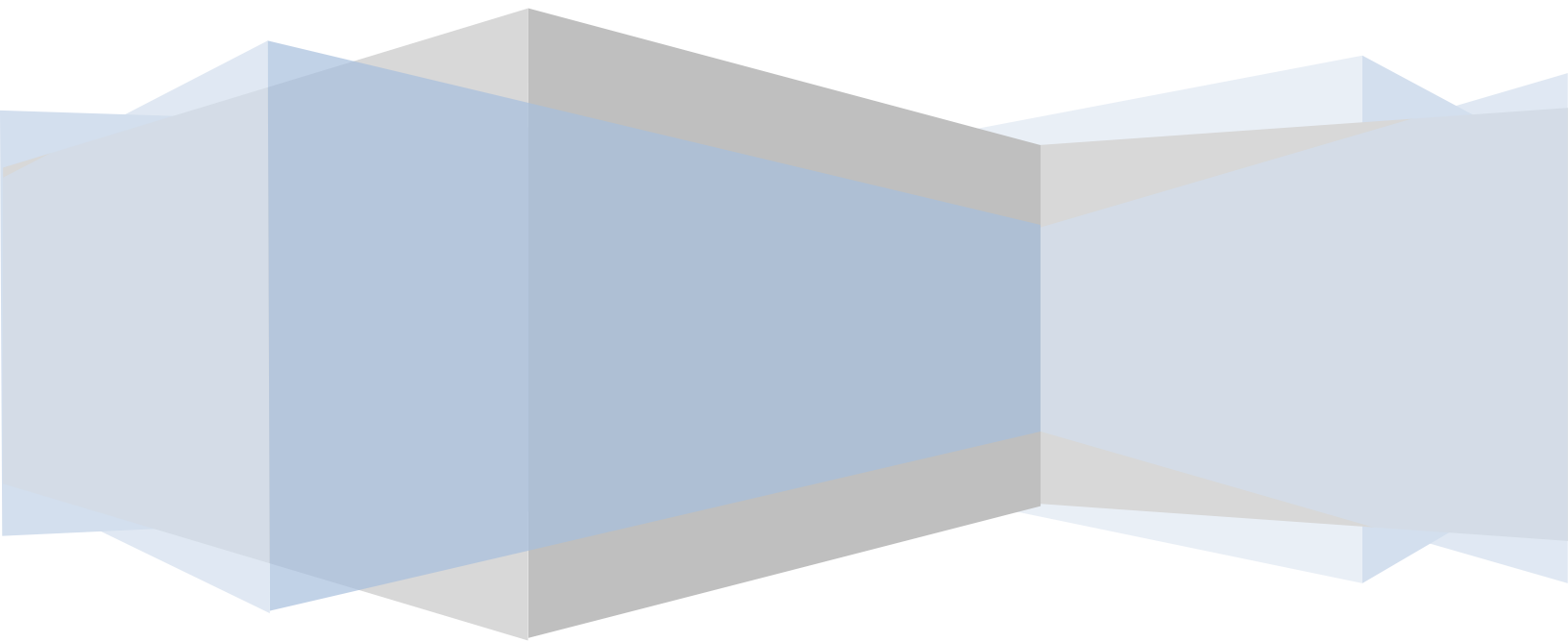


LL.B VI SEMESTER

LAW RELATING TO WOMEN AND CHILD

CSW

ASOK KUMAR



Commission on the Status of Women(CSW)

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946. The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) first met at Lake Success, New York, in February 1947, soon after the founding of the United Nations. All 15 government representatives were women. From its inception, the Commission was supported by a unit of the United Nations that later became the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in the UN Secretariat. The CSW forged a close relationship with non-governmental organizations, with those in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) invited to participate as observers.

From 1947 to 1962, the Commission focused on setting standards and formulating international conventions to change discriminatory legislation and foster global awareness of women's issues. In contributing to the drafting of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the CSW successfully argued against references to "men" as a synonym for humanity, and succeeded in introducing new, more inclusive language. Since the codification of the legal rights of women needed to be supported by data and analysis, the Commission embarked on a global assessment of the status of women. Extensive research produced a detailed, country-by-country picture of their political and legal standing, which over time became a basis for drafting human rights instruments.

The Commission drafted the early international conventions on women's rights, such as the 1953 **Convention on the Political Rights of Women**, which was the first international law instrument to recognize and protect the political rights of women; and the first international agreements on women's rights in marriage, namely the 1957 **Convention on the Nationality of Married Women**, and the 1962 **Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages**. The Commission also contributed to the work of UN offices, such as the International Labour Organization's 1951 **Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value**, which enshrined the principle of equal pay for equal work.

