

Statement to the Anglican Consultative Council from Anglican Women attending the  
52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York  
25 February – 7 March 2008.

Introduction

We are a group of over 125 women from 30 countries on 6 continents who gathered as representatives from all parts of the Anglican Communion to attend the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, “Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women”.

Each day we had the opportunity to worship together. We reflected on the Scriptures, the daughters of Zelophehad (Numbers 27: 1–11), the midwives defying the order to kill the Hebrew baby boys (Exodus 1:15–32), the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:25–30), the widow with the two coins (Luke 21: 1–4), the persistent widow (Luke 18:1–5). We prayed and sang together. We also recalled the example of Jesus Christ, His commitment to distributive justice and the many recorded examples of His personal empowerment of women. We shared our stories and heard current-day versions of the ancient problems of poverty, powerlessness and violence against women. Improvements in the status of women are happening, but slowly.

Our Anglican Consultative Council and the Lambeth Conference 1998 endorsed the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. We were reminded that governments and organizations had failed to meet Goal 3 concerning the empowerment of women and girls by the target date of 2005. However, our Anglican Consultative Council began to move toward equal participation of women with men in decision-making bodies, by passing resolution ACC 13-31 in 2005. We were happy to be able to report that, but we lacked evidence to say what progress was being made on implementing this at the ACC or in provinces or dioceses.

Theme of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UNCSW: Financing For Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

During this CSW, the World Bank launched a new book, “Equality for Women: Where Do We Stand?” showing clearly that where financial resources are provided, significant improvement toward MDG 3 are made. The Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, launched a campaign to end violence against women. It is clear that without adequate resources, women cannot escape the cycle of violence. When countries and organizations endorse UN agreements and programs, they must be able to show what actions they have taken. We listened to several days of reports by governments on their successes and failures, and by NGOs on their programs for seeking equality and empowerment for women and girls.

One financial strategy for empowerment is the direct allocation of resources for specific programs for women and girls. Another strategy for measuring success is budget analysis. This does not call for separate budgets for women but gives a breakdown of our prospective budgets to show how women and men benefit from these. Gender budget analysis asks how each budget allocation either benefits women and girls, or negatively impacts them. This is important because the evidence is clear that without the resources to make the fulfillment of MDG 3 a reality, urban, rural and indigenous women and girls are stuck within a cycle of poverty and powerlessness to escape violence.

A gender analysis of the Anglican Consultative Council would ask questions like:

- i) What percentage of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s time is spent in meetings, on projects, travels, that benefit women and girls?

- ii) What percentage of the money that provinces send to the ACC benefits women and girls?
- iii) In the ACC budget, what percentage directly benefits women and girls?

#### Why should ACC/ our Church get behind and commit to Gender Financing and Empowerment of Women?

We believe that the Church has a moral imperative to join with the United Nations by committing to the equitable distribution of resources between women and men within our church community. It can then become a model which the private business sector, governments and other institutions might follow.

#### What can the Church do?

We commend ACC on its proactive initiative in passing Resolution ACC13-31. We believe that the Church is in a unique position to be an example by instituting gender responsive budgeting at all levels. We would encourage the ACC to lead the way in this by starting with its own budget and encouraging the provinces and diocese to do likewise. Then they could also be a role model to other organizations in society. This means that women's perspectives need to be incorporated at the places of decision-making (ACC 13-31) so that God's kingdom becomes more whole.

We also recommend that, in all its statistics (membership, functions, activities), the church produce disaggregated quantities so that the impact on men/boys, women/girls is more clear.

We would also request that ACC pass a new resolution on gender sensitive budgeting in the Church as this will help in the practical realization of Resolution ACC13-31. By adopting gender responsive budgeting, women being the neediest and the poorest of the poor, will be directly impacted by the resultant mobilization of resources. Additional resources will lead to improvement in maternal health, educational attainment and an ability to receive just wages for their work. This will positively impact on the lives and health of their children and the girls who are the women of subsequent generations.

#### Benefits to the Church

We know that where gender sensitive budgeting occurs and resources are mobilized for the benefit of the empowerment of women, families and communities are strengthened. This equitable distribution returns dignity and choice to both women and men and broadens the opportunities for them to fully live into the life that God intends.

#### Conclusion

We are excited by the possibilities that gender equality in financing and the empowerment of women offers for the women of our Communion, our communities and our world. We who have attended the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UNCSW have learned the benefits of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women. We commit ourselves to speaking about this in our home provinces and to educating other women to take their places at the tables where budgeting and financial planning are done.

We ask you to support our resolution that, "ACC supports education for women and men in the understanding of gender sensitive allocation of resources".

We would ask you, the members of the ACC, to partner with us by taking this approach to your provinces for implementation, for you are in a unique position to ensure that this dream becomes a reality.

*New York, 2 March 2008*