

FWWPI participates in the UN Commission on the Status of Women

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Ms. Christelle Ngama spoke of her experiences as a Congolese refugee

The Women's Federation for World Peace International (FWWPI) has participated for the past thirteen years in the annual sessions of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the mission of which is the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

This year, the fifty-ninth annual session of CSW runs March 9–March 20 and includes more than 450 parallel events. The theme is "Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action," referring to the fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. As a young organization, in only its third year, FWWPI was fortunate to participate in this conference. Ms. Maureen Reagan, daughter of the late Ronald Reagan (president of the United States, 1981-1989), led FWWPI's delegation of several hundreds of members.



Yeon Ah Moon, president of FWWPI

Prof. Yeon Ah Moon, president of FWWPI; and Ms. Carolyn Handschin, director of the FWWPI UN Office; led our delegation for CSW 59, which included close to seventy FWWPI leaders, members and guests from ten countries. FWWPI leaders included international vice presidents, secretary-generals, national chapter presidents, FWWPI UN representatives, interns and staff members.

FWWPI participated in CSW 59 on a number of levels, beginning with the NGO CSW New York Consultation Day, which was held in the historic Apollo Theater in Harlem on Sunday, March 8. One highlight of this event was a heartwarming presentation by the honorable, highly respected Gertrude Mongella, who is affectionately referred to as "Mama," who was under-secretary general of the UN from 1996 to 1997, and the first president of the Pan-African Parliament.

On Monday, March 9, Prof. Yeon Ah Moon, our president, attended the opening session of CSW 59.

The speakers included Ban Ki Moon, the UN secretary general and Dr.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the UN Women executive director, who introduced the session by saying, "The wonderful thing about this panel is that we talk about possibilities, we talk about triumph and we talk about excellence that women and girls bring to the field."

WFWPI held a parallel event at the Armenian Convention Center with the theme, "Young Women and Leadership: Education, Opportunities, and Obstacles," from 12:30–2:00 PM, on March 9, which two hundred and seventy guests attended, including student delegations from six schools in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey. Montage Initiative, WFWP-USA and the World Youth Alliance cosponsored the event.



The speakers, from the Congo, Iran and Canada, covered the topic "Young Women and Leadership: Education, Opportunities, and Obstacles"

On the following day, we hosted a luncheon in the UN headquarters building in New York, which over a hundred leaders, members and friends of WFWPI attended. The keynote speaker was Ms. Patience W. Stephens, special advisor for education, from UN Women. President Moon presented the vision of WFWPI's founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.



Director Handschin gave a presentation entitled "WFWPI and the Beijing Platform for Action." Ms. Tokuko Sato, a Tsugaru kite artist from Japan, presented gifts of custom-made kites to the speakers, high-level guests and WFWPI leaders. WFWPI President Moon and Director Handschin and Alexa Ward, deputy director of the WFWPUI UN Office, presented gifts to the speakers as well as to the parallel event panelists and moderators.

WFWPI was pleased to be among the participants attending the Planet 5050 event, held in the Manhattan Center on Tuesday evening, March 10, which featured UN Secretary General Ban, Hillary Clinton (a former US secretary of state 2009–2013) and Mr. Bill de Blasio, mayor of New York City.

Mrs. Clinton had made a strong impression in the World Conference on Women in Beijing, which she attended during her husband, Bill Clinton's term in office as president of the United States (1993-2001).

The WFWPI delegation attended dozens of side events, sponsored by governments and UN entities in the UN headquarters, as well as parallel events organized by NGOs that were held in the UN Church Center, Salvation Army, and Armenian Convention Center. A group of six WFWPI young adults attended an advocacy training session, which helped them to better understand the process afforded by CSW to influence governments and policies in the area of women. Both the side events and the parallel events offered an extraordinary opportunity for meeting the highest level leaders in the organizations sponsoring CSW, as well as networking opportunities with NGOs throughout the two weeks.

One of the best parts of this period was the opportunity to spend time with Professor Moon. Throughout the week in informal settings, as well as at dinner meetings, which she hosted on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening, Prof. Moon shared deeply about the founder's vision and lifestyle and how these apply to WFWPI. Leaders had the opportunity to meet and assess WFWPI's status as an organization and to consider how to develop to the next level.

WFWPI would like to acknowledge the hard work of the UN team members and the growing involvement of young adults in its work.

They are looking forward to participating in CSW 60 and are planning for greater impact and involvement.