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**Commission on the Status of Women Fifty-fourth session 1-12 March 2010**

**Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda\***

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals**

**Statement submitted by the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

“Women and men joined together in common faith, sacraments and ministry to contribute to achievement of gender equality, development and peace”

The Anglican Communion consists of 80 Million members in 164 Countries worldwide. As a priority group, the communion has invested in training over 200 women drawn from over 50 countries in economic literacy, diplomacy and international advocacy and exposure learning. They have active advocates for all or some strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The ACC believes that strengthening and deepening impact of actions for the implementation of the BPFA needs to start through prayer and service that ensures all rights especially women’s rights, basic needs are met, and to work in partnership with governments, non state actors and other faith communities. This requires making deliberate connections between the instruments and tools for gender equality and women’s empowerment. This includes the reviews of the **cumulative gains** of CEDAW, BPFA and the gender targets of the MDGs, and to factor into this analysis the current financial and economic, climate and food crisis. In light of that, we wish to explore innovative ways for:

**i) Revealing achievements and obstacles on gender equality and empowerment of women**

We support governments that have worked towards CEDAW requirements for women's equality before the law.<sup>[1]</sup> We also note a number of national governments especially in the developing and NORDIC countries that have empowered women through affirmative action thus enabling them to participate in decision making and legislation.

**Obstacle:** This has not often translated to legislation and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights. Nor have the legal instruments been linked to economic tools to ensure economic rights and access to economic resources in line with the strategic objective A.2 of the BPPFA.

There have been mixed responses to gender equality and empowerment even with ACC resolution 1331.<sup>[2]</sup> These desks provide gender specific programs that equip women with skills in leadership, decision making, income generation, advocacy and economic literacy. In Rwanda, the Anglican Church has been active in publicly condemning gender based violence and involving women in peace transformation, establishment of women's clubs in all Districts.

**Obstacle:** There are Provinces that have never had women's desks and a few have closed them as a direct result of the economic and financial crisis. There are provinces that are still discussing the Ordination of women that would place women in positions of leadership.

#### **We therefore call for:**

- ❖ Consideration of a sustainable way of achieving women's equality which includes ensuring they are enshrined within national policies, laws and administrative instruments and tools.
- ❖ Innovative and research-based tools for advocacy and dialogue for church resolutions that shall strengthen and compliment government policy formulation, legislation in ways that can be adopted in various actions including evangelism and Church Growth Initiatives in accordance to resolution 14.02.<sup>[3]</sup>, in addition to UN instruments.
- ❖ Partnerships around tools and case studies for addressing areas of weaknesses in implementation, accountability for actions through development of common tools for assessing progress and gaps in achieving gender equality, development and peace.
- ❖ Tools to be used for comparing and evaluating progress throughout the different systems that can illustrate effective economic growth, poverty reduction and the right to development.

#### **ii) Actions for women in Post-Conflict situations**

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<sup>[1]</sup> CEDAW Article 15.

<sup>[2]</sup> ACC Resolution 1331 that called for the establishment of Women or Gender Desks in all Anglican Provinces.

<sup>[3]</sup> (ACC resolution 14.02 Jamaica, May 2009)

We support the UN resolution (SCR 1888) on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. Under CEDAW the ACC has implemented post-conflict programs of reconciliation and healing in the Provinces of Burundi and Rwanda, as well as Congo, Sudan, and Melanesia. The ACC has programs to support post conflict victims of violence and rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Rwanda has worked in tandem with the ACC as part of the Faith community to new legislation that has empowered women, widows and girls and ensured the protection of their rights including inheritance and property. In addition, the action undertaken towards women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution in post-conflict peace building (as agreed in the 52<sup>nd</sup> CSW, 2008) should be honoured. Based on obstacles we call for:

- ❖ Appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General to drive lead and coordinate all programs that shall be derived from all UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on violence.
- ❖ Provision budget support for implementing conflict related sexual violence programs.
- ❖ Rapid responses to post conflict domestic and gender based violence especially since emergency response is often removed after the conflict has been contained.
- ❖ Increased solidarity and partnership in counselling and trauma management for abused women in post conflict situations.
- ❖ The creation of “Women protection and gender advisory on human rights”<sup>[4]</sup> within UN Peace Keeping missions.
- ❖ A timetable for reporting and a monitoring mechanism for implementing conflict-related sexual violence including 1325 and 1888 to be developed.
- ❖ Observing Special Sundays as a means of repentance, conversion and renewal in ways that lead to deeper communion.
- ❖ Establishment means of rapid response and relief that is more effectively to the situation of minorities living in difficult contexts; support the needs of indigenous people.
- ❖ Strengthen alliances of relief and development agencies to improve co-ordination in development, relief and advocacy work and share experiences of best practice.
- ❖ Governments that have not, to become signatories United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with active support of the Churches in those countries.
- ❖ In cases where there are indigenous people who are minorities, there is need to take appropriate and necessary steps to assist the healing of indigenous families, including the protection of women and children from violence and human trafficking.

### **iii) Gender focused strategies for Natural Resource utilization**

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<sup>[4]</sup> Kathambi Kinoti-AWID, 2009.

In terms of the environment, the global economy and support of vulnerable people and communities, ACC encourages all governments and institutions to weigh the environmental as well as the financial costs of institutional activities, including the church; to work towards increasing access to safe water as an inviolable human right; to enable faith communities to consider energy services as practical and strategic need and promote the use of renewable energy to encourage and support development of skills and sustainability of appropriate use of science and technology; to advocate sustainable restorative economies with national governments, the United Nations through the Anglican Observers Office, and local constituencies.

**v). Gender focused Community Rebuilding**

Local churches have done tremendous work in rebuilding communities, even in cases where there is violence and conflict. The Episcopal development, aid agencies and other Church; secular NGOs, should increase their support to strengthen the implementation of social development programmes. Through local churches, these programmes address strategic needs of females and males.

**vi). Mobilizing women and men for comprehensive gender focused actions**

In Thailand, trafficking is THB 500Billion {\$US = 34 Thai Baht, THB} annual business, which is 50- 60% of the government's annual budget and more lucrative than drug trade (Authorities and activists, Kulachada Chaipipat, "new law targets human trafficking," The Nation, 30 November 1997)

**Obstacles:** The reluctance to recognize the links between economic crisis/poverty, trafficking in human persons and gender based violence. Besides being lucrative, trafficking in human persons is rising as an income response to the impact of the financial crisis presents **new demands** for mobilizing both men and women for gender action. This financial and economic crisis has had a direct impact on the household that goes beyond loss of housing and job. "The recent economic downturn is set to drive more vulnerable children and young people to be exploited by global sex trade".<sup>[5]</sup>

"If you ask me, the government is not correcting the source of the problem," says Asipong. "It's just treating the symptoms. Poverty is a big contribution to the problem in Thailand, especially in the countryside. Street children and stateless children are extremely vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation."<sup>[6]</sup> "We need to improve law enforcement and the economic welfare of children,"

The ACC in partnership with UNICEF and ECPAC, held an Asia regional consultation to address the issue of trafficking especially in girls. partnership with UNICEF Regional Office, ECPAC an International Organization that works towards the elimination of child trafficking.

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[5] Carmen Madrinam, executive director of ECPAT international, the organization that authored the August 2009 report.

[6] Amanda Bissex, UNICEF's Chief of Child Protection in Thailand

The best practice was from India where the Bishop, working closely with the community and local District authorities have set up surveillance and monitoring and reporting systems for girls and any agents who may come into the community to recruit or traffic. They have also established a method for tracking and resettling trafficked girls and now creating a means to economically empower the victims in their community.

The International Anglican Women's Network has made effort in promoting women's concerns in church and society. The efforts have provided support to actions on the elimination of forms of violence against women. Such mobilization has enabled all Provinces to participate in programmes and events that promote the rights and welfare of women, particularly as expressed in the Beijing Platform for Action and the United Nations MDG's. Other efforts have included appropriate methods for allocation of financial resources and actions have been undertaken to implement gender budgeting throughout the Communion.

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