

FAQS on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

CFUW at UNCSW - The CFUW delegation will be led by the CFUW Vice-President, International Relations. Delegates will be notified of a CFUW briefing to be scheduled early in the first week on a variety of issues. Both GWI and CFUW have consultative status at the UNCSW and do work together. GWI holds a briefing as well early in the week. If possible, a teleconference of CFUW delegates will also be held prior to the UNCSW.

1. What is UNCSW?

The Commission on the Status of Women (hereafter referred to as “CSW” or “the Commission”) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. Each year, the UNCSW chooses priority and review themes on different topics related to gender equality.

2. When and where does the annual meeting of UNCSW take place?

The Commission meets annually for a period of 10 working days (late February-early March) at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

3. What is the website address for UNCSW?

The main website is: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018>

There are other websites for related events that are listed below.

4. Who participates in UNCSW?

Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world attend the session. In view of CFUW's special consultative status at the United Nations, CFUW members are allowed to have access to meetings of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - in this case, UNCSW

5. How do CFUW members register to attend UNCSW?

In early fall of each year, the CFUW issues a notice to members to let them know that registration is open for UNCSW. Members who wish to register may submit an application through the National Office and should contact the Executive Director at cfuwed@rogers.com) at the National Office.

6. Who pays for members of the delegation to attend?

Participants are responsible for paying all their own expenses, including accommodation, travel and meals.

7. What information does the national office need in order to register you?

The following information is required:

- a. Full name as indicated on passport
- b. Height (either inches or cm.)
- c. Weight (either lbs or kilograms)
- d. Eye colour
- e. Hair colour
- f. Date of Birth
- g. Place of Birth
- h. Home address
- i. Home phone number
- j. Email address
- k. Nationality
- l. Emergency Contact- person's name, address, phone number and relationship to you
- m. Hotel in NYC- name; address and phone number

8. What else goes on in addition to the official UNCSW proceedings?

It should be noted that not all the delegates may be able to attend the official UNCSW general proceedings onsite due to space restrictions.

However, there are parallel events organized by NGOs which are open to all delegates and free of charge. These take place outside United Nations premises, at the three locations listed below. Any NGO may organize and attend these events – subject to space availability.

The Church Center

Address: 777 UN Plaza (at the corner of 44th Street and 1st Ave)

The Salvation Army

Address: 221 East 52nd Street (between 2nd and 3rd Avenues), New York, NY 10017.

The Armenian Convention Center

Address: 630 2nd Avenue (at 35th street), New York, NY 10017

Additionally, there are other events described in question 11.

9. Where are the daily briefings that the Government of Canada give held?

The daily briefings will be held at 12:45 outside the Qatar/East Lounge of the CSW.

10. How does one apply to hold a parallel event?

An application can be made through the National office to apply to hold a NGO CSW Forum Parallel Event. There is a fee to help cover costs which is paid by the National Office. Priority is given to events that address the UN CSW priority theme that is selected each year.

Any CFUW group that wishes to present at the parallel event is encouraged to find partner groups to co-sponsor events so as to attract stronger attendance at each session. Co-sponsoring an event increases the chances of having the event scheduled in the first week when attendance at UNCSW is higher.

11. What information is required in order to submit an application for a UNCSW Forum Parallel Event?

Usually, the UNCSW asks for the following information:

- Event Title
 - Number of participants anticipated to attend event
 - Event Description names of speakers and titles of presentations (1,000 characters including spaces and punctuation)
 - Preferred dates and times to hold event. All events are 1 ½ hours long.
- Any CFUW group who wishes to present at the parallel event is encouraged to partner with other groups to co-sponsor events so as to encourage stronger attendance at each session. Co-sponsoring an event

increases the chances of having the event scheduled in the first week when attendance at UNCSW is higher.
-Event sponsors

12. How does one organize a Parallel Event?

Please see Appendix A for “Nuts and Bolts on Organizing a Parallel Session” prepared by Hally Siddons

13. What is the NGO CSW Forum Handbook and Who is Entitled to Receive A Copy?

The NGO CSW/NY issues a handbook containing useful information on the UN and NGO CSW/NY, daily calendars of both UN side events and NGO CSW Forum Parallel Events, and special events.

