ENGENDERING THE UN ARCHITECTURE:

FEMINIST ADVOCACY IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UN WOMEN

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Since its inception, the United Nations has been shaped by a multitude of actors. From Member States to academics to civil society, the UN is a unique space where individuals from diverse political, sociological and economic backgrounds join together in an effort to maintain international security and achieve world peace through advancing a development agenda and human rights framework. From its founding, the UN has expanded its presence worldwide as well as enriched its programs and capacities comprised of a wide range of issues including women's rights. In my thesis, I explore the multi-layered history of women's rights organizing at the United Nations in an effort to grasp its most recent creation, UN Women. I seek to determine the significance of the impact that women's rights activists have had on the United Nations and explain the importance of feminist activism in global governance. Therefore, this study analyzes how women's rights advocates have impacted the United Nations reform process on gender equality architecture.

Women's rights advocates have been unrelenting in their efforts to establish a more coherent and robust women's agency at the United Nations (UN). The Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign was created to monitor the United Nations reform process and actively lobby for a stronger women-specific agency within the UN. This Campaign proved to be a galvanizing force at a moment when civil society involvement in

the UN has been curtailed. Based on primary sources and qualitative findings, I can explain the high level engagement among women's rights activists and identify the significance of the GEAR Campaign's contribution to the creation of UN Women. By using qualitative methods, I gained empirical knowledge of the impact advocates had on the reform process since 2005. GEAR has not only ensured the creation of UN Women, but also strategically shaped its form.

My intention with this project is straightforward: I hoped to see what added-value a civil society campaign had on the creation of a UN entity and to document the strategic dedication of women's rights activists in the development of a global organization tasked to meet the needs of women and girls worldwide. Without a doubt, GEAR was a significant force in ensuring that UN Women was structured to serve women systematically and methodically. Along the way, those advocating for its creation experienced the difficulties created by the UN bureaucracy unflinchingly. Many processes proved overly technical, painfully slow, inconsistent and erratic. When GEAR proponents believed they were close to achieving their goal, the process regressed. Thus feminist activists employed key strategies to advocate for the foundations of a more effective United Nations. They sought to value the lives of women holistically not only in the UN's programming on gender equality and women's empowerment, but by restructuring the organization's gender architecture.

Preface, with acknowledgments

Since 2005, I have been privileged to witness the exceptional advocacy of the global women's rights and feminist movements. As an activist and employee of the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) based at Rutgers University, I am indebted to the countless conversations I have observed and been engaged in with fearless and passionate feminists at CWGL and worldwide. It is because of those individuals and inspiring organizations that I am hopeful and encouraged that a more just world is possible. The work of feminists is complex and tiresome, and I am constantly motivated and challenged by the ways in which new paradigms for global change emerge.

Without the guidance and insight of key players from the GEAR Campaign, this project would not have been possible. Particularly, I would like to thank Lydia Alpizar, Mabel Bianco, Naisola Likimani, Bandana Rana, and Daniela Rosche for their thoughtful analyses, which facilitated my exploration of the challenges and successes of the campaign. Similarly, Joanne Sandler provided me with a glimpse into how the gender architecture process unfolded from within the United Nations, a perspective that was lacking within my analysis.

I owe a great deal of thanks to a team of close colleagues, friends, and family who have been an enormous base of support for me over the last two years while I pursued my Masters at the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University part-time. Some may have read my thesis while others just listened to me agonize over its detail. Of course, I must especially thank my mother who read through my first iterations without completely understanding the topic and my father for his continued encouragement; both have been a constant source of strength for me.

Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
APWW	Asia Pacific Women's Watch
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CWGL	Center for Women's Global Leadership
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era,
FEMNET	African Women's Development & Communication Network
GEAR	Gender Equality Architecture Reform
GFP	Global Focal Point
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
OSAGI	Office of the Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Gender Issues
RFP	Regional Focal Point
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WEDO	Women's Environmental and Development Organization
WIDE	Network Women in Development

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

UN Women was not created in a vacuum. This *gender entity*, as it is labeled by the UN, was created by women's rights advocates located within the United Nations, within government offices and by activists outside of the UN. Most notably, a little known civil society project entitled the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign that identified debilitating gaps in the UN's programming on women, low level of funding for its gender equality initiatives, and ineffective country presence for addressing pervasive violations of women's rights. Feminist organizations and civil society played a critical role in the creation of UN Women through the endeavors of the GEAR Campaign. This campaign and other civil society initiatives such as the GEAR Campaign must be added to the intellectual history of global governance as women continue to identify the UN as a site to effectively promote gender equality and women's human rights holistically.

After five years of campaigning by GEAR, supporters of the creation of a robust and strengthened gender entity saw their vision implemented when UN Women was established in June 2010 by a resolution adopted unanimously by the General Assembly. A few members from the GEAR Campaign Working Group gathered to celebrate this greatly anticipated outcome. It was at this meeting where I first considered the possibility of writing in-depth about the campaign's energy and success. This campaign was relatively unknown beyond those directly involved, yet a study of GEAR can help scholars and activists ascertain the challenges that feminists faced and the strategies employed during this period. Moreover, this latest materialization of women's rights and feminist advocacy at the UN embodies the sustained presence of global women's movements in the

organization's development over the last six decades. I seek to address the intersections between global feminist activism and global governance and concomitantly chronicle the GEAR Campaign.

Although there have been numerous women's rights milestones and legal standards adopted to eliminate gender inequalities since the United Nations was formed, the geopolitical challenges that women experience daily are continually transformed into contemporary forms of inequality. Globally, women confront daily economic and social violations that thwart access to vital resources affecting their ability to live with full human dignity and with human rights as articulated in the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Indisputably, women are affected differently than men by worldwide phenomena such as globalization, conflict and crises because of how inequalities are produced and reproduced in the family, the community and the state. Worldwide there are serious disparities in the education of girls and boys and consequently women are two thirds of the world's 774 million adult illiterates, a statistic that has not changed over the past two decades (Mrkić, 2010). In parliaments, corporations and the United Nations, women are still underrepresented in senior leadership and high-powered positions. For many women globally, basic standards of living, such as access to nutritional food and safe drinking water are unattainable. More than 60 percent of all young people living with HIV are women between the ages of 15 and 24 (Opportunity in Crisis, 2011). Rates of HIV/AIDs among females increase with the presence of gender inequality, violence against women and maternal mortality (Menon-Sen, 2005). Furthermore, violence against women and girls occurs at different rates globally, but it is inescapable and persists within and outside

of the home. Thus, even while women's rights and gender equality indicators have been adopted through numerous UN resolutions, conventions and other legal human rights documents, women still experience widespread inequality.

In the last decade, the world has been altered by the attacks of September 11, 2001, the global financial crisis and a re-emergent imperialism appearing under new guises. Struggles that women face today involve new sets of actors, often functioning in neoliberal economies, and pervasive forms of violence that undermine the effectiveness of the UN. The UN system must respond to current situations differently than it has in the past, which is particularly significant vis-à-vis the operation of its women's machineries. The United Nations provides a concrete channel for engaging in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment as it facilitates intergovernmental processes to address ongoing and emerging global challenges. Ideally, the UN should help build national capacity to develop policies that concentrate on eliminating gender inequalities. While some progress has been made, some critics see the UN as weak, superfluous and too often *mouthpiece* to drive the donor agenda. Challenging these notions would require an overall reform of the system. To meet the current and new demands of women globally, then, the United Nations has had to transform its internal structure.

Women in 2011 continue to face persistent inequalities in the work place, in the home, and in daily life. What is clear is that although the UN is an bureaucratic system, considering its flaws and limitations, it continues to provide a strategic environment where activists, governments and policy makers assemble to address key global issues, including women's human rights. Nonetheless, before the creation of UN Women, the strength of the

UN's gender architecture and the system's vision for gender equality worldwide was inadequate and limited.

From the United Nations inception women rights activists and feminists have been key players in shaping its agenda and remain active participants in the UN today. Women's equality was written into the United Nations through the UN Charter in 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 because of the efforts of a small group of women. This story has been shared over six decades through interviews, documentaries and historical analyses. The arduous struggle for gender equality globally continues and the UN offers women a unique political space to elicit government support for women's rights. Although this space brings with it contradictions and at moments a sense of false hope, women's rights advocates can leverage the UN's positive impact on the world. The organization provides a useful space for civil society to interact with government representatives and for both to translate policy to country specific action. It thus provides a critical interface between government policy and the lives of people on the ground.

The Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign is a civil society network of over 300 human rights and women's rights organizations worldwide that was created to monitor the United Nations reform process and actively lobby for a stronger women-specific agency within the UN. This global campaign proved to be a galvanizing force at a moment when civil society involvement in the UN has been curtailed.

GEAR sought to advance women's rights within an organization with a long history of addressing global issues, including inequalities based on sex and gender. The campaign began with the objective to, "build a UN that really works for all women!"

Advocates called upon the UN and demanded that the new gender entity have robust funding, operational capacity, an esteemed leader, and meaningful civil society participation. Its aim was to position a UN women's rights organization at the same level as other UN agencies like UNICEF and UNFPA.

GEAR offers an important window into the interplay between women's rights and feminist advocates and the United Nations. Without a doubt, GEAR was a significant force in ensuring that UN Women was structured to serve women systematically and methodically. Thus feminist activists employed key strategies to advocate for the foundations of a more effective United Nations.

UN Background

In 1919, the League of Nations was formed from the Versailles Treaty of which the purpose was to prevent war through an international organization. The members of the organization had to pledge to not go to war. Eventually, the League of Nations met its demise due to weak enforcement mechanisms in its framework (Shaw, 2003, p. 30). The League failed to thwart events that led to wars in Asia and in Europe and thus did not achieve its mandate (Langhorne, 2006, p. 81). From the League emerged another international organization that still exists today, the United Nations was created sixty years ago.

