

3PM: Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O'Neal welcomed everyone to the meeting and elucidated that this month's Theme for our meeting is: "Domestic Violence Against Women & Girls: A Major Obstacle to Women's Empowerment".

General Meeting 3PM – 5PM

Margo and Yvonne began the meeting by thanking H.E. Mr. Amrith Rohan Perera, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Ms. Sonali Samarasinghe, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN for their outstanding and generous support. They thanked H.E. Koki Muli Grignon, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of Kenya to the United Nations for her support of our meeting today as well. We are grateful to Mr. Isaac Reshad, Ms. Sheima Sweiss and Mr. Shawn Porat for their kind contributions to the refreshments for today's meeting.

We acknowledge our friends and colleagues who are survivors of adversity: Nyla Amin, Monica Singh, Consolee Nishimwe, Cyrus Singer, and an active leader in our community in trafficking and violence against women and girls, Melissa Jane Kronfeld.

Margo and Yvonne welcomed the meeting moderator, Mrs. Sonali Samarasinghe, Minister Counsellor of the Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN. Ms. Samarasinghe welcomed keynote speaker Honorable Mrs. Sicily K. Kariuki Cabinet Secretary of the Republic of Kenya's Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs. She further elucidated that this is a newly established ministry following the recent reorganization of the executive by His Excellency, the president of Kenya in December 2015. The main priorities for the new minister include gender equality and women's empowerment, transforming public sector service delivery, youth empowerment, and strengthening of the national youth service.

Honorable Minister Kariuki began her statements by thanking the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development and the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations for giving her the opportunity to share this experience in this distinguished gathering. She further explained that this subject is close to her heart as it would be close to any minister responsible for gender affairs. "Excellences, distinguished guests, the Constitution of Kenya recognizes that violence against women is a gross violation of human rights. It provides a freedom from many forms of violence either from public or private sources. Domestic violence and all forms of gender based violence harm women, undermine their productivity, on national development, violate human rights, compromises women's health, restricts them from becoming active and productive citizens, thereby compromising development of entire nations. Gender based violence denies women their personal security and wellbeing. Beyond the personal impact of gender based violence is a critical development issue. The cost of not addressing GBV is significant for the victim, for the society, for the community, and for the economy as a whole, as well as a huge socio-economic cost of gender based violence which are likely to have serious negative impacts on any society". She noted that the National Female Mutilation rate in Kenya has dropped from 27% five years ago, currently to 21% according to a survey conducted last year. In ending her statements, Honorable Minister Kariuki explained that the government through the national machineries, has continued to promote gender equality interventions through strengthening of various institutions that provide normative and policy guidance on gender quality and women empowerment.

Next, Moderator, Mrs. Samarasinghe of the Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN introduced welcomed keynote speaker, honorable Mrs. Nana Oye Luther is the Honorable Cabinet Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection of the Republic of Ghana. Honorable Minister Luther, explained that the underlining issue is to address gender inequality. "In Ghana, we have a Constitution which talks about non-discrimination, which talks about equality under the law. But even professional women and women at all levels are not able to negotiate safe sex. Sometimes it ends up in violence against women and the girls who are child brides when they insist they do not want to have sex with their partners because they know their partners are having extramarital affairs. So these are the bulks of the issues we are dealing with. What we have done is to sustain engagement with traditional leaders and with community leaders who are the gatekeepers so that they appreciate and understand how it is beneficial for the society to adhere to the text of the law and to ensure that there is equality between the sexes". She further explained that in Ghana, they have created a legal and policy framework by ensuring that we have an affirmative action bill, which will ensure we have the critical mass of women in public service and also in political office. So presently, at this point in time, we have an affirmative action bill being considered by our cabinet, which will when passed show that we have a minimum of 40% representation of women in public office, in the security services, in the public sector, and across the board in Ghana. Honorable Minister Luther explained that Another key issue is research and data. "We can go on and on and campaign and advocate for ending gender based violence. If we do not have the evidence then that is a problem, and not just reading off figures of the numbers of women who have reported cases of gender based violence, but we need to unpack and go further. What are the health implications? Are they able to serve the women and the victims and survivors of gender based violence? Because when we did that in Ghana in 1998 we found out that 80% of victims of gender based violence who presented at healthcare facilities were only given pain relievers and paracetamol. So what we have done in Ghana is to ensure that the healthcare sector has a gender policy and has a policy addressing how they will address gender based violence cases when it comes before them. We've also been supported by different to come up with a comprehensive study on gender based violence and what are the drivers of gender based violence, and we will be having a side event on Monday to discuss that. In terms of strengthening the legal and policy framework, we have adopted just over from last year a child and family welfare.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne spoke of the importance of United Nations Resolution 25/10: **Ending violence against children: a global call to make the invisible visible.** They further explained the horrors women face on a daily basis. Margo explained she personally suffered from random beatings from her father, who learned about the abuse from his parents. When asked by her teacher, she lied to protect her father. Both brothers suffered from random beatings, all forms of violence from women and children should be criminalized.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne put forth the *NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY's official Global Call to Action to Break the Cycle of Domestic Violence – to truly leave no one behind.*