NGO CSW Forum Handbooks are distributed free during the NGO CSW Forum Consultation Day (one copy per person, on a first-come, first-served basis). A version is also made available online to download and print.

The handbook also contains greetings and advertisements from NGOs. These handbooks reach more than 2,200 participants attending the CSW. Advertising online on the NGO CSW/NY website is also available.

14. What Other Events Take Place During UNCSW?

NGO CSW Forum Reception

NGO CSW Forum holds a reception for all UN and NGO delegates attending. Registration and a fee (around \$45 USD) are required. The program includes a presentation of the NGO/CSW/NY Woman of Distinction award. Space is limited and tickets are issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Upon completion of registration, one must print out their confirmation to present at the door. No cash is accepted.

Website is: <http://www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/ngo-reception>

NGO CSW Forum Consultation Day

The purpose of NGO CSW Forum Consultation Day is to prepare participants for the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meetings. It is usually held on the Sunday prior to the start of formal meetings. The fee for the day is usually

\$100 USD per person. Space is very limited and registration is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The working language is English.

The website is: <http://www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum>

NGO CSW Forum Artisan Fair

The public is invited to visit the NGO CSW Forum Artisan Fair free of charge usually held for one day during UNCSW. 100% of the proceeds go directly to the artisans.

Artisans can register online to sell their goods which help support worthy causes. As space is very limited, applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration is free.

The website is: <http://www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/ngo-artisan-fair>

Conversation Circles

The NGO CSW Forum organizes thematic “Conversation Circles” during the CSW. These are free and open to all delegates. The purpose of these sessions is to facilitate conversations among groups around mutual interests, and to network for future collaborations, including working collectively to implement the UN agreements. Please note that these are not primarily lobbying caucuses. Participants interested in similar themes will be able to share stories about themselves, their organizations, and issues. Opportunities are provided to network, plan collective strategies to implement UN agreements and dialogue with governments.

These Conversation Circles provide a chance to meet other participants who care about the same issues, exchange ideas and contact information. The website is: <http://www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/conversation-circles>

Regional Caucuses

During the NGO CSW Forum, regional NGO caucuses meet to discuss thematic and regional issues. These are open to all participants who are registered for the CSW. Details are provided on the website which is:

<http://www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/regional-caucuses>

15. What are written statements?

Written statements may be submitted by organizations with special consultative status on matters related to the topic of UNCSW. The deadline to submit a statement this year is October 16, 2015.

CFUW may decide to submit a written statement either by itself or in cooperation with other organizations.

16. How may one make an oral statement to the UNCSW general discussions?

Oral statements may be delivered during the general discussion by a limited number of NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council subject to time availability.

Preference will be given to NGOs speaking about the priority theme, on behalf of groups of organizations, caucuses, or coalitions. Instructions about the process will be communicated via email to each NGO representative requesting to make a statement.

Oral statements should not exceed three minutes. (i.e., about two pages double-spaced using font size 12).

It will be the decision of CFUW whether or not to make an oral statement. Depending on the scheduling of the statement, one of the CFUW delegates may be authorized and asked to present it.

Lessons learned from Attending UNCSW - Prepared by Doris Mae Oulton

- Start a walking regime early so that you are in shape for the miles you need to walk, and bring good walking shoes.
- Read over the UN and UN Women history before you arrive – helps to know that players.
- Look over the program before you get there – even if you don't know what you want to see – you need to start to understand the diversity and the range of choice. Pick sessions that are geographically close. Remember that the distances are significant and that to be in to the UN campus you need to go through a scan – and it takes time.
- Get to the sessions in plenty of time – the rooms are always crowded. Late arrivals are annoying. If you get at the back of the room, it is deadly – people are talking, there is lots of in and out activity – distractions are endless. Because many of the speakers are not fully fluent in English, understanding the sessions needs your full concentration.
- Hotels are not all internet accessible – or they charge for access.
- The UN building has good accessible WIFI – other venues are sketchy.