The United Nations, created immediately created after World War II, focuses on maintaining peace, developing amicable relations amongs nations, and solving international issues of a economic, social, cultural and humanitarian nature (Shaw, 2003, p. 1205). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted on December 10, 1948, proclaims that all individuals have the entitlement, "to equality before

the law and to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind and proceeds to include sex among the grounds of such impermissible distinction" (UNIFEM CEDAW History). Following the UDHR, legally binding conventions were created such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both dated 1966. The former is described as positive rights while the latter is negative rights. During the Cold War, many Western countries were more interested in addressing the ICCPR while socialist and third world countries focused on the ICESCR. The polarization of these conventions created further tensions between in the global North and South working in intergovernmental settings.

Proposal

Over the last five years, the UN has undergone a process of reform in general and of its gender equality architecture in particular in the effort to make the system more efficient. With critical informal guidance and pressure from women's rights movements, the United Nations finally created a high level and autonomous gender specific entity. The GEAR Campaign was a civil society force built on the previous efforts of women's rights activists at the UN. In my analysis of the GEAR Campaign, I attempt to uncover strategies of women's organizing within the United Nations in an effort to understand the creation of this new entity. I want to determine the significance of the impact that women's rights activists have had on the United Nations. Therefore, I ask, how did women's rights advocates shape the United Nations gender equality architecture reform process?

By the early 2000s there was a strong consensus that reform was needed throughout the UN and specifically in its gender entities: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI), and the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). In 2004, an Independent Advisory Committee panel on UNIFEM revealed that while UNIFEM was created to assume high-level policy advocacy within the UN, the low level of its leadership meant it could not even be at the tables where high-level decisions were being made. For example,

> As the tsunami hit Asia in 2004, UNIFEM offices received phone calls from affected women's rights groups and home-based care workers. UNIFEM wanted to respond immediately as part of the overall UN response. But when a UN delegation was convened to visit the site in the immediate days after the tsunami struck, UNIFEM was not immediately given a place on the delegation (Sandler, personal communication, March 14, 2011).

Member States, UN staff and individuals monitoring and experiencing UN programs all observed its inadequacy to meet the huge task of achieving gender equality. UNIFEM, the only gender entity with country presence, did not have high-level authority and thus it could not autonomously make such decisions.

Initially I wondered whether UN Women was would it have been established without the efforts of the GEAR Campaign? Through my research I became aware that many factors played a role in the establishment of the gender entity. Without GEAR some type of reform probably would have occurred, but it would most likely have been devoid of many operational and critical standards that were included because of women's rights activists and feminists input. The bottom line is that GEAR activists presented the UN with a feminist perspective, a position that was rarely articulated without the pressure from women's rights activists. In my interviews with participants of the GEAR Campaign, it

was obvious that this critical feminist paradigm would not have been represented if not for the advocacy of women's rights activists.

Women's organizations, over the last six decades, have put pressure on the UN to improve its gender equality programming. Women's rights activists in the 2000s built upon the work of their predecessors and created a campaign that provided a transformational feminist vision for this most recent UN reform. In 2006, GEAR advocates developed a position paper on what the UN needed to create a:

> Strong, women-specific entity mandated to work across the whole UN system - one that has the capacity to lead, monitor and to act as a driving force, or catalyst, for the advancement of gender equality and women's rights, at both the global and country level with policy-setting responsibilities on substantive issues of gender equality and women's rights. It must have the capacity to monitor, with the authority to ensure accountability, on gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system, and have field presence to conduct and shape UN operational activities to ensure that gender equality and women's rights programming are carried out effectively. It must have autonomy; it must be adequately and sufficiently resourced; and it must have the authority and clout necessary for the entity to function as a substantive and political leader for gender equality at the global and national level (Rao, 2006, p. 4)

These key articulations were the basis for GEAR advocacy and strategy, which further evolved over the next five years. GEAR's recommendations were considered, utilized and rebutted with concern and skepticism from Member States and UN representatives alike. In an interview with a former UNIFEM staff person, it was conveyed that, "the resolution that established UNIFEM made it an organization without the authority to fully manage its own affairs, a kind of second-class UN organization that was not on par with many other UN organizations" (Interview, Joanne Sandler, March 14, 2011). Women's rights activists, both inside and outside of the UN, observed the gaps and UN's systematic failure to strengthen its programming on gender equality.

In chapter two, I explain relevant theoretical feminist foundations, which describe the complex interactions between the UN, Member States and feminist activists. Using a politically progressive lens, feminist theory seeks to understand the basis for gender inequality and question dominant epistemologies. Women's participation in the reshaping of global governance has often been in response to inequalities at the local and national levels. The opportunity to reform the UN system opened a space for women rights activists to highlight the failures of the UN organization's leaders and decision-makers to reform and strengthen the gender architecture and attempt to make them function better for women everywhere. Understanding how gender binaries are utilized in traditional international relations allows one to comprehend the rampant structural gender bias in governments and why the UN gender entities were not allowed to be more effective. Based upon advances that global women's movements achieved in the past, GEAR harnessed the expertise of women's rights and human rights activists to move the creation of UN Women forward.

Chapter three succinctly conveys the rich history of women's movements and activism in the United Nations. Over the course of six decades women have celebrated accomplishments and observed defeats within the UN. "The worldwide women's movement acquired a politically powerful identity…not only by participating in the UN world conferences but also by virtue of its increasing skills in dealing with UN procedures and agendas" (Jain, 2005, p.132). Additionally, NGOs that advocate in multilateral organizations are building institutional knowledge, which makes them a valuable player in global governance. These and other non-state actors are an increasingly important in shaping global policies. They informally negotiate with Member States, partner with

governments in a variety of national projects to promote social welfare, and simultaneously hold governments accountable for commitments to gender equality.

Chapter four follows the development of the GEAR Campaign, which articulated the impact of the absence of a unified United Nations women's agency and diligently worked over the course of five years to help create one. I highlight the key GEAR moments over the last five years and present a brief timeline. From 2005 when advocates demanded gender equality architecture be included in UN reform to 2008 when GEAR was formally launched to 2010 when the director of UN Women was appointed, women's rights activists were closely monitoring this process. Indefatigable advocacy on behalf of women's rights groups and activists worldwide have no doubt led not only to the establishment of UN Women's, but also to the strategic and innovative structure at its foundations.

In Chapter five, I explain the methods I used to assess the campaign. I spoke with members of the GEAR Campaign to obtain an accurate perception of the kinds of impact the advocates had on the process since 2005. The GEAR Campaigns structure was based on a working group that was developed to ensure a systematic method for engaging with women's rights groups globally. The working group consisted of Regional and Global Focal Points and a New York Lobbying group. Regional Focal Points play key roles in raising awareness about the new gender entity in various world regions and share input with regard to what women want from the UN. Global Focal Points are international organizations that maintain presence at the UN and have connections with groups transnationally. The New York Lobbying Group plays a significant role in gathering intelligence from Member States in New York and attends UN formal and informal

meetings. Lastly, the Facilitation Committee directs the campaign's communications, is key to its coordination, and develops campaign materials. In addition to the working group, the campaign has over 300 organizational signatories that support GEAR's demands and vision. Over the years the campaign's main objectives have been to ensure that the new gender entity is created with robust and predictable funding, strong civil society participation, country presence, and a qualified leader. Furthermore, I researched the GEAR archives located at the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University.

In Chapter 6, I analyze the findings from semi-structured interviews I conducted with key GEAR activists who have an institutional and individual commitment to women's rights. Their responses highlight three key themes. First, it was apparent that the campaign and its advocates experienced many challenges throughout the process internally and externally. Whether it was the communications platforms used locally and globally to share information or the lack of transparency in the UN process, there were many moments when it was difficult for the GEAR Working Group to monitor this UN process. Second, GEAR illustrated promising outcomes during the five years. Interviewees shared techniques used to build an effective campaign. Finally, since the campaign achieved its objective, the creation of a new gender entity, in 2010, what is its future? Many advocates expressed the importance of continuing to monitor the progress of UN Women over next several years in order to ensure that it is designed with GEAR's input and that country level teams are effective in delivering results for women.

CHAPTER TWO: Mapping the Literature

UN Women was created in July 2010 by a United Nations resolution that called for the, "strengthening of institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women" (UN General Assembly resolution on system-wide coherence, 2010, para. 49). A driving force in its realization was a little known global women's rights campaign that had a strategic force and a strong constituent base. The Gender Equality Architecture (GEAR) Campaign was the brainchild of seasoned women's rights advocates who possessed expertise in UN technicalities and emerged from global women's rights movements. With the aim of strengthening the gender equality architecture in the United Nations, GEAR raised issues related to the authority of the new gender entity as well as women's location within the intergovernmental organization. Ann Tickner (2001) describes the work of women's organizing through social movements and feminist theory as having brought, "gender biases to light," while working to reframe norms and rules in ways that go beyond traditional perspectives (p. 112). This was no simple plan, however, since women's rights groups and feminists in intergovernmental processes and bureaucratic institutions have always been contested because their presence challenges hegemonic standards.

Non-governmental organizations and especially women's rights groups have played an increasingly crucial role in the United Nations over the last six decades. From the UN's inception, advocates for women have been promoting their rights in an often

contentious and politically charged environment. "Feminist and women's movements have influenced global governance through strategies ranging from disengagement to changing policies and bureaucratic procedures" (Meyer and Prügl, 1999, p. 14). In a moment when the last women's world conference occurred over fifteen years ago and the political power of the UN has been consistently undermined, women's rights activists assumed the role of interlocutor between Member States and the UN and pushed for the establishment of UN Women. Historically, women's issues and experiences have historically been seen as private and thus unrelated to the international sphere. Nevertheless, in most recent years, women's activists have been able to proactively and successfully organize in a complex global environment.