In 1963, efforts to consolidate standards on women's rights led the UN General Assembly to request the Commission to draft a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which the Assembly ultimately adopted in 1967. The legally binding **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, also drafted by the Commission, followed in 1979. In 1999, the **Optional Protocol to the Convention** introduced the right of petition for women victims of discrimination. As evidence began to accumulate in the 1960s that women were disproportionately affected by poverty, the work of the Commission centred on women's needs in community and rural development, agricultural work, family planning, and scientific and technological advances. The Commission encouraged the UN system to

expand its technical assistance to further the advancement of women, especially in developing countries.

In 1972, to mark its 25th anniversary, the Commission recommended that 1975 be designated International Women's Year—an idea endorsed by the General Assembly to draw attention to women's equality with men and to their contributions to development and peace. The year was marked by holding the **First World Conference on Women** in Mexico City, followed by the 1976–1985 UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. Additional world conferences took place in **Copenhagen** in 1980 and **Nairobi** in 1985. New UN offices dedicated to women were established, in particular the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

In 1987, as part of follow-up to the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, the Commission took the lead in coordinating and promoting the UN system's work on economic and social issues for women's empowerment. Its efforts shifted to promoting women's issues as cross-cutting and part of the mainstream, rather than as separate concerns. In the same period, the Commission helped bring violence against women to the forefront of international debates for the first time. These efforts resulted in the **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women** adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 1993. In 1994, a UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences was appointed by the Commission on Human Rights, with a mandate to investigate and report on all aspects of violence against women.

The Commission served as the preparatory body for the 1995 **Fourth World Conference on Women**, which adopted the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**. After the conference, the Commission was mandated by the General Assembly to play a central role in monitoring implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and advising ECOSOC accordingly. As called for in the Platform for Action, an additional UN office for the promotion of gender equality was established: the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI).

UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work. We also facilitate the participation of civil society representatives.

Methods of work

The Commission adopts **multi-year programmes of work** to appraise progress and make further recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action. These recommendations take the form of negotiated agreed conclusions on a priority theme. The Commission also contributes to the follow-up to the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Under its current methods of work, established by ECOSOC resolution 2015/6, at each session the Commission:

- Convenes a ministerial segment to reaffirm and strengthen political commitment to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as well as their human rights, and to ensure high-level engagement and the visibility of the deliberations of the Commission, including through ministerial round tables or other high-level interactive dialogues to exchange experiences, lessons learned, and good practices;

- Engages in general discussion on the status of gender equality, identifying goals attained, achievements made, and efforts under way to close gaps and meet challenges;
- Convenes interactive expert panel discussions and other interactive dialogues on steps and initiatives to accelerate implementation and measures to build capacities for mainstreaming gender equality across policies and programmes;
- Considers one priority theme, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Evaluates progress in implementing agreed conclusions from previous sessions as a review theme;
- Discusses emerging issues, trends, focus areas, and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, including equality between women and men, that require timely consideration;
- Considers in closed meeting the report of its Working Group on Communications;
- Agrees on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions;
- Contributes gender perspectives to the work of other intergovernmental bodies and processes;
- Reports on the aspects relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women of the agreed main theme of the Economic and Social Council, in order to contribute to its work; and
- Celebrates International Women's Day on 8 March, when it falls within its session.

Programme of work

The Commission elaborated a multi-year programme of work for the first time in 1987, containing priority themes for discussion and action at its annual sessions, per ECOSOC resolution 1987/24. Subsequently, multi-year programmes of work were adopted in 1996 in ECOSOC resolution 1996/6 (see p. 20), in 2001 in ECOSOC resolution 2001/4, in 2006 in ECOSOC resolution 2006/9, in 2009 in ECOSOC resolution 2009/15, in 2013 in ECOSOC resolution 2013/18, and in 2016 in ECOSOC resolution 2016/3. The theme for 2020 was determined in ECOSOC resolution 2018/8. A new multi-year programme of work is to be adopted by ECOSOC in 2020.

Based on the resolutions from 2013, 2016, and 2018, priority and review themes for 2015–2020 are:

- **2015:** Review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and of the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, the first five-year assessment conducted after the adoption of the Platform for Action, which highlighted further actions and initiatives. The session also addressed opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.
- **2016:** Priority theme: Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development. Review theme: The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (agreed conclusions of the fifty-seventh session).

- **2017:** Priority theme: Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. Review theme: Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls (agreed conclusions of the fifty-eighth session).
- **2018:** Priority theme: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. Review theme: Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women (agreed conclusions of the forty-seventh session).
- **2019:** Priority theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development (agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session).
- **2020:** Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development