- Make sure you have a good communications package before coming – roaming charges are brutal.
- Food in the cafeteria of the UN is reasonably cheap and good.
- Bring a water bottle – the collapsible kind would be excellent. Food and drink (other than water) is not allowed in the rooms, there are no ‘coffee shops’ and water fountains are scarce.
- There are few places to sit and rest within the UN campus – find the East Lounge – it is lovely and quiet.
- Register early – arrive in New York with enough time to get your credentials before Monday morning.
- Even though you have credentials – you cannot go through the main entrance portals – you enter and leave through portals that are off to the side.
- There is a post office in the basement of the UN with its own stamps and mail imprint.
- The briefings are really useful – as much to meet other people from your delegation or country as to hear what is being said. The early morning UN briefings are at least as useful as the orientation day. They are FULL so get there early.
- Not all venues are equal – this year the sessions at the Armenian Centre were very difficult to hear.
- Be prepared for behavior that is ‘outside the North American’ norm. Remember that it is not necessarily rude.
- Do not expect to be able to ‘sight see’ – you won’t have time. If you want to see New York, book extra days.
- You will feel like your head is exploding – there are so many women with so many talents and so many issues that need attention and so many nuances in language and processes. Wine helps.

NUTS AND BOLTS OF ORGANIZING A PARALLEL SESSION

AT THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Prepared by Hally Siddons, CFUW-Ottawa

April 1, 2014

SUGGESTED CONSIDERATIONS

There is never any point in reinventing the wheel. I offer the detail enclosed in this report as a help to someone considering organizing a Parallel Session at UNCSW. I would encourage such! There are many versions of a Parallel Session and this is but one. The task is enormous and the planning, organization and follow through on so many fronts involves hundreds of hours of work but with a structured and willing committee the leadership and tasks can be divided. An asterisk indicates a sample form is attached.

A Background:

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Forum is a huge event with representatives of Member States, UN entities and ESOSC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world in attendance. Any of these representatives may choose to present a Parallel Session on a topic relating to the chosen CSW theme. Sessions are scheduled concurrently and take place outside the United Nations premises. They are open free of charge to all delegates and to the public. Space may sometimes be limited. To present a Parallel Session it would be a help to have attended a previous CSW Forum but not essential. (Side Events, not to be confused with Parallel Sessions, are held on UN premises during the CSW session by Permanent Missions and UN entities. CSW Delegates can attend.)

B Early Considerations:

1. Team:

Confirm a team of kindred spirits and an understanding of who might do what. They should be workers and leaders in one or some aspects of the process, and not just team members.

2. Partner Affiliate/NGO:

Consider joining with a partner who shares your expertise and interest. This apparently enhances the chance of being accepted, of attracting a bigger turnout to your session, and

therefore of being scheduled in the first week when more people are in attendance. Consider NGOs with “consultative status” and on the same “wavelength” regarding your topic. Check last year’s Handbook to get ideas. If WG-USA is a consideration, a member could possibly apply to attend as a delegate through IFUW.

3. Topic:

Become familiar with the CSW theme when it is announced. Early on consider your topic and shape it carefully to complement the theme. Leave lots of time for ongoing research.

