

**Zonta International United Nations Committee  
Individual Committee Member Report Form**

**Anlage 4**

**Relating to: (please check one)**

- Prevention of violence (including trafficking)
- Improving women's health and maternal health (fistula, FGM, information/education)
- Women's rights/human rights/CEDAW/Beijing +20
- Economic equity (WEPs, women's employment, ILO)
- Delay of early marriage
- Education

**Name of Committee Member**

**Meeting and Location**

Barbara Devin

**Geneva NGO Forum – Beijing+20  
UN ECE Regional Review 3-5 Nov**

**2014**

**Date of Meeting  
port**

**Date of Submitted Re-**

November 3-5, 2014

November 15, 2014

**ISSUES FROM THE PLENARY SESSIONS**

Compared to nearly 20 years ago - Beijing 1995 - **progress has been made** to advance the status of women:

- Issue of women's rights and human rights have occupied since then all agendas and forums and conferences dealing with women.
- Multiple women oriented goals have been formulated, recommendations for action have been put forward.
- Not only the UN but also an enormous number of NGOs, social societies and other private initiatives/stakeholders have formed to fight for women's wellbeing that they succeed to live up to their natural right.

**In spite of** these successful efforts of all parties actively involved very little progress has been achieved to really and widespread alleviate women's status - to name the most important: violence against women, gender equality and education. Even in "developed" countries a substantial gap between goals and achievements remains - in most areas of concern. Time for action is now - instead of more laws, regulations, treaties, conferences!

**NGOs and civil societies and grass root organizations have worked hard** around the world and accordingly have found great acceptance at the UN. But both parties are tired of rhetorical and regulations. A certain fatigue has spread of making new and refined laws - to combat trafficking, to eliminate violence, to enforce laws to achieve gender balance... -

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**This Forum demands explicitly action.** NGOs /social societies feel somewhat powerless in face of global developments like

- Criminalization of transnational trade
- Weak political will / conviction to "grant" human right to women
- The overriding power of economic and financial issues
- The actual economic/financial crisis
- The spreading of terrorism / fundamentalism in all areas - politics, economy, religion, social structure, value systems....
- Militarism

**The Forum reclaims action in particular concerning preparation of the Post 2015 Agenda** and definition of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs. Which are expected to succeed the Millennium Development Goals MDGs

In particular specific **NGOs and specialized social societies engage tirelessly for women's status.** UN committees and bodies cooperate intensively with them. The **UN appreciates the expertise, competence and – above all the - practical experience which the NGOs,** social societies and grass root initiatives bring into the discussions and in the executorial work!

**This Forum explicitly calls for evaluating and monitoring** the actions being implemented according to laws, regulations, conventions that countries /parliaments have agreed upon and ratified. Here lays the only tool /mecha-nism, to point out the problem areas and to highlight the success. The forum urges for unconditioned **commitment and accountability** of governments /society to UN conventions – f.ex. CEDAW. Advocacy and lobby work become unchanged importance. In this context improved statistics, data research is needed. Again NGOs and the like should continue to take up these tasks consequently and prepare **shadow reports.**

**Violence against women represents THE prevalent problem** across all sectors, branches, rational and emotional levels and positions. Violence against women remains high – increases purely due to population growth! The Forum clearly stated the **failure of justice** to assist victims – women and girls. There are available sufficient laws and regulations worldwide to take action.

Women's right occupies the focus – **but men suffer at the same time.** Women's problems are more accurately described – and tackled – by a focus on "gender balance" – instead. Problems of which women suffer are basically problems of the entire society – men, women, children, family, politicians,

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leaders.... Gender issues are relevant across all sectors and demographics.

**Target groups which lack attention:** Inclusion of elder women, widows, disabled women, girls, rural women.

Finally, a philosopher encouraged the audience to keep up the pressure for change. **Change comes from the periphery, not from the center** which does not move and becomes inflexible. The center will not develop but stick to the achievements so far. It is the pressure from everywhere else, from outside - from the periphery that has the drive and the creativity. As consequence , the center - eventually - fades and collapses. And a new powerful center develops...

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