Opening Video – edited by Julia Goldsby (Cologne)

Introduction – My-Linh Kunst (Berlin)

Progress and Gaps – Sallie Chaballier (Paris)

Challenges to Implementation – Johanna Dishongh (The Hague)

Key Recommendations – Martha Canning (Amsterdam)

Next Steps – My-Linh

Personal Impressions – all

Thoughts from Bejing and Nairobi - Helen Hoostmann (The Hague)

Q/A

Video “Maybe It’s You” by Julia and Robin Goldsby

**TALKING NOTES**

**Introduction**

20 years ago was the 4th World Women Conference in Beijing where Hillary Clinton famously said “Women’s Rights are Human Rights”. Out of this came a Platform for Action – which was *foundational in its unapologetic call for gender equality*. This platform of action highlighted 12 critical areas of concern and set strategic objectives for each as well as outlined specific actions.

Hand-out (Platform of Action & strategic objectives)

Every 5 years, reviews are conducted (country & regional)– now in the review process for 20th anniversary (ie.Beijing +20 Review). In 2013, the UN member states passed a resolution asking that the 20-year-review of BPfA to take place at CSW 59, under the leadership of UN Women. In preparation for that, the five UN Regional Commissions have been conducting the Regional reviews to feed into global review. This will in turn, feed into the Post-2015 Agenda.

What is the Post-2015 Agenda?

The Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) are finishing next year and the new set of goals for the next 15 years will most likely be called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Objective is to have a stand-alone goal on gender equality and to streamline women’s issues into all of the SDGs.

The Geneva NGO FORUM – Bejing +20 UN ECE Regional Review was an opportunity for civil society (NGOs and women’s rights advocates in ECE Region) to give input to the country representatives of the ECE Region\* going into their Governmental +20 review meeting. The Forum was 3 days, and the Governmental review was the 2 days after. The Forum produced a declaration and recommendations – which were handed to the UN ECE government representatives.

The FORUM was organized by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (NGO CSW Geneva) and FAWCO’s UN Liaison, being vice-president of this CSW, was part of the organizing committee. FAWCO was very prominent in the Program being listed as 1) Vice-President of CSW and part of the organizing team, 2) Rapporteur in 3 sessions including the opening session and 3) FAWCO’s own Youth Ambassador Julia Goldsby and her mother Robin performed their original song for the Forum “Maybe It’s You” at the Closing session.

With 16 delegates from 12 clubs, FAWCO was one of the largest delegation (at least top 5).

**Where we stand 20 years later: achievements and gaps**

Achievements since the Beijing Platform for Action

* Increased access to education
* Lower maternal mortality, greater access to reproductive health care
* Stronger networks for women in civil society
* Greater voice for women in decision-making
* Stronger institutional frameworks for women
* Stronger normative, policy and legal frameworks to address women’s issues
* Improved data collection for empirical data
* Some increase in gender responsive budgeting
* Resolutions to combat violence against women
* Increased participation by women in government and the labor force
* More journalists trained to cover gender equality; more women media executives

Gaps between resolutions and reality

* Progress is uneven and incomplete in all areas
* Frameworks do not guarantee funding and implementation; human rights not enjoyed by all
* Rollback of some gains from 20 years ago: violence and extremism restrict women’s rights and safety; reproductive rights curtailed, lack of information on reproductive health especially for women at risk; economic empowerment limited, increasing poverty and marginalization; media and technology promote violent and sexist images and ideas
* Multiple crises (financial, energy, climate, food) have disproportionate negative impact on women
* Restrictions on civil society limit possibilities for civic engagement, little room allowed for women’s groups where civic discourse is curtailed
* Data collection is insufficient: data lacking disaggregated by individuals’ gender, marital status, age
* Women at greater risk of poverty, unemployment, violence; unrecognized care work places women at disadvantage
* Global financial crisis has reduced women’s rights to subtext rather than central component of sustainable development
* Multiple conflicts in various regions place women and girls at greater risk for violence and precarious existence
* Monitoring, accountability, resources and implementation depend largely on governments
* Violence against women not punished systematically, impunity persists in some countries
* Social norms and traditions perpetuate stereotypes and impede gender equality

Emerging issues

* Impact of globalization on women
* Aging, concerns of older women and widows
* Information and communications technologies
* Science and technology
* Climate change
* Increased migration, displacement and demographic changes
* Trafficking
* Violence against women
* Impact of divorce and inheritance laws

**Challenges to Implementation**

Lack of political will - or proactive political leadership on the issue

Underrepresentation of women in (gov’t) positions of power

Policies are too weak to implement

No funds for national gender plans – unfunded mandates

Growing fundamentalism – attack from ultra conservative circles and churches

Poverty – austerity measures had greater adverse impact on women (lack of decent jobs put them quickly into poverty, cuts in social programs caused more work (unpaid care)

Patriarchal society – must combat social norms and stereotypes

Women put family responsibility before career (motherhood penalty)

Armed conflict and political tension – Gender issues are always put on the back burner to any crisis

Social Disintegration – conflict of values, concentration of wealth, greater disparity between the “haves” and “have not”

Women underrepresented in media

Lack of CRVS – Certified Registered Vital Statistics – no birth certificate, no proof of age (against early/forced marriage), travel docs, etc

Migrants continue to move

Region needs:

Combat VAW (legal framework in place, but implementation has been slow and support for victims is in some places non existent)

Women in economy (decent jobs, gender pay equality)

Women in power and decision making positions

Large variances exist across the ECE region (and the world)

Notes on Implementation:

Passion and Perseverance are the road to Gender Equality

Areas that shape gender relations:

Social norms and traditions – must change stereotypes

Economic and political environment (austerity platforms, women in politics)

Legal Framework - All 3 must work together

Position on Gender Equality cannot be stand alone. We must look across all issues with the ‘gender lens’ – environment, trafficking, cyber crimes, natural disasters, conflict, etc.

Legal Framework comes from the top down. Change will come from civil society on the periphery.

Every woman (and man) deserves to live her (his) life free of fear (basic human right). CEDAW (Convention to End Discrimination of all forms Against Women) has been ratified by 188 countries including Afghanistan and Cuba. The United States is one of only seven countries—including Iran, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and two small Pacific Island nations (Palau and Tonga)—that have not yet ratified CEDAW.

Voice, Choice and Freedom from Violence

4th Wave of Feminism: Young women grew up believing/expecting Gender Equality and are not happy now to find out that it is not available to them.

Funding, Funding, Funding and Implementation, Implementation, Implementation – How could we ever forget.

**Next Steps**

🡪 UN ECE Regional Review (Nov 6-7, 2014)

🡪 CSW 59 Beijing +20 (March 9-20, 2015)

🡪 General Assembly (September 2015) to define the Sustainable Development Goals

Implications for FAWCO:

* CSW 59 attendance
* SDGs define priorities for our Global Issues work – which affects the clubs.