4. Dates that will Guide You:

- a) Deadline to sign up with CFUW as a possible delegate.
(In 2013, the invitation was sent out in the CFUW News on November 15 with the date to reply, December 6.)
- b) Deadline for National Office to submit Parallel Session Description to the NGO Committee on the Status of Women in New York.
(In 2013, the date was December 12.)
- c) Date to learn if the parallel session application had been approved by CSW.
(In 2013, CSW contacted National Office on December 23 to confirm acceptance of the application and directions to a site to learn the assigned room, date and time. National Office kindly passed the message on.)
- d) Deadline for CFUW to confirm the event as announced.
(January 10, 2014.)
- e) Deadline to purchase an ad for the event in the Official Handbook or on the ngoCSW.org website.
(January 17, 2014)
- f) Register for Consultation Day through NGOCSW after booking offered and while tickets last.
- g) Book a hotel before fully booked and determine travel plans. If planning to attend Consultation Day arrive in New York Saturday afternoon so you can register before registration closes to ensure you are free for Consultation Day Sunday.

Hotel: CFUW members have found Murray Hill East Suites 149 East 39th Street to be accommodating and an excellent location.

C. Considerations in Moving Forward to the Application Process:

With team and working committee structure decided, topic confirmed, efforts need to begin on how the event will be structured, and who the speakers will be. This needs to start at

least in the early fall and before the deadline to submit the application to present. Plans will continue to evolve!

a) Timing of the Session:

Events are scheduled every two hours to allow for set up and take down but sessions are given an hour and a half time slots (8:30 to 10:00, 10:30 to 12:00). Setting up is a huge issue as people take a long time to exit and can delay the incoming group in setting up. Careful planning beforehand can help alleviate the situation.

b) Title:

Develop your title. It should be catchy, draw others in and be the focus as you develop the plans for your session.

c) Setting the Stage:

Consider a presentation that “sets the stage” for the session and speakers. It should be no longer than 10 minutes and a PowerPoint if possible. It should be polished, professional and accurate. The audience will be knowledgeable too. Even if a speaker may touch on some of the content briefly, repetition does not hurt. The overview will start everyone at a common point and will be an insurance in the event of a sudden speaker withdrawal.

d) Format for the Session:

Options will depend on the topic, how best to share it, the skills that will be available to do so and the amount of work the team is prepared to do.

i) A chair may present a series of speakers and then take questions from the audience.

ii) A chair may present speakers, engage them in a round table discussion and then take questions and answers.

iii) The session could begin with an overview to be followed by speakers, a possible roundtable, and questions and answers. Timing will need to be carefully worked out.

iv) Prepare to be flexible and creative on the spot as the room setup may have changed since your last visit, and the speaker’s participation will only be confirmed when you see him/her arrive in the room.

e) Speakers:

The number of speakers will depend on how you structure your session. What other features do you plan to incorporate or will your whole programme consist of speakers only?

With speakers only you would probably need 4 speakers. With other items on

the agenda three is possibly ideal but two might be a bit weak and the overall session not as interesting. Insurance is needed against a poor speaker or a no-show. A suggested length of talk to request is 8 to 10 minutes. Question and Answer sessions are popular and time needs to be reserved for them. High profile speakers will need to be asked well in advance. At the same time they are often difficult to commit or may be called away at the last moment. If possible you might want to consider a standby or ask each to provide one. However, high profile speakers are definitely an attraction to the session and give it added credibility.

f) Use of PowerPoint:

Equipment is not provided nor are there any technicians to assist. Projectors can be rented. Apparently there may be some refund but there is no budget. If one of your team wishes to present and use PowerPoint, she would therefore probably want to bring her own equipment including a couple of extension cords, a long cable and extra bulb. Whatever decision is made about PowerPoint should be shared with the speakers.

g) The chair needs to be organized, familiar with the subject matter, willing to take on a huge task and able to adjust as more work is required or unknowns arise.