In an effort to organize research and analyses regarding the impact that progressive women's organizing has had on the United Nations I analyze four categories: (1) complexities of gender binaries in traditional international relations, (2) post-positivism and post-structuralist feminisms, (3) constructivism and feminism, and the (4) global women's right movements. Feminist theory allows us to ask questions which do not necessarily provide concrete answers, but guide us in sorting out options (Bunch, 1979). Feminisms promote diverse social criticisms and encourage agents of change and offer more than just adding gender and women to an analysis (Tickner, 1997). More specifically, "feminist theory provides a basis for understanding every area of our lives, and a feminist perspective can affect the world politically, culturally, economically, and spiritually" (Bunch, 1979, p. 12). Therefore, my exploration into the GEAR Campaign applies feminist analysis to global governance using these basic theoretical understandings.

First, I reviewed literature that offered feminist alternatives to traditional international relations and focused on three prominent theorists to frame my analysis, Robert Keohane, Francis Fukuyama, and Ann J. Tickner. Second, I viewed post-positivism and post-structuralism as a lens through which feminists could question the observed nature of international relations and expose a nuanced approach to the discussions about global systems. Third, considering constructivist paradigms, I employ feminist ideologies that reveal the presence of non-state actors, an approach that counters conservative perspectives that tend to affect feminist politics regressively. Furthermore, constructivism brings to light important tools for understanding international norm setting in international relations. I then conclude with a fourth section, which provides an overview of global women's movements in international standard setting at the United Nations while historicizing its presence in this space.

Complexities of Gender Binaries in Traditional International Relations

Traditional international relations theories convey women's issues as private and thus unimportant to existing state centric power structures (Enloe, 1996). Sarah Brown (1988) identified the dichotomies created in international relations as implicitly gendered with the construction of the realist/idealist divide. These gendered components are social and cultural constructs in which the feminine opposes the masculine: feminine characteristics are private, weak, and emotional whereas the masculine are powerful, autonomous and rational (Tickner, 2001). Most theorists in this field think in terms of interests defined by states power, a perception that lacks a complex perspective to address global challenges such as war, poverty, famine, and climate change.

In addition to using a gendered lens, racial and class binaries further problematize conventional international relations, leading to a perspective that is again inadequate for engaging critical global challenges (Chowdry and Nair, 2002). "With the ascendance of a neo-liberal paradigm, one that shapes not only the field but also international and national politics and policy, we find an increasing dissimulation around questions concerning equity, poverty and powerlessness" (Chowdry and Nair, 2002, p. 1). The development of a critique, that takes seriously one's geographical and historical locations has expanded traditional understandings of IR (Tickner, 2001, p. 6). Using a women's centered, feminist approach, progressive scholars have been able to move conversations forward that look critically at power and politics.

Although gender binaries presuppose the absences of certain political voices and perspectives, it is critical to go beyond the stereotypical nature of this argument. Francis Fukuyama's (1998) critique of feminist IR, for example, dwells on the male/female biological dichotomy. He addresses the binaries, but he does not analyze their implications. Fukuyama's biological argument is contrary to what most feminist scholars suggest. Indeed, oversimplification of women's relationship to peace and women's association with peace and idealism as innate can sometimes disempower women. Though women (and men) may want a less dangerous and less militaristic world, ignoring the complex political and sociological hierarchies is detrimental to understanding gendered perspectives in international relations. In response to Fukuyama, Tickner (1999) argues that the link between women and peace can lead to gender stereotypes, and "not only are these stereotypes damaging to women, particularly to their credibility as actors in matters of international politics and national security, but they are also damaging to peace" (p. 4).

Another pioneering theorist, Robert Keohane (1998), also finds that gendered dichotomies impede and mislead. He argues that the dichotomies of rational/irrational, fact/value, universal/particular, and public/private, should be "replaced with a continuum, with the dichotomous characterizations at the poles" (p. 195). Feminists see these relational oppositions as re-enforcing gender stereotypes, but they are important to name nonetheless. Keohane (1998) suggests a stronger emphasis on a scientific approach to acknowledge the truth of the binaries and recognize that not everyone fits perfectly on one side or the other, but along a continuum. Nonetheless, in his measure of the significance of gender in international relations he suggests, "perhaps states with less gender hierarchy would be less aggressive, but might be more easily bullied," furthering the traditional IR approach (Keohane, 1998, p. 197).

Even when Hans Morganthau (1985) states, "universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of the state," (p. 166) a feminist scholar might argue that the embedded masculine conceptions of morality inform the standard by which principles are accepted. Thus, Cynthia Enloe (1993) has critiqued the idea that moral choices are made from universal ethical orientations rather than in particular contexts. If, as the theory of identity politics connotes, the racial, class, and gendered identity of individuals influences their decisions, then an imbalance of gender and regional representation in the UN poses significant problems. Activists have thus argued for more diverse representation so that it can better respond to global challenges that will positively serve the most vulnerable populations. Throughout the recent UN Reform process, GEAR advocates worked to ensure that women's voices and feminist perspectives were heard.

Inequalities based on gender, class and race have appeared throughout history often under various guises of state power. In the twentieth century, traditional international relations theory continues to promote an idealized notion of sovereignty in which the hegemonic foundation of the state relies heavily on domination over the powerless. Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamaben use the terms *biopower* and *biopolitics* to understand how states shape the politics of populations. Understanding the ways that women's lives are controlled and manipulated to serve the state under traditional international relations exposes the inherent oppressive and patriarchal perspectives of the states. Foucault (1976) explains that it is the achievement of "the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations," that empowers the state (p. 140). Furthermore, *biopower*, values the accumulation of capital in terms of what human subjects can provide for the state (Charkiewicz, 2007). Viewing human beings in this way is in absolute opposition to how feminists perceive the world and thus function in international relations.

Post-positivism and Post-structural Feminisms

Feminist paradigms offer epistemologies that are still marginalized in the international relations discipline today. The connections between gender and international politics are acknowledged, but rarely considered an acceptable approach to countering world problems at the level of the State. As Ann Tickner (2001) posits, the "scientific rationalistic tradition associated with both neorealism and neoliberalism is being challenged by [feminist] scholars in critical and post-positivist approaches," p. 2). These perspectives are focused on creating stronger foundations for feministic and humanistic international methods to challenge traditional boundaries of international relations. As V. Spike Peterson argues, "Post-positivists criticize this structuring of paired opposites that at

once differentiates one term from another, prefers one to the other, and arranges them hierarchically, displacing the subordinate term beyond the boundary of what is significant and desirable" (Peterson, 1993, p. 185). She (1993) views post-positivism as adding value to the meta-theoretical debates of international relations.

First, post-positivist "examinations of power converge in calling into question categorical distinctions between subject and object, fact and value," which allows for a more realistic application of theory to practice (Peterson, 1992, p. 186). Second, advocates of this approach note the importance of transforming and updating international theories to address current issues. "Global economic and ecological crises cannot be addressed by state-centric decision-making. Non-state actors powerfully shape national economies. And new social movements…raise deeper questions about the nature of power and the meaning of human community" (Peterson, 1992, p. 186). Third, conversations must occur between the centre and the margins of this debate so that successful translations of concepts can bring diverse communities into these international conversations.

Feminists are critical of using orthodox approaches to global governance because of their clear subjectivity (Harding and Hintikka, 1983). "If knowledge claims that are necessarily grounded in lived experience, not some transcendent reality, then elite male experience cannot be used to ground claims about human social reality" (Peterson, 1992, p. 195). Post-positivist knowledge claims are rooted in concrete experiences that lead to crucial critiques of the United Nations. Despite the fact that the former gender entities were shaped in response to women's movements, at its foundation the UN is based on on a traditional international relations approach that is inherently patriarchal. This hegemonic approach determins which norms are accepted as legitimate and then delegitimizes

alternatives. Thus, "a particular perspective or paradigm has been treated as though it was a 'common sense' view of the world against which all other perspectives should be judged" (Steans, 2003, p. 433). It is such perspectives that post-positivist critique.

A legally binding United Nations treaty, the Convention of the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), developed by women's advocates, was one method by which feminists and women's rights activists were able to bring international and domestic, public and private issues into mainstream international relations. Feminist advocacy exposes the ways gender is implicated in the economy, politics, and society and illustrates the ways identities are constructed to form oppressive hierarchies so that the State can take advantage of the voiceless. Women are often responsible for their own private interests and those of the State which support gendered divisions in the global economy.

A feminist post-positivism brings to light the western hegemony within traditional IR. "Post-positivism keeps feminists attentive to the dangers of essentializing and totalizing practices, while feminists extend post-positivism by exposing the gendered foundations of objectivism and by insisting on politically relevant critique" (Peterson, 1992, p. 205). By looking through a feminist lens, one can critique the systemic gender effects on identities and politics in international relations and global governance.

At the same time, human subjectivity is engrained through cultural discourses and perspectives. The post-structural approach identifies language as fundamental to the construction of identity. "Discourses are ways of constituting knowledge, together with, the social practices, forms of subjectivity, and power relations which inhere in such knowledges" (Weedon, 1997, p. 105). Cultural practices and discourses thus create

knowledge that can exist as polar domains and are constantly changing. "Everything we do signifies compliance or resistance to dominant norms of what it means to be a woman" (Weedon, 1997, p. 83).

Judith Butler (2002) theorizes that, "social agents constitute social reality through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign" (p. 285). Understanding how power is experienced is critical to the narratives that create equality and empowerment. Thus Butler (2002) warns against neatly packaging women in one grouping.

