons trying to reach the northern shore of the Mediterranean. Or have prevailing attitudes in Europe led to a lack of political will to address the question of Human Trafficking more efficiently?



**Mary Ward Loreto, Albania** recently presented the Anti -Trafficking Awareness Project called URAT. At the presentation they remembered the victims and prayed for freedom of the millions trafficked.

**Kolkata Mary Ward Social Center, India** recently organized a programme on formation and orientation for adolescent girls. The aim of “Sensitizing on Human Trafficking” is to raise awareness among the girls on human trafficking and its impact. The programme capacitates them with ways to protect themselves and to recognize their human rights as described in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC).

**Rescue Story. Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Center, India** shared this rescue story. “One of our suppliers was on his way from Gangtok to Siliguri last month. He stopped for dinner on the way at a small restaurant and spotted 4 men with a minor girl. The minor was clearly drugged s her state appeared abnormal. The men boarded her into a truck and left. Our supplier took immediate action by calling D.M.W.S.C. staff. As soon as our project coordinators were informed they corresponded with the police and asked our supplier to lodge a FIR (first Information Report) at the nearest police station. All the check -posts en route were alerted. At 12 am in the morning the suspect truck was seized at Rangpoo check-post. Unfortunately, due to lack of substantial proof, the men involved were released with a warning but their documents were confiscated. The girl, on the other hand, returned home safely thanks to the vigilance of a concerned citizen.”

**Loreto Australia and South East Asia Facebook** captured the attention of our network on Human Trafficking and the connection with the chocolate industry. Why buy #Traffikfree products? Children who have never tasted chocolate are enslaved on cocoa farms in Ivory Coast. The cocoa they harvest goes into the chocolate we eat.

Thanks to all who share Facebook information on Human Trafficking!

Cecilia O'Dwyer ibvm