D The Application Process:

- a) The application* to hold a Parallel Session is made through the National Office.
- b) Priority is given to events that address the UN CSW priority theme that year.
- c) Partner, if used, would need to be identified
- d) Information needed for the application:

- i) Event Title – make it catchy!
- ii) Number of Participants expected to attend
- iii) Event Description to include names of speakers (50 words?)
- iv) Choice of dates and times to present – these may be important

depending on the availability of speakers

- v) Other comments about your event

e) Speakers may not be able to confirm this early but names should be included anyway. Even ones that may have confirmed might back out. Including names gives the Planning Committee an idea of what you have in mind.

E. Acceptance to Present and Preparation for the UN:

a) **Re-confirm team and tasks:**

Now that you have a clear idea of the task ahead, confirm again your team and each member's individual tasks. It is a huge job and unrealistic for one person to take the lead in every area. If you are presenting and considering a series of speakers and possible round table,

consider a coordinator with lead players. Some tasks could be combined. Depending on your content and format possible lead players could be:

- i) Speakers and Programme
- ii) Presentation and Presenter
- iii) Facilities before and during
- iv) Publicity before and after
- v) Technology
- vi) Feedback and follow through

b) **Speakers:**

Decide on objectives for the session and draw up a draft plan. Create a list of speaker options to consider. Try to find people already in New York. But depending on your topic and the value added that you envisage, you may want to consider one from abroad. Hopefully you can work to avoid visa issues! Decide on your first choice of speakers and invite, stating clearly that there is no budget allowance and therefore no travel expense can be offered. Share with speakers the agreed to format for the session and the names and topics of the other invited speakers. Consider a small programme. Design and produce for handout at the Session. Ask for pictures and short bios so you will have when needed. Use them or research to draft a version to then send to them for their approval. Limit to 150 words. Explain AV situation for speakers. Consider speaker backup options in the event of unexpected withdrawals. Plan to introduce VIPs but not have them speak due to lack of time. Decide on appropriate recognition for the speakers ie a lunch to follow if the event is in the morning. Decide on content for Speaker Envelope, prepare and plan for distribution in New York.

c) **Overview* of the Session:**

With speakers and programme in mind, what is the logical flow of the session? What will it look like? What is the timing for each part? Write out a skeleton overview with timing and work with as the programme evolves.

d) **Facilities:**

The format of the session will be influenced by facility realities.

You can count on a large screen, table, chairs, wall plugs, and one microphone usually on a cord. You cannot count on the room arrangement, equipment or extension cords. You cannot count on silence in the hall outside but insist on a good mic and use it properly. Consider your setup, possible table use, chair and table arrangement, use of lighting. Will any changes need to be made during the session such as for a round table discussion? Will name tents be needed? Identify requirements and who will follow through. Will any chairs need to be reserved?

e) **Publicity: Before & After**

Publicity is not only to attract numbers to the event but to raise awareness of the

subject matter. It needs to focus on what, when, where and the inevitable follow through – who will do it? Design and colour of the material will be important. Identify points for publicity (electronic and non-electronic) before and after the event, what is needed for each and who will design and produce. You may want to produce an attractive “one pager*” to include highlights of your session to insert in hard cover mailings or on websites. In addition create a colourful flyer* with basic session information prominently displayed to distribute once you arrive in New York. Pre-arrange CFUW photographers for New York and give specific instructions. Pictures are needed not only for website, Facebook and publications immediately after the event but also to have on file. Pictures should be the event as it progresses - the speakers, the organizing committee, attendees and venue. They need to be considered ahead and co-ordinated. Pre-arrange also a note-taker for the session and give specific instructions. Pre-arrange a date you would appreciate the material sent to you.

f) **Technology** – identify requirements in your preparations, and once in New York, follow through.

g) **Costs:** CFUW budget cannot cover any expenses except session fee. This will need to be taken into account in the publicity and technology plans. Committee members may feel so passionately about their subject that they are will to arrange for the colour copies personally.

To help consider printing:

i) colour flyer 3 across an 8 x 11 page and

ii) programme 2 across but back to back but one side, colour, and on the

back, black and white

g) **Feedback* and Post Session:**

Are you interested in feedback of your session from your attendees? Do you want to offer a possibility of those who attended to stay connected? If so design a simple handout such as the attached.