> In a culture in which the false universal of "man" has for the most part been presupposed as coextensive with humanness itself, feminist theory has sought with success to bring female specificity into visibility and to rewrite the history of culture in terms which acknowledge the presence, the influence, and the oppression of women... feminists run the risk of rendering visible a category which may or may not be representative of the concrete lives of women. (p. 419)

Similarly, Donna Haraway (1998) suggests that knowledge claims are based on particular social situations and need to be judged against such situations. Living truths are based on the discursive awareness of one's location, which includes the oppressions of race, sex and class and the acceptance into some areas and the exclusion from others (Locher and Prügl, 2001). Furthermore, feminists look beyond traditional IR theories that focus solely on the state and neglect the influence of non-state actors. It is in this domain where scholars have conceptualized norm setting and transformations of world politics and looked analytically at the emergence of social movements and the kinds of "soft power" they wield (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, 1993).

Constructivism and Feminism

The constructivist approach also assumes that identities are multiple and that different sets of interests are implied by different identities. It "offers alternative understandings of a number of the central themes in international relations theory,

including: the meaning of anarchy and balance of power, the relationship between state identity and interest, an elaboration of power, and the prospects for change in world politics" (Hopf, 1998, p. 171). Compared with neoliberal assumptions of power, constructivists believe in both material and discursive notions of power. Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) identify constructivists as focusing on how ideas, norms, knowledge, culture and politics collectively play a part in understandings of social life.

Like feminists, constructivists try to understand the foundations of political motives to explain political outcomes. Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) give this example: "Just as understanding how the double-helix DNA molecule is constituted materially enables understandings of genetics and disease, so, too, an understanding of how sovereignty, human rights, laws of war, or bureaucracies are constituted socially allows us to hypothesize about their effects in world politics" (p. 394). Uncovering basic foundations of political concepts is central to both feminist and constructivist analytics, but constructivists generally consider gender as a marginal variable when explaining most international relations phenomena (Locher and Prügl, 2001, p. 116) whereas feminists place gender along with race and class at the center of their paradigms.

Birgit Locher and Elisabeth Prügl (2001) claim that feminism and constructivism overlap in their ontological groundings (p. 113). Constructivists preference for critically looking at how ideas and norms can counter strong state interests makes their approach useful in illustrating how a civil society campaign can effect an intergovernmental process. "Human rights norms, the preference of the weak, have been shown to triumph over strong actors and strong states; environmental norms prevail over powerful corporate business preferences" (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001, p. 398). Prügl and Locher then identify two

feminist approached to IR that overlap with constructivist perspectives. One highlights the embedded power dynamics that form constructions of hegemonic ideologies and create norms that construct and subordinate gender in institutions (Locher and Prügl, 2001, p. 116). The other group of IR feminists describes "power as ideology but sees it located in the formation of identities" (p. 117). In this literature, women's subordination is coded in terms of race, ethnicity, and other status indicators while gender is treated as a core variable for understanding international relations.

Global Women's Rights Movements

In terms of women's rights activism within the United Nations, an intergovernmental body, global women rights movements have faced numerous challenges, setbacks and difficulties while continuing to make progress in advancing their issues. Feminists have not only pushed agendas forward, but have entered into these spaces as legitimate actors with powerful voices. Moreover, energy and time spent while organizing at the global level has proved a valuable tool in efforts to make change at the local level. Women's rights movements have no doubt been a catalytic force in the development of women's rights mechanisms within the UN. Its latest victory, the establishment of UN Women, builds on the work that women's rights activists and feminists have done for over six decades.

It is important to grasp the diversity and range of issues covered within women's movements and the continuum between women's organizations and feminist visions. As Peggy Antrobus (2004a) expresses the problem: that conflating the two "is an error that confuses and misrepresents both feminism and the broad spectrum of women's organizations" (p. 12). Feminism has many definitions; it is politically grounded in

understanding women's subordination, challenges the structures that perpetuate this subordination and is often the engine of women's movements. Whereas some women's activists find feminism perhaps too radical to influence their entire agenda because of its mainstream stigma, others openly declare their feminism more directly.

Antrobus (2004a) summarizes the various aspects that define women's movements including, political perspectives to change social conditions; relational understanding of social conditions; organizations comprised of women from diverse locations; rejection of patriarchy; and location within a broader social justice struggle (p. 13). A movement as broad and diverse as women's movements applies strategies and methods in many different social justice arenas at the international, regional, national and local levels.

At the international level, women's movements have been involved with UN processes for decades. Devaki Jain (2005) describes this involvement in her intellectual history of women and the UN. She explains the efforts of women as, "kaleidoscopic [in] character, further complicated by the diversity of its users and the locales in which it lands, its chameleon-like adaptation to the atmosphere and threats from the outside, which change over time, escapes universally acceptable capture" (Jain, 2005, p. 6). Since the geopolitical landscape is in continuous flux, women's rights organizations must simultaneously react and reorganize in their struggle for gender equality.

Within feminist movements there are areas of discontent and decades old debates. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) explains in her writings about feminism and North American locations that developing one's political location requires an exploration of "historical, geographic, cultural, psychic, and imaginative boundaries, which provide the ground for political definition and self-definition" (p. 31). Although feminists may seek to

defend one area in terms of another, not only does race and class play a historical role in developing issues, but also the post-colonial perspectives and deep-rooted layers of socio-economic oppression must be addressed in order to move beyond the status quo. Caren Grown and Gita Sen (1988) call attention to the ways that poverty must be critically central to feminism and inject the feminist perspective with an analysis of the global hegemonic economic system (p. 80). Consequently, tensions exist globally and locally as Sisonke Mismang states:

> There are rifts between women of the North and of the South. There are divisions among older feminists and younger feminists. There are tensions between black feminists and white feminists, and differences of opinion among working class women and elite women; this is as old as the movement itself (Kerr, Sprenger and Symington, 2004, p. 179).

These types of distinctions are consistently visible in global and regional feminist dialogue.

Finally, the creation of common understandings surrounding issues of women's rights and equality in feminist and women's rights groups is a shared production, which Sally Engle Merry argues involves global cultural processes and transnational cultural flows. First, she explains the idea of "transnational consensus building," which involves the negotiation of language for international treaties, resolutions, and outcome documents amongst states and civil society (Merry, 2006, p.19). GEAR activists have used the approach of transnational consensus building through the development of key resolutions related to the creation of UN Women. Working with Member States, advocates are able to frame language while keeping women's interests at the forefront. Second, Engle Merry denotes "transnational program transplant" as the second form of cultural flow where similar legal or social initiatives are spread across many countries. While GEAR is not a service provider that has enacted a program in specific countries, it has brought attention to

a number of demands that have been heard globally by women's rights activists. As UN Women builds up its country teams, civil societies that have been connected to the process will have a clearer understanding of the new entity's mandate. Third, the description Engle Merry provides about the "localization of transnational knowledge" illustrates GEAR's long term impact on those involved and ensures that information disseminated at the global and regional levels is also being shared at the local level through sub-regional groups (Merry, 2006, p. 20). Global human rights activists find in the UN a space where advocates can not only network, but share skills and educate one another about various issues. GEAR was successful because it was able to both monitor the UN reform and mobilize networks. "Activists participate in two cultural spheres at the same time, translating between them with a kind of double consciousness" (Merry, 2006, p. 3). The GEAR Working Group has acted as an advocacy liaison between the UN and the women's rights movements.

Diversity within the global women's movements enables critical and intelligent analysis regarding world politics and global governance. Therefore, the GEAR Campaign grew out of these traditions. Most of the information developed for the campaign and its objective was by a small group of women's rights activists based at renowned international women's rights organizations. I was able to gather and collate the information through materials available electronically and collect data through interviews with key stakeholders in the campaign.

CHAPTER THREE: Women's Rights Advocacy at the United Nations

> Feminists who aspire to represent women in the transnational arena must not only build consensus about what constitutes women's needs and interests, but also build global alliances to support an issue agenda (Hawkesworth, 2006, p. 69).

Since the United Nation's inception, a diverse group of actors both state and non-state have participated in shaping its agenda and strengthening international cooperation. The relationships among civil society organizations, United Nations staff and Member States are unique and complex. Actors who originate from transnational social movements, including environmentalists, peace activists, children rights advocates, non-proliferation supporters, and indigenous rights activists, have played a significant role in the UN throughout its history. This chapter focuses solely on the role of women's rights organizations in the development of the UN's gender machinery. These groups have a significant presence in global governance and their strategic input into UN processes have enriched and expanded the UN's understanding of women's daily struggles. Over the course of the UN's history, women's organizations, as catalytic agents in global governance, have worked to integrate mechanisms that systematically address Member States progress on and commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality into the programmatic visions of the United Nations.

System of Governance

With the increasing participation of non-state actors in intergovernmental organizations, NGOs play a key role not only in humanitarian efforts, but also the naming and shaming of unjust policies. States are no longer the only critical actors involved in international relations; global justice organizations and women's rights groups are critical global actors in the international arena. Thus "contemporary world politics is a tapestry of diverse relationships" (Keohane and Nye, 1977, p. 17).

The influence of non-state actors in shaping global policies is growing and setting the stage for future international arrangements. In addition to the global justice movement, multi-national corporations are significantly intertwined with determining economic and social policies of a country. As Devaki Jain claims, "The multi-nationals are coming into our country, so they want all the labour laws suspended; they do not want to have accountability in our countries… all of these agencies usually bring their own legal and chartered accountancy firms to provide those services" (Jain, 2002, 25). This rising corporate power, for which there are few legal human rights accountability mechanisms, at times seems at times to supersede the authority of the State. As women's rights organizations seek to counter corporate interests and neo-liberal agendas in the global arena, States are confronted with multifaceted resistance and triangular tensions arise. Responding to the urgent needs of those most affected by neoliberal policies, international women's rights groups informally negotiate with Member States, partner with governments in a variety of national projects to promote social welfare, raise concerns over unjust national and international policies, and are regularly consulted to help develop innovative responses to gender inequality.