Next, Moderator, Mrs. Samarasinghe introduced Honorable Ms. Chandrani Bandara Jayasingha Minister for Women and Child Affairs in Sri Lanka. Mrs. Samarasinghe explained that in Sri Lanka, under the leadership of Honorable Minister Jayasingha, the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs has embarked on important projects such as childcare centers within the office premises and an action plan for widows. They have also focused on the implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Minister Jayasingha opened her statements by thanking Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne and the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development. She explained that they are privileged to cohost the event on the importance of CSW 60. Moreover, she explained that 1 in 3 women will be beaten, raped and mutilated during their lifetime and domestic violence is the most common form of violence around the world. In cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Women and Child Affairs has helped create laws on behalf of women affected by violence. There also needs to be a change in people's mindsets and attitude against women. Engaging men and boys is important to incorporate in homes and we stand firm as we join the global call for action. In ending her statements, Minister Bandara explained that her country has secured a 25% quota for women at the local government level.

Next, Moderator, Mrs. Samarasinghe introduced Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Deputy Executive Director of UN Women. Ms. Puri began her statements by thanking Margo and Yvonne for organizing the meeting. She explained that Domestic Violence is a global pandemic and every country in the World has a problem with domestic violence. This issue is behind the walls and all families have been touched one way or another by domestic violence. Since violence is in the context of the family and the home, it is difficult to deal with it due to the "none of your business kind of attitude". This issue stays with you thought out your life. Men and boys are also critical for the issue and they should fight to stop all forms of violence against women. The CSW 57 themed: "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls" set out a road map to deal with violence against women" conclusions recognize that multiple forms of discrimination and other factors expose some women and girls to increased risk of violence, requiring targeted responses. Now gender equality agenda has become a sustainable development agenda. Goals 5.2 and 5.3 are about domestic violence and the movement to criminalize domestic violence has been growing worldwide. During the UNGA 70, Head of State and governments made commitments to end violence against women and promote gender equality. Ms. Puri ended her statements by explaining that the three campaigns: #HEFORSHE, #Planet5050, and #UntiedtoEndViolence have helped raise awareness of this major issue. Government agencies should work together to deal with the issue within their countries and NGOs are the biggest partners of Social Change.

Next, Moderator, Mrs. Samarasinghe introduced, Ms. Sarah Hague, Case Worker/District Representative who spoke on behalf of Honorable Ms. Carolyn B. Maloney U.S. Congressional Representative of New York District 12. My special thanks to Margo and Yvonne for inviting me here today and the work that they do every day to further this very important agenda. Representative Maloney gave a special thanks to, Honorable Mrs. Nana Oye Luther, Honorable Mrs. Sicily K. Kariuki and Ms. Honorable Ms. Chandrani Bandara Jayasingha and Ms. Lakshmi Puri. In Ms. Maloney's statements, Ms. Hague explained that ending the plague of violence against women and human trafficking is a must in the development agenda. This issue affects the lives of millions of women around the world and the lives of generations yet to come. It amazes me that in this day and age, people around the world still dismiss the importance of domestic violence as a global issue, human rights issue, economic issues and criminal justice issue. Moreover, she explained that in her work she has helped secure the passage of legislation to combat sex trafficking internationally and domestically. Representative Maloney is the lead democratic sponsor of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA). This bill was passed in the House in January 2015. It focuses on rescuing domestic victims, tracking down their exploiters, and prosecuting the criminals responsible for modern-day slavery. In 1994, she was the original cosponsor of the Violence Against Women Act (NAWA) when Congress passed it in 1994 and supported the previous renewals in 2000 and 2005 and 2013. Further, she also introduced The Human Trafficking Fraud Enforcement Act to enable the IRS to investigate sex traffickers for violations of tax laws. Today, 1.2 billion women are victims of domestic violence and although this number is starting to go down, we still have a long way to go. Government have failed their people and must work to protect them.

To close the meeting, H.E. Mr. Amrith Rohan Perera, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations made comments on the issue of gender based violence. He thanked everyone for the work they have been doing to further his agenda, specifically Co-Chairs, Margo and Yvonne, the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development and all the other co-sponsors of the meeting for working with the Mission of Sri Lanka in organizing the event. Moreover H.E. Mr. Perera thanked Honorable Mrs. Nana Oye Luther, Honorable Mrs. Sicily K. Kariuki and Ms. Honorable Ms. Chandrani Bandara Jayasingha, Honorable Ms. Carolyn B. Maloney, and Ms. Lakshmi Puri. They set the stage for the tone of this important complex issue. Through the respective of the national experiences we now have an insight in to possible approaches and solutions of this issues which is what this type of gathering is all about. He ended his statements by pledging Sri Lanka's continuing commitment to ending all forms for Gender Based Violence.

There was a spirited and honest Q & A session with those attending the meeting (both men and women) share some of their own personal stories and experiences with domestic violence. We all agreed to start an initiative to raise awareness with perhaps PSAs that the NGOCSD-NY would produce with other partner related to our Global Call to Action to Break the Cycle of Domestic Violence to truly Leave No One Behind.

Mrs. Samarasinghe and Co-Chairs Margo & Yvonne adjourned the meeting.

A Reception followed our meeting~