F. **Final Preparations before Leaving Home:**

Chair works with team to ensure:

a) Final details with speakers.

b) All materials are printed, will be transported to New York, delivered to presentation room, and upon conclusion collected and returned to the Chair or designate.

c) Committee and session helpers (other CFUW delegates) are in place and tasks clearly outlined. There will be no time at the UN to check up.

d) Reserved seat signs, Name Tents (both professional quality and prepared beforehand), water for speakers, and possible Feedback Sheet logistics.

G. **Upon Arrival in New York:**

a) Before your session visit your assigned room to observe a session or

two. Note their choice of room set up and identify any issues than might need to be dealt with before your turn.

b) Seek out those CFUW delegates who have agreed to help and go over your expectations. You can't assume anything. Paint picture of the chaos at room setup time especially if on top of all, you are doing a PowerPoint and a speaker wants also to test your equipment. Remind due date for photo or note returns to fit your diary.

c) When you first meet in New York divide the flyers among other CFUW delegates and ask them to give them out as they can on Consultation Day, at sessions they attend through the week and at morning briefings.

d) Don't waste the paper but try to make an eye or verbal contact and decide if there is interest.

H. The Day:

a) Team and helpers arrive at the room before the previous session is over to ensure they can enter when possible.

The **Chair** will need to focus on the overall situation.

Tech Team: divide tasks

i) Note any personal team equipment contributed ie extension cords, and collect to return all at the conclusion to the owner.

ii) Assist presenter with set up of PowerPoint if being used

iii) Pull down screen

iv) Decide on any lighting needs, where needed and who will do.

v) Test microphone

vi) Arrange for speakers to check any last minute needs with you

vii) Operate PowerPoint if speaker prefers

Facilities Team: dividing tasks

i) Move table into place for PowerPoint equipment if being used

ii) Straighten up room upon entry if necessary asking people politely to leave if they are not staying for the next session.

iii) Place reserved seat signs with speaker and committee names on previously announced seats.

iv) If being used place name tents on table.

v) Consider if any other chairs need to be reserved to accommodate any format change during session.

vi) Have one or two at door to welcome and encourage to move in promptly. As the room fills direct to empty seats.

vi) Connect beforehand with whomever has brought printed material to circulate ie Programme and Feedback Sheet, and do so. Either place on the chairs or offer to

attendees upon entry.

vii) Be in the hallway to invite people to move in quickly and announce a 5 minute start time.

viii) At the conclusion, collect Feedback sheets if being used, and return to Chair. Offer help to correlate.

Speaker's Team:

i) Identify a helper for each speaker. Be in hallway to look out for and greet the speakers upon arrival. Present with Speaker Envelope. Welcome and introduce to Chair and others. Engage in conversation so they are not left alone.

ii) If anyone is using any equipment take him/her to tech person to check out equipment and confirm all is well.

iii) Let Chair know when all speakers have arrived.

iv) At conclusion, make sure they are not left alone and direct to next activity or accompany to exit.

I. After the Event:

Have fun! Don't let the event die!

While fresh in your mind, note those who contributed to the Q & A session, and those with whom you engaged in conversation or exchanged business cards.

Collect the contact information from the Feedback Sheets and keep in touch.

Organize another event to pick up on it and follow through either locally or nationally. For example, WG-USA set up a teleconference with members across the country to engage them in the subject of the session and present additional ideas.

To conclude:

Regardless of the content and scope of a Parallel Session, detailed consideration of every aspect beforehand is essential for final smooth delivery. Additional issues will arise but a sound working out of the event in advance will bring the confidence and flexibility needed to make last minute adjustments. The experience will be a rewarding one, but demanding and deserving of excellence. A chair with committee members willing to take on major decision making and leadership roles will be essential.