Global Civil Society

Over the last century, civil society has emerged as a growing force in the world. New forms of governance have transpired which allow "states, associations of states, supranational organizations, transnational organizations and non-state actors to weave an intricate tapestry of rules, norms and laws which govern actions…" (Langhorne, 2006, p. 112). Civil society organizations actively participate in debates over a diverse range of issue areas from the campaign to ban landmines to humanitarian aid to rights based advocacy. They work locally, nationally, regionally and internationally and are often transnationally associated. Transnational advocacy networks incorporate activists with shared values and try not only to transform policy but also the terms and nature of the debate (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 5). Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have become key actors in civil society and are active in lobbying and influencing politics at all levels. They have as Foucault theorizes, produced "truth regimes" through domains of knowledge, which have the power to reveal and conceal understandings about social worlds (Clarke, 2009, p. 13). The perspectives of a human rights activist and a government representative, for example, are often very different.

NGOs must also confront a number of criticisms from peers who label them as conduits for Western imperialism or critique their, "liberalist conceptions of individuality shaped by political economy of human rights that draws its power from donor capitalism and biopolitical bureaucracies" (Clarke, 2009, p. 8). They may often be linked with Western hegemonic forces and the global elite, but nevertheless NGOs serve a critical role in the global landscape and have increasingly taken up social provisions when countries are unable.

Another critical aspect of NGOs emergence as a powerful force is how globalization has affected their participation. Through the internet and other social media and networking sites, NGOs have been able to amplify their activism and communicate to some degree more freely. Building on one another's strength, the networks of NGOs have expanded their reach and transformed how the world transmits information. "Technological change and the advent of globalized economic and cultural systems make it possible to maintain relative intimacy even at great physical distance" (Ferguson and Mansbach, 2004, p. 69). In certain moments, these organizations are now able to reach out to global partners across the world as if they are seated right next to one another.

For example, in 2008, a group of prominent global leaders came together and formed "The Elders." This group spurred a global campaign entitled, Every Human Has Rights. The campaign promoted the idea that every individual had to pledge to live by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, also known as the International Bill of Rights. On its website, there was a Google map which highlighted where individuals were located who signed the pledge. In collaboration with Witness, a multimedia NGO that uses video to expose the world to human rights violations, short videos were filmed from well-known human rights activists. In this way, NGOs are partnering more with one another to reach a larger audience and using technologically advanced methods to engage with the public.

Another example of a platform that uses technology to promote human rights, is Take Back the Tech. It advocates for women and girls to use technology to advance their activism and take control of information and communications technologies to eliminate gender-based violence. This campaign occurs during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, originated by women's rights groups and celebrated by NGOs, the

United Nations and governments around the world. The tools allow NGOs to shape relationships, network with a diverse group of actors and benefit from South-South and South-North partnerships. In this regard political space "can actually be organized in many other ways than territory, and new technologies are facilitating reorganization" (Ferguson and Mansbach, 2004, p.67). NGOs have taken up space in a world where governments have retracted in certain areas for one reason or another and civil society is "transforming existing institutions through consultation, confrontation, and compromise" (Langhorne, 2006, p. 121).

Women & the UN

From the very beginning of the United Nations women have played a critical role in shaping its agenda. The language of women's equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex was delineated in the United Nations through the UN Charter in 1945, and the UDHR in 1948 and because of a number of women delegates from Asia, Europe, and North and South America fought to have it included. The women attended the UN Charter Conference and worked together with 42 non-governmental organizations to guarantee the inclusion of sex in the anti-discrimination clause as well as to change 'equal rights among men' to 'equal rights among men and women.' Four out of one hundred and sixty individuals who signed the UN's Charter in 1945 were women (Jain, 2006, p. 12). Minerva Bernardino, Bertha Lutz, Wu Yi-Fan and Virginia Gildersleeve were from the Dominican Republic, Brazil, China and the United States, respectively. A similar effort was made in the drafting of the UDHR (Pietila, 2002). The UN Division for the Advancement of Women in 1999 noted that "the international women's movement from its beginning influenced the founding principles and goals of the UN with regard to women's

rights" (World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 1999). International affairs scholars tend to lose sight of these facts because of the gendered binaries that so often are interwoven with the history of world politics. The four women who signed the Charter and women's groups present at the time immediately called for a separate body in the UN that focused on advancing women's rights eventually creating the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Over the last sixty years, women's groups have participated in the shaping of four international women's conferences in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing, which provided spaces where women's organizations mobilized, created solidarity through networking, and built meaningful relationships with state and non-state actors alike. Many alliances were formed, grievances articulated and spaces created for women to discuss similarities and differences. Scholars have identified this as "venue shopping," strengthening the impact of an organizations work by creating relationships with similar strategic groups (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 17). Women's organizations have been actively involved in the creation of each of the four UN gender entities from their inception to their realization and finally to their consolidation.

Commission on the Status of Women – A Galvanizing Force

In 1946, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was created with the mandate "to prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields," and to make recommendations, "on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights" (E/RES/2/11). In response to the Commission's recommendations, Member States resisted accepting a framework that supported international women's rights

as they saw it as an intrusion on their sovereignty (Jain, 2006, p. 19). Questions from states about sovereignty and the universality of international treaties persist today. During the mid-twentieth century, some tensions also arose between activists from the global North and global South. Women who were experiencing post-colonial freedoms understood the principle of equality differently than women who had been advocating for suffrage and political inclusion. The difference arose perhaps from the dichotomous relationship between economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights.

Participation of civil society today varies at the CSW due in part to UN restrictions and funding availability. Before 2010, women's rights organizations that held the UN ECOSOC status could accredit an unlimited number of colleagues and interested supporters.[1] In general, NGOs that attend the CSW develop their issue areas through side events; oral intervention and/or a written statement; Member State negotiations; and/or the dissemination of documents and information once home as they pressure governments to abide by commitments made (Merry, 2006, p. 50).

The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) was established in 1946 to service the CSW. In the years after its establishment, the CSW created a number of declarations, but they were fragmented and failed to address the rights violations that women face comprehensively. From 1949-1959 the Commission established declarations that focused on the Political Rights of Women, the Nationality of Married Women, the Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages and

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[1] I note this in the past because at the 2010 CSW, restrictions were placed on the number of registrants ECOSOC accredited organization could request. UN representatives claim that the restrictions are due in part to the ongoing construction within the UN, while civil society understand these constraints, it believes that the UN should do more to ensure that civil society is guaranteed participation in official proceedings.

adopted the Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.

The International Bill of Rights for Women & the First World Conference on Women

Despite these advances, the UN system lacked a legally binding document that holistically addressed women's rights. From the UN's inception, women's equality was not fundamentally incorporated into the human rights regime. In 1963, the UN General Assembly proposed that the Commission draft a declaration articulating international standards of equal rights for men and women. Women's rights activists globally were asked to partake in the drafting of the document and thus were able to frame it based on their document from their personal experiences and those of their country women. Although the declaration was a moral and political statement, it raised a number of controversial issues regarding culture, marriage and family and was adopted by the General Assembly in 1963.

The 1970's brought a new level of attention to women's rights issues that gained support from the UN. In 1974, the Commission set out to create a legally binding and comprehensive document for women's rights that would engage the forms of discrimination experienced by women. 1975 marked the 25th anniversary of the Commission, and the UN pronounced that year as International Women's Year. Gradually women's groups shifted their focus to UN Conferences. The First World Conference on Women, which took place in Mexico City in 1975, set in motion a new era for women's human rights and the creation of another UN entity focused on women.

Approximately 133 governments participated in the conference, and 4,000 NGO representatives attended parallel forums. A year later in 1976, the International Research

and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was created based on a recommendation from Mexico City and established its headquarters in the Dominican Republic in 1983. INSTRAW carried out research programs related to gender and development in areas, such as valuing women's household production, and identified gaps in order to promote further studies. It also conducted training seminars and published training materials and methodologies related to research on gender and development.

Then in 1976, the UN declared the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (A/RES/3520, 1975). Over the course of a decade, those following the development discourse understood that it could not overcome global challenges without including women in the discussion. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women was developed at this time and later named the United Nations Development Fund for Women or UNIFEM. As the only UN Fund mandated solely to assist women, it was a vehicle both within the UN system and at the national level to publicize and prioritize the needs of the female half of the world's population.

The drafting of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was mandated by the Mexico City Plan of Action, which called for effective implementation procedures in the convention. The UN's Third Committee, which deals with humanitarian, social and cultural issues, convened a working group of the General Assembly to produce this document. CEDAW was adopted in 1979 and became enforceable in 1981 and received technical support from DAW until 2008 when its secretariat function was moved to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/CONF.177/7, 1995).

CEDAW uses a legal framework to define equality and how it can be attained. The Convention was the first international treaty to define discrimination against women:

> Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. (CEDAW, Article 1)

UNIFEM & the Second World Conference on Women

After the adoption of CEDAW, in 1980, the second world conference on women was held in Copenhagen. Its focus was employment, health and education (A/RES/33/185, 1979). The Copenhagen Programme of Action had clearer language about ensuring women's ownership and control of property including inheritance rights, child custody and loss of nationality. Media sources counted over 8,000 participants at the NGO forum. It was at this moment that actors participating in Copenhagen also proclaimed that the CSW needed to be strengthened (Jain, 2006, p. 132).

In 1984, UNIFEM, the former voluntary fund, was made a separate operational entity and placed in association with the UN Development Program (UNDP). With headquarters in New York, it had regional offices, but was only present in a limited number of countries. The scope of UNIFEM's work expanded with a growing understanding of what is vital to development for women, and came to include programs on women and governance, peace, security and violence against women as well as economic justice (Snyder, 1995). UNIFEM used landmark documents to frame its work, including: beginning with CEDAW and later adding the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995).

For UNIFEM NGOs proved "an important mechanism for diagnosing and alleviating problems at the grassroots level, information sharing, networking and advocacy" (UN NGLS , 2005, p. 162). In this vein, UNIFEM as a fund also gave grants to NGOs. Furthermore, UNIFEM assisted civil society organizations in preparing for and participating in national and international meetings. At times UNIFEM conducted training workshops for women on advocacy and leadership often building on methods developed by women's movements. For the 1985 World Conference on the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, DAW developed a questionnaire which was completed by 121 governments to review the position of women in their countries (A/RES/37/60, 1982).

The Third & Fourth World Conference on Women

The 1985 Nairobi Conference was the third international women's conference. The UN secretariat had reported to Member States that only a limited number of women had benefited from improvements since the first two conferences. Thus, the Nairobi Conference was mandated to seek new ways of overcoming obstacles for achieving the objectives of the Decade: equality, development and peace. Three basic categories were established to measure the progress achieved: constitutional and legal measures; equality in social participation; equality in political participation and decision-making (UN: Key Conference Outcomes on Gender and Equality).

Over the decade the concept of gender equality was gaining support and becoming understood as a dynamic issue that encompassed all areas of human activity. It was necessary for women from all spheres to participate. Women began to challenge and transform their perspectives and development paradigms. The experience of women in the colonial and neo-colonial contexts expanded the debate to advance diverse issues from

environment to human rights and from population to poverty (Antrobus, 2004). Although the UN, an intergovernmental organization, sponsored these conferences, the articulations were often shaped by the global women's movement in collaboration with progressive women in governments and the UN to demand more from governments vis-à-vis gender equality; a unique arrangement.

In September 1995 for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, over 45,000 people converged on Beijing, China where women's rights advocates and governments created what still stands as one of the most comprehensive UN documents to address the realities of women's lives. More than 4,000 NGO representatives attended the government conference and 30,000 attended the parallel NGO Forum (Timothy, 2005, p. 190). The resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) identifies twelve critical areas of concern: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl-child. It lists objectives and recommends actions to improve women's access to rights in these areas. Although the Platform for Action is not a legally binding document, it serves as a policy guide for governments, institutions, private businesses, and UN agencies, and establishes standards by which to judge policies and programs already in place. Governments that adopt the Platform for Action strongly committed themselves to it and addressing obstacles to the advancement and empowerment of women.

The Fourth World Conference brought together the largest and strongest international women's movement force yet, but was not without challenges. New to the

scene were neo-conservative groups like Concerned Women of America and the Real Women of Canada. The messages of these groups were completely contrary to women's rights agenda, yet they were still identified as women's groups. Furthermore, some feminists argued that the United Nations cooptation of women, particularly women from the South created a division among women's groups. According to Gayatri Spivak (1996), "UN feminism is a monoculture of Western liberal feminism where elite, upwardly mobile (generally academic) women of the new diasporas join hands with similar women in the so-called developing world to celebrate a new global public or private 'culture' often in the name of the underclass" (p. 250). Women's rights and feminist paradigms are never clear-cut. Nonetheless, there are few other arenas in which women from so many nations and NGOs can come together to forge an agenda that has the backing of powerful political and institutional organizations. Although Spivak names a powerful condemnation of women's and feminist advocacy within the UN, women's progressive and feminist perspectives must remain in these spaces to ensure that allies supportive of women's human rights are leveraged in the 21st century. The more that feminists are present in these spaces, identifying problems and using their expertise to create alternatives, the more likely governments are to take up more nuanced perspectives in addressing gender equality at the national level. But if this perspective is absent and women's rights groups are not monitoring commitments, governments will likely ignore issues related to women's rights.

As the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali noted in his statement on the concluding day of the Fourth World Conference on Women:

> The commitments made in Beijing are not only the result of diplomatic negotiation. Behind them lies the strong and organized power of the women's movement. The entire continuum of global conferences and summits has been shaped by the

growing influence, passion and intellectual conviction of the women's movement (Boutros-Ghal, 1996).

The BPfA is a celebrated and an acclaimed platform for women's rights. Thus, every five years at the CSW, civil society organizations and governments come together to mark the BPfA, examine implementation of it and identify areas where progress has stalled. Governments write reports on improvements they have made and NGOs create shadow reports that highlight civil society perspectives.

Finally, the Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women was formed in 1997 from a recommendation that was made at the Beijing Conference. The office was intended to provide direction for the work on gender mainstreaming throughout the UN and for the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, as well as for the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace, and Security. It included the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat who worked to improve the status of women internally within the UN.

Millennium Summit

With great gains also came setbacks and in 2000 and again in 2005, women found themselves marginalized at the Millennium Summit and the UN World Summit. Out of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), only one was explicitly related to gender equality and the only concrete target set was equal access to primary education. The other MDG focused on women -- improving maternal health – addressed the needs of women as child bearers, but not in any other capacity. From 2000 to 2005, feminist groups worked to expand the gender equality MDG into seven key target areas and to bring gender perspectives into the others, such as the MDG on HIV/AIDS. Yet, the initial draft of the World Summit document in 2005 failed to make women's rights central. After feminists

organized to influence the summit and remedy this they concluded that: "Gains were made in the document but governments and the UN still fell far short of both the development and the gender equality goals espoused; this disappointment fueled the move to demand a stronger gender equality architecture at the UN" (Gender Monitoring Group of the World Summit, 2005).

Despite frustrations regarding the MDG, it is apparent that women's rights organizing and collaborations with strong allies have led to the integration of gender equality frameworks across the UN system. Gender equality and women's empowerment is threaded through multiple UN organizations and there have been significant gains in relation to development, human rights and peace and security (Bunch, 2009, 5). "Conceptual advances - such as recognition of women's rights as human rights, reproductive health and rights, or rape as a war crime -- are gains in changing international mindsets or laws and do push the women's rights agenda forward" (Jain and Chacko, 2008, p. 18). Furthermore, the gender mainstreaming approach has brought substantial gains, but there have also been impediments due to the UN's inability to address the systemic fragmentation, underfunding and the weak positioning leadership amongst the four gender entities: DAW, INSTRAW, UNIFEM, and OSAGI. The culmination of both advances and setback led to what is known as the GEAR Campaign.

Feminist Foundations

By using a feminist and human rights paradigm, women's rights organizations are able to deconstruct international politics to include imagined communities "of women with divergent histories and social locations, woven together by the political threads of opposition to forms of domination that are not only pervasive but also systemic"

(Mohanty, 2003, p. 47). In essence, these organizations brought to the UN an exploration of the intersections of race, gender and class and have thenceforth integrated this framework into the development, human rights, and peace agendas of the UN. Self-definition is key in global women's rights movements. The ability to articulate the diversity of experiences and challenge existing structures while simultaneously working within the structures is how feminists are able to connect and debate visions of gender equality in institutional settings (Grown and Sen, 1988, p. 80). Thus, as Jain and Chacko argue:

> Women's engagement with the UN's work in Development, as different from development itself-has been to challenge the terms of reference – open the door to reveal other contours even of the industrial typology, of the hierarchies in values given to various aspects of social and economic organization, to spaces, - the public and private, to the basis of knowledge creation, to the very notions of theory or bounded ideas (Jain and Chacko, 2008, p. 4).

Women's rights organizations are, "concerned with the reorganization of production, gendered divisions of labor, the problematization of boundaries, and the reconceptualization of space," all of which would be absent if it were not for decades of mobilizing and educating Member States and the UN about how women are affected by political and economic decisions (Tickner, 2001, 66). While thinking critically about ways to improve women's opportunities, feminists have called on governments to enhance accountability mechanisms, create effective employment programs and reassert the need for women to shape and be involved in policy choices (Grown and Sen, 1988, p. 82).

At the same time, women's rights groups have used the UN to put pressure on governments in areas of women's work and employment, poverty reduction, violence against women, land reform, peacekeeping, basic needs and data collection (Grown and Sen, 1988, p. 85). One of these advocates main contributions has been questioning the

knowledge base with its embedded hierarchies and "critiquing ideas such as the dichotomies of development and rights, public and private" (Jain, 2005, p. 8). A new language was created to address the gender inequalities that women faced globally. From this evolved relationships amongst women's rights groups who united over similar structures of oppression and across conventional divides to critique ideas and agendas. These transformations have been supported by women's rights groups worldwide and, regardless of whether or not the organizations were united, they were able to create a space within the United Nations to challenge ideas and build alliances.

CHAPTER FOUR: Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign Timeline (2005-2010)

> If we wash with a bucket of water and start from our feet, the water is wasted washing only our feet. But if we pour the water over our heads, we can wash our whole body (Rana, 2007).[2]

2005-2006: Development of a UN Reform on Gender Equality Architecture

Since 2005, the advocates of the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign have monitored UN processes around UN reform. The result is hundreds of statements, letters, communiqués, press releases, media hits, and critical analyses that have influenced and transformed the course of gender equality architecture reform at the United Nations. The current relationships between Member States, the new UN gender entity and civil society were formed by the critical strategies that GEAR employed.

GEAR emerged out of a number of analyses that identified the lack of synergy among the UN's gender equality structures and the fragmented programming implementation that resulted. In 2004, an Independent Advisory Committee panel on UNIFEM, chaired by Dr. Nafis Sadik former executive director of UNFPA, identified challenges and solutions for achieving gender equality. The report recognized serious structural constraints for UNIFEM delivering on its mandate. One example of this was the unsystematic grounding of the UN's gender specialists.

A UNIFEM/UNDP scan in 2002 revealed that there were nearly 1,300 individuals with gender equality in their Terms of Reference in the UN and multi-lateral

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[2] Rana refers to how the gender entities were not functioning well together and if they were brought together and strengthened they would be more effective.

development banks. Of those, nearly 1,000 were Gender Focal Points (GFP). As demonstrated in a 2001 UNFPA study, the majority of GFPs are relatively junior, lack technical expertise and access to decision-makers. They are also generally responsible for gender as one of many other areas of work (2004, p. 7).

Therefore, those charged with leading the gender equality programming were not capable of prioritizing gender effectively in the UN, not necessarily because they did not support it, but rather because they did not have the appropriate tools or access for delivering results.

Stephen Lewis (2005), former Deputy Director of UNICEF and United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, in a statement at a conference on "Global Issues in Women's Health," articulated the need for a UN international women's agency based of the limited impact the United Nations, was having on understanding the gendered implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the effort to indemnify women's health. Lewis proclaimed the need for an agency focused on women that was at the same level as the UNICEF so that the UN would be equipped to address women's issues more effectively. He asserted,

> We have absolutely no agency of power to promote women's development, to offer advice and technical assistance to governments on their behalf, and to oversee programmes, as well as representing the rights of women. We have no agency of authority to intervene on behalf of half the human race…We have only UNIFEM, the UN Development Fund for Women, with an annual core budget in the vicinity of $20 million dollars, to represent the women of the world. There are several UNICEF offices in individual developing countries where the annual budget is greater than that of UNIFEM. (Lewis, 2005)

Toward the end of his statement, Lewis (2005) declared that the struggle to attain a holistic gender entity would have to "become a movement for social change." Lewis, a champion for women's rights and the new gender entity, brought this issue to diverse venues and promoted the creation of a new gender entity among his high-level colleagues.

With the new millennium, UN reform of its bureaucratic system became a big issue. In 2005 the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called for "system coherence" in the UN and developed a report entitled, "In Larger Freedom," aimed at addressing the reform. It noted that the UN system, "as a whole is still not delivering services in the coherent, effective way that the world's citizens need and deserve." "[P]art of the problem," he claimed, "is clearly related to the structural constraints," such as fragmentation, inconsistencies system-wide and weak implementation mechanisms. In 2005, the reforms that were proposed, "include[d] grouping the various agencies, funds and programmes into tightly managed entities, dealing respectively with development, the environment and humanitarian action. And this regrouping might involve eliminating or merging those funds, programmes and agencies which have complementary or overlapping mandates and expertise" (In Larger Freedom, 2005, para. 197). Because the report lacked any serious description of reform in areas of gender equality and many women's rights advocates were irate. Devaki Jain (2006) noted that after "sixty years of international struggle by women," there is no difference in the UN, "even as it is advising nations to give equality in those spaces." Jain implied that while the UN is a proponent of gender equality in countries and globally, it has not addressed the gendered bias of its own structure.

Annan formed a UN High-level Panel on System Wide Coherence in early 2006, to explore how the UN could work more coherently in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. The Secretary-General appointed only three women out of the fifteen members on the coherence panel. Women's rights advocates highlighted this disparity in a briefing note and inquired how the UN women's machineries

can adequately function in their vision towards equality and empowerment when the UN itself does not adhere to those expectations?

At the 2006 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) four organizations took up this issue. The Center for Women's Global Leadership, NGO CSW Committee, Women's Environment and Development Organization and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, drafted an, "An Open Letter on Women & UN Reform to the Secretary General and Member States from NGOs present at the 50th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women" (2006). The letter expressed outrage with the lack of attention the women's machineries received in the reform agenda and the lack of significant number of women on the high level panel. This began a series of responses and efforts to address this gap and others.

Two women's rights organizations led the NGO activities related to the UN reforming the gender equality architecture of the UN and continued monitoring its progress throughout the process. The Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) played lead roles in the civil society, feminist and women's rights centered approach to the process.

After the CSW this group of activists requested and had the opportunity to meet with Annan to express their concern over the process. The group outlined key characteristics for effective gender architecture in the system, which was to create an independent women's agency with high-level leadership and robust funding and combining operational and normative roles. Echoing the demands of the women's rights organizations, Annan agreed to make gender a crosscutting subject of the panel, which

covered development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. Feminist advocates then proceeded to focus on these issues with the Coherence Panel.

NGOs participated fervently in the mapping of the process in order to influence the Coherence Panel Report. Relationships were built among the women's rights activists and the Coherence Panel staff and the civil society team began strategically mobilizing its constituency to get involved and to become knowledgeable about the process. A series of papers and briefings were developed in the next months that outlined principles for rethinking of the reform. Between May 2006 and November 2006, concerned organizations produced numerous advocacy papers and letters defining their positions.

CWGL and WEDO commissioned a working paper drafted by Aruna Rao, Founder-Director of Gender at Work, which briefly outlined the successes and failures of the UN system in addressing gender equality and women's rights, and recommended several ideas for reforming the gender equality architecture (Rao, 2006). It was endorsed by over 116 organizations from all over the world. The working paper identified specific examples that illustrated the UN practices in addressing gender equality and identified resistance from governments and non-state actors in the achievement of gender equality. It also noted that women's rights activists have to exert more resources and risk their human security to advocate for change.

> For instance, it took nearly five years of advocacy by women with support of a small number of donors to get Burundi women included at the peace table and, at the eleventh hour, it was the advocacy of Nelson Mandela that made it finally happen. This ad hoc approach, which too often requires high-level intervention, is not effective in producing consistent positive outcomes to support gender equality and women's human rights. (Rao, 2006)

Rao recognized that human rights champions play a critical role in garnering attention from States and mainstream media. Although it is encouraging to read about the

investments that prominent allies declare in the name of their reputation, it is unsustainable and unrealistic in many cases. CWGL and WEDO thus looked to the UN to develop stronger institutional mechanisms that would address these issues. They characterized key elements necessary for the success of a larger UN women-specific entity, including agency autonomy, high-level leadership, universal country presence, and adequate resources. These four demands were fundamental to civil society advocacy.

The advocates fact sheet dated August 2006 urged that the creation of a well-resourced, independent women's entity should have normative, operational and oversight capacity, and universal country presence (Fact Sheet, 2006). In November 2006 GEAR activists experienced their first victory. "After hearing from governments, the UN, and women's advocates around the world, the Coherence Panel recommended consolidating and strengthening the gender equality architecture in the UN in its report in November of 2006" (Bunch, 2009, p. 8).

The Coherence Panel report highlighted a series of recommendations to "overcome the fragmentation of the United Nations so that the system can deliver as one, in true partnership with and serving the needs of all countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals." Specifically, on gender, the Panel recommended: a stronger UN entity for women to be created through consolidating some of the women's mechanisms that already exist (DAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM - INSTRAW was later added to this list). The new organization should have a dual mandate of both normative and programmatic responsibilities and would operate at both global policy and country levels. A new Under-Secretary-General position should be added to head this agency – a higher level status than the leadership of

the current UN women's entities, thus enabling high-level representation for women's rights in UN decision-making. And the new gender entity should be ambitiously funded (Delivering as One, 2006, p. 24). [3]

Between 2006 and 2007, women's networks were encouraged and emerged around this issue and five regional statements were written focused on reforming the United Nations gender equality architecture essentially calling for a similar entity. The International Gender Policy Network (IGPN) wrote a concluding statement from an NGO Regional Consultation on, "Reforming the UN Gender Equality Architecture: What Does it Mean for Women's Rights in Europe and CIS?" The UK Gender and Development Network and Women in Development drafted a statement on, "Gender Equality Recommendations of the High Level Panel on UN Reform." South Asian activists also wrote a "Statement on Reforming the Gender Equality Architecture of the United Nations." In addition, a statement of the, "African Feminist Forum on the New UN Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was developed." Each statement added legitimacy to the ideas and concepts for which the women's movement was advocating. Moreover, in 2006 the South Asian Campaign for Gender Equality initiated a call for governments in their region to support the integration of the gender architecture in their proposals. Ultimately, the petition garnered one million signatures in support of a new women's body in the United Nations and was presented to the Pakistani co-chair (Khosa, 2006).

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[3] The four fragmented and under-resourced gender entities would be amongst the areas in the UN that would eventually be consolidated: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), United Nations Development Fund For Women (UNIFEM), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI).

An international statement drafted by CWGL and WEDO garnered 157 international, regional and local organizational signatures. Galvanizing the women's rights constituency, organizations and activists employed feminist strategies by bringing on board diverse social justice organizations including mainstream NGOs. From this point forward, groups mobilized their constituencies, calling on them to contact their governments to determine whether they would champion the gender equality recommendations. The small group of organizations and activists that had been working globally, regionally and in New York, at UN headquarters, knew that just because their recommendations were incorporated into the Coherence Panel report did not mean that there would be systematic follow-up. The difficult work of implementation began, which included promoting the report during inter-governmental processes at the UN without having the message weakened. Due to the informal character of the government negotiations on the Panel report and lack of transparency of the process, women's groups had to act quickly. At times progress was slow and government negotiations were informal and inaccessible, but once a resolution was proposed, the governments would quickly adopt it, leaving little time for more discussions with civil society groups. Member States might also challenge language that had earlier been agreed upon, thereby reversing headway already made. To attain accurate information and keep the process moving from outside of the UN, activists cultivated solid relationships with Member States and UN staff.

2007: UN Negotiations Stall Processes

During this period a new UN Secretary-General was appointed; Ban Ki-moon began to lead the UN reform process and supported the Coherence Panel report on gender. In December 2006, at the end of his term, Annan had failed in a belated effort to move

quickly to create the new Under-Secretary-General position to lead the new entity. Therefore, Ban could not move forward until the intergovernmental process approved the creation of the new entity. It was this decision coupled with the UN's highly politicized environment that prolonged the process for three years. In the recommendations, Ban wrote, "I will await the outcome of the substantive discussions and consultations by Member States on the proposal in order to be guided further by the intergovernmental process. I hope that Member States will be able to reach a positive early agreement on this proposal so that we can take it forward" (A/61/836, 2007).

In 2007, NGOs were able to create energy and interest in a very technical and somewhat uninteresting platform for the creation of the entity. According to Joanne Sandler, it was nothing, "short of a miracle that there is a campaign raising structural issues" (Personal Communication, March 14, 2011). At the 2007 Commission on the Status of Women, the campaign for the new entity was discussed at the Linkage Caucus, co-sponsored by CWGL and WEDO, and gathered forces and support for an open letter to UN Member States and the Secretary-General on the occasion of International Women's Day. The letter welcomed and endorsed the proposal to establish an independent women-specific entity that would combine OSAGI, DAW and UNIFEM, have both normative and operational responsibilities, be ambitiously resourced, led by an Under-Secretary General and called on the UN to take swift action. It was signed onto by 162 organizations globally (Open Letter, 2007).

In early March, a Global Strategy Meeting for Gender Equality Architecture at the UN was organized by the two lead organizations in this process, CWGL and WEDO. The organizations invited almost 50 individuals from global women's rights organizations to

strategize about the gender equality architecture. The meeting provided a unique space for activists to collaborate and build alliances with one another regarding what became the GEAR Campaign. Two days were spent gaining a common understanding about UN Reform, developments since the Coherence Panel, and the political context inside and outside the UN; developing strategies, for global, regional and national actions for gaining General Assembly approval of a strengthened gender equality architecture; and developing regional and national action plans, commitments, and key messages. As a result of this meeting a political mapping of government allies was developed and a small working group of women's rights and human rights NGOs was formed to steer the campaign. This soon evolved into the official GEAR Campaign led by co-facilitators, CWGL and WEDO. A few months later, a GEAR Campaign listserv was created that provided the interface through which GEAR could communicate transnationally.

During the 2007 CSW, a thematic panel organized by DAW was held entitled, "Call for strengthened United Nations body to enhance women's participation in decision-making." Speakers included, Srilatha Batilwala, renowned global feminist and Harvard scholar; Malika Dutt, Director of Breakthrough; Pregaluxmi Govender, former member of the South African Parliament and Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights head. The panel drew attention to the gaps between the rhetoric of the UN and the reality of women's lives. Each speaker identified the need for a new gender entity that would enhance women's leadership in decision-making on all levels. As Govender articulated the issue,

> Organizations established to advance the rights of women and gender equality were generally under-resourced, with little power to impact crucial decisions directly. Generally set up to fail, those structures –- and the women in them –- often ended

up playing catch-up. Worse, they often fought each other for resources, while the position of women continued to get worse in many areas of life (Panel, 2007).

All panelists noted that the need to address this issue was urgent and doing so would make clear that women's equality was a priority for United Nations.

Agreement was growing outside of the UN for the creation of the new gender entity as activists called attention to the increasingly slow progress in the UN that resulted from the number of disputes among governments about the other parts of the Coherence Panel Report. These included UN operations such as funding, governance and the Delivering as One UN country level project (Bunch, 2009, p. 8). The women's groups were persistent and incited support from the women's rights movements and other civil society actors to exert pressure on Member States to keep pushing the issue forward. CWGL and WEDO made an urgent call in May 2007 made an urgent call updating its constituency about the status of the gender entity and informing them of immediate actions that needed to be taken. They noted that actions had been stalled because all the recommendations from the Panel's report were being considered as one package. Thus the reform of the gender machineries would not progress until the other issues within the reform process were also addressed. The other issues were of longstanding importance to many governments in the South.

Women's groups advocated for each section (gender, governance, and funding) to be acted on separately so that they could be negotiated regardless of what happened to other components. In the resulting document, actions and strategies were suggested, such as: (1) lobbying governments and Ministers of Foreign Affairs to not only support the GEA proposal, but to delink it from the other recommendations of the Coherence Panel Report; (2) urging governments to liaise with their missions in New York and instruct

them to affirm their support for the new proposal and for strengthening the existing GEA and engaging in all relevant negotiations to voice strong support within their country groupings and encouraging governments to take positions on the GEA deliberations in this General Assembly session; (3) informing governments that ideas to strengthen the GEA within the UN were conceived and supported by women's groups (and not donors) in order to deliver on the promises and commitments established in the Beijing Platform for Action over ten years ago; (4) organizing informal briefings with government officials throughout various regions; and others (Action Needed to Gain Stronger Gender Equality Architecture, 2007). A global campaign was beginning to form and these groups continued their advocacy with a renewed hope that they would succeed.

However, tensions arose among Member States, as they usually do in intergovernmental negotiations, between donors and non-donors, and between the global North and South. These undercurrents are often warranted because of the UN's uneven political landscape, and feminists struggle with this dynamic as well as others. Since financial and human resources are constrained, feminists also debated the importance of following such international UN processes because local concerns may be much more dire. As Jain (2006) asked, were activists to,

> Integrate into the mainstream or remain apart, challenging its legitimacy and its values? Integrating into a given set up that is inaccurate and flawed means surrender, apart from perhaps leading to undesirable results. But staying away from participating also has its negative effects, i.e., exclusion. In the language of the feminists this question has also been phrased as: 'do we want a piece of the poisoned cake?' or 'do we want to swim in the polluted stream?" (p. 3)

2008: The GEAR Campaign - "Building a United Nations that Works for All Women"

Once again the Commission on the Status of Women was a critical space where women met to strategize and mobilize NGOs to get involved in this issue of UN reform. A strong and passionate group of women's rights, human rights and other social justice organizations were forming an alliance around this issue. A coalition and a global campaign emerged from these bonds. Early in 2008, the following NGOs submitted a statement to the United Nations Economic and Social Council to bring attention to what women's groups were advocating for through the UN reform process. The global campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform in the United Nations was endorsed by Amnesty International, Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW), Association for Women's Rights In Development (AWID), CWGL, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), African Women's Development & Communication Network (FEMNET), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), WEDO, WIDE - Globalising Gender Equality and Social Justice. The group continued to grow and eventually a formal working group evolved for the GEAR Campaign.

CWGL and WEDO organized another GEAR Strategy Meeting in late February just prior to the 2008 CSW. Fifty participants from 38 different organizations globally attended the meeting to engage regional and national organizations with the New York based groups to determine directions for the GEAR Campaign (Meeting Report, 2008). Discussions about core campaign messages were articulated and expectations for the process were proposed. Complex decisions about the relationship between GEAR and the women-specific programming and gender mainstreaming were discussed, and the group concluded that the new entity would have to have both approaches engrained in its mandate. Regional debriefings were a significant part of the meeting's agenda. Strategies

for the CSW were outlined for GEAR, and NGO mobilization activities and ideas and advocacy for the future began to unfold.

During the 2008 CSW, organizers of the gender equality architecture group chose to highlight the formal launch of the GEAR Campaign as part of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR60). In honor of this landmark Declaration, Campaign members discussed GEAR in the context of the history of women's activism at the UN. Throughout the CSW, GEAR Campaign co-facilitators organized Linkage Caucuses for NGOs to strategize, share information and gather support for the campaign.

Since 2005, the principles of gender equality architecture reform had garnered growing support and by the time the GEAR Campaign was officially launched in 2008, 85 organizations from 35 countries endorsed the campaign. GEAR believed that the "creation of a stronger UN entity for women would greatly advance gender equality, the empowerment of women and their human rights throughout the world" (CSW Statement, 2008). Advocates note that for three decades the UN has promoted and defined a global agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment, and there have been significant advancements for women. However, the UN still lacked a mechanism that would ensure that critical commitments made were implemented.

As a result, GEAR advocates outlined five demands that would essentially better enable the UN and governments to deliver on their promises. Basically the group called for: (1) an Under-Secretary-General to head the entity and provide high level leadership; (2) extensive field presence and a strong program to improve lives for women on the ground; (3) predictable resources of $1 billion; (4) meaningful involvement of civil

society, specifically women's NGOs; and the (5) promotion of gender mainstreaming throughout the UN.

While it was challenging to gain media attention and engage public interest, by 2008 a number of international news agencies that cover UN politics and processes responded to GEAR Campaign representatives for opinions and views on the current situation. In August 2008, former United States President Bill Clinton, a friend of Stephen Lewis, announced his support of the new women's entity during a presentation at the International AIDS Conference. He stated,

> We all know we need to do more to promote the rights of women and girls to end the epidemic of gender violence. Women already bear a disproportionate burden as wives, mothers, grandmothers, and healthcare workers in the AIDS crisis. Violence and discrimination should not add to that burden. That is why I have decided to support the current effort of many governments and advocates to create a new United Nations agency for women… (HIV/AIDS and Health System Reform, 2008).

Momentum grew as support from prominent leaders and well-known human rights advocates increased and pressure for the establishment of the new gender entity grew.

After many governmental informal meetings negotiating next steps, the Coherence Panel co-chairs of the gender equality process at a final meeting of the 2008 62nd session of the UN General Assembly (GA) in September pