

**Statement from the Anglican Communion Delegation at the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations  
Commission on the Status of Women, March 2013**

## **A Call to Raise our Voices; Faith in Action**

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.  
Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

*Isaiah 1.17*

We, the Anglican Communion delegation of women from 16 countries, gathered in New York, 4 to 15 March 2013, to participate in the 57th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW57). The priority theme for UN CSW57 was 'The Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls'.

As women of faith and representing the diversity of the Anglican family of Churches, we observed the proceedings of UN CSW57 and listened to a wide range of speakers. Where possible we met face to face with our country missions to the UN in order to advocate directly with them on behalf of women and girls in our different regions. We also participated in a full programme of UN and non-governmental side events dedicated to the priority theme. These meetings and side events gave us an opportunity to learn, and to share insights and concerns from our home contexts with government representatives, members of other church and faith traditions and non-governmental organisations. We were also able to share with others the progress we have made in many of our Churches, where leaders have spoken out and championed the work needed to end violence against women and girls and care for survivors, and where resources have been developed to assist our moving forward.

We thank God for the progress we have made. However, violence against women and girls continues as a global and often hidden pandemic.

Women and girls make up more than half the world's population but many of them live in the shadow of violence and abuse with up to seven in ten women having undergone physical and/or sexual violence. Violence against women and girls takes on multiple forms - physical, sexual, psychological, social and economic, and includes interpersonal/domestic violence, rape, human trafficking, female genital mutilation and forced prostitution. It is a proven fact that violence against women and girls adversely impacts all of society. Violence against women and girls is a cause and consequence of gender inequality and gender injustice, compounded by numerous forms of discrimination.

The Church worldwide must be part of the solution. We therefore urge all the Churches of the Anglican Communion:

1. to continue and build on the positive work already being undertaken towards the eradication of violence against women and girls
2. where silence and inaction persist, to end it. Speak out and begin the work.
3. to include men and boys as an integral part of seeking solutions to, and eradicating violence against women and girls

4. to implement Anglican Consultative Council Resolutions 15.07 on gender-based and domestic violence<sup>1</sup> and 15.10 on the trafficking of persons<sup>2</sup>
5. to encourage churches at parish level to become places of refuge and safety and participate actively in addressing violence against women and girls
6. to create awareness and provide training for clergy and the laity to recognise violence and to address it effectively.

We draw attention to existing resources around the Anglican Communion to facilitate and empower churches in their work towards eradicating violence against women and girls.

We affirm that all people are made in the image of God and that violence against women and girls mars God's creation. We also affirm that Scripture brings the message of freedom, justice and love.

We call our Churches to recover their prophetic voice in speaking out against the gross injustice of violence against women and girls.

We challenge our Churches to become agents of justice, peace and reconciliation. Reconciliation must be preceded by transformation and accountability. As the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, recently reflected: 'There is a challenge to active cooperation with the life of God in our lives now. We live and we serve. The recognition by the Samaritan of the other as his neighbour leads to action, not mere existence. He becomes a herald of reconciliation.'

We are deeply grateful to the Anglican Communion Office at the UN for facilitating and supporting the Anglican presence at UN CSW57, and to The Episcopal Church for offering us space and a warm welcome within the Episcopal Church Center. We also extend heartfelt thanks to the many volunteers who so generously gave of their time to extend to us hospitality and care. We enjoyed and benefitted considerably from the fellowship of other Anglican and Episcopal women and men present in New York for events surrounding UN CSW57, and sincerely appreciated our interaction with Ecumenical Women, an international coalition of churches and ecumenical organisations which have status with the Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations.

We commit ourselves to promoting the Five Marks of Mission, and in particular to seeking to transform unjust structures of society, challenging violence of every kind and pursuing peace and reconciliation. We pray for God's grace and guidance as we strive to participate in God's transforming mission in the world.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc15/resolutions.cfm#s7](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc15/resolutions.cfm#s7)

<sup>2</sup> [www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc15/resolutions.cfm#s10](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc15/resolutions.cfm#s10)