Week One of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) Update

Friday the 16th of March brings to a close the first week of an incredibly busy Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) for IPA in New York. After welcoming IPA’s short term representatives: Janet Cribbes (Australia), Billie Greenwood (USA) and Rowena Weng (Philippines) to the city and IPA late last week, the office and the UN headquarters have been abuzz with excitement and inspirational women. Among such women is the current commission’s bureau President, H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason of Ireland, who gave an empowering speech during the commission’s opening. A former presentation school graduate, this woman is most certainly someone we as the IPA community should be proud of.

The annual CSW is the United Nations principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. This year (CSW62), the commissions priority theme is “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”. This is a theme IPA and its members are well versed in. This two-week session has been laden with opportunities for our six representatives to learn from experts and others on this topic, network with other civil society entities and nation states. We have also been able to share our own experiences and knowledge and take part in women’s advocacy at its finest. This commission is also the primary platform for discussing progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5). Also being raised, are emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women at an international level.

In conjunction with official meetings and round table discussions, where key themes were discussed, each representative has had the opportunity to attend and be involved in various side and parallel events. With well over 500 side and parallel events, majority of which occurred during this first week, everyone has had extremely busy schedules. Deciding to divide and concur, each IPA rep has spent the week focusing on a
specific area of interest to them, their region and the organisation. Personally, I focused on issues relating to indigenous people and climate. I also attended event specifically aimed at participants form the Asia Pacific region. One such event was the Asia Pacific Civil Society CORCUS where we had the opportunity to put forward any suggestion we had for a document NGO CSW will submit to the bureau. Throughout the week it has been extremely encouraging to see the level of civil society involvement. However, what is even more encouraging is the number of delegates attending and interacting and willing to listen to society especially at side events.

As well as attending events IPA also co-sponsored a very successful event named **Women as Change Makers: Empowering Stories of Rural Women and Girls**. Among the fantastic panel was our very own Rowena. Addressing the large crowd with absolute eloquence Rowena’s presentation on empowering youth and indigenous women in the Philippines left us feeling empowered and hopeful for the future of rural and indigenous women. I was personally left feeling proud to be associated with her work at the work of presentation people in her region. Looking forward to the second week and more IPA action with myself (Molly) a panellist on a the CSW side event named **Shouldering the Burden: Rural Women and Climate Induced Displacement**


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