



United Nations Activity Report

The [63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) is an opportunity for representatives from [United Nations](#) Member States, other United Nations entities, and civil society to review progress toward gender equality. Participants meet annually for 10 days in New York (United States) to identify challenges and barriers to gender equality and to forge alliances to overcome these challenges. From the CSW website, the purpose of this year's event was to address as its priority theme "social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls." The event is also an opportunity for women from around the world to meet, to learn, and to celebrate the successes they have helped to achieve.

Report Submitted by Aric Shimek, Sigma United Nations Liaison

Sessions attended include:

- 1) Sigma's event "Precursors to Violence: Identifying, De-Escalating, and Reducing Women's Risks"
- 2) Infrastructure Development as an Enabler in Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: The Role of MDB's
- 3) Promoting Rights-based Social Protection Policies for Gender Equality: A Prerequisite for Social Justice and Sustainable Development
- 4) Health for All Through Women's Human Rights: Ensuring Universal Health Coverage and Social Protection
- 5) On the way to Biarritz: Women's Rights at the heart of the G7 Summit
- 6) How can digital technology support gender equality in the Middle East and North Africa regions?
- 7) Humanitarian Aid: The Great Equalizer
- 8) United Nations Secretary-General Townhall Meeting with Civil Society. This event provided civil society organizations an opportunity to engage with Secretary-General António Guterres and his senior leadership on topics pertaining to gender equality and the work of the United Nations.

This forum was an opportunity for individuals and groups to pose questions to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General gave a very brief speech outlining the efforts the United Nations is making to improve conditions for women working within the United Nations, and for women outside the United Nations who come in contact with United Nations staff. Sigma United Nations liaison Penny Sessler Branden and Sigma United Nations youth representative Dania Al-Itani posed a question to the Secretary-General asking if the organization understands the impact of nurses on many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), suggesting that nurses are included at the table for most discussions.

The below information is a summary of all events attended.

As outlined below, there is not one Sustainable Development Goal untouched by gender equality. Women are disproportionately affected by the declines in our world and by the systems and attitudes that ushered in those declines. Empowering women has the potential to reverse these trends and help us achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Goal 1: No Poverty – “Globally, women and girls are over-represented among the poor: 330 million women and girls live on less than US\$1.90 a day, that’s 4.4 million more than men.”

Goal 2: Zero Hunger – “In nearly two thirds of countries, women are more likely than men to report food insecurity.”

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being – “Globally, 303,000 women died from pregnancy-related causes in 2015. The rate of death is declining much too slowly to achieve Target 3.1.”

Goal 4: Quality Education – “15 million girls of primary-school age will never get the chance to learn to read or write in primary school compared to 10 million boys.”

Goal 5: Gender Equality –

“5.1 In 18 countries, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working; in 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have equal inheritance rights; and 49 countries lack laws protecting women from domestic violence.

5.2 1 in 5 women and girls under the age of 50 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period.

5.3 Globally, 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18 and at least 200 million women and girls in 30 countries have undergone Female Genital Mutilation.

5.4 Women do 2.6 times the unpaid care and domestic work that men do.

5.5 As of September 2017, women hold just 23.7% of parliamentary seats, an increase of 10 percentage points compared to 2000 – but still way below parity.

5.6 Based on data from 45 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, only 52% of women aged 15–49 who are married or in a union make their own informed decisions about sexual relations and the use of contraceptives and health services.

5.a Globally, women are just 13% of agricultural land holders.

5.b The benefits of internet and technology are accessible to men at a much higher rate than women, leaving women behind in Internet access and mobile phone ownership. Women are less likely than men to own a mobile phone, and their internet usage is 5.9 percentage points lower than that of men.

5.c More than 100 countries have taken action to track budget allocations for gender equality.”

Goal 6: Clean Water & Sanitation – “Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 80% of households without access to water on premises.”

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy – “Indoor air pollution from using combustible fuels for household energy caused 4.3 million deaths in 2012, with women and girls accounting for 6 out of every 10 of these.”

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – “Globally, the labour force participation rate among prime working-age women (aged 25–54) stands at 63% compared to 94% among their male counterparts. The global gender pay gap is 23%.”

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure – “Women represent 28.8% of researchers worldwide. Only about 1 in 5 countries have achieved gender parity in this area.”

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities – “Up to 30% of income inequality is due to inequality within households, including between women and men. Women are also more likely than men to live below 50% of the median income.”

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities – “The global population is becoming more urban, with opportunities and risks for women and girls: More than 50% of urban women in developing countries

live in conditions where they lack at least one of the following: access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, durable housing or sufficient living area.”

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production – “Investment in public transportation yields large benefits for women, who tend to rely on public transport more than men do.”

Goal 13: Climate Action – “Climate change has a disproportionate impact on women and children, who are 14 times as likely as men to die during a disaster.”

Goal 14: Life below Water – “The contamination of freshwater and marine ecosystems negatively impacts women’s and men’s livelihoods, their health and the health of their children.”

Goal 15: Life on Land – “Between 2010 and 2015, the world lost 3.3 million hectares of forest areas. Poor rural women depend on common pool resources and are especially affected by their depletion.”

Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions – “In times of conflict, rates of homicide and other forms of violent crime increase significantly. While men are more likely to be killed on the battlefield, women are disproportionately subjected to sexual violence and abducted, tortured and forced to leave their homes.”

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals – “In 2012, finances flowing out of developing countries were 2.5 times the amount of aid flowing in, and gender allocations paled in comparison.”

*Quotes taken from “Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” from UN Women. Accessed 4/9/19 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/sdg-report>

We are awaiting the Commission’s final report on the event’s outcomes and any resolutions adopted during the session. These will serve as a guide for the United Nations liaisons to explore opportunities to remain involved in the CSW’s work and to participate in the 2020 event.

As the largest component of the global healthcare workforce, nurses have the power to be an agent for change. Sigma, as a representative of over 135,000 global nursing leaders, is in a unique position to support this change. We choose to be involved with the United Nations because we support human rights and the right to good health for all. By participating, we hope to inform, encourage, and support those who are working to make the world a safer and healthier place. Our presence at these events allows us to collaborate with those in other industries and nations who can help us to advance world health and to celebrate the contributions of nurses around the world. Attending events like the CSW also provides Sigma and its members a direct path to influence decision-making processes on a global level and the chance to be seen as subject matter experts in nursing and healthcare.

Sigma should continue to make its presence known at the UN and continue the discussion regarding the impact that nurses make every day on the health and wellness of individuals around the globe.

Why is this important to Sigma members? Sigma members should be aware of the issues facing different populations globally, because those issues affect everyone in a global community, and a better understanding of the rest of the world allows us to make a more significant impact on the health and lives of those we come in contact with in our various areas of impact: community health, inpatient and outpatient care services, education, research, and health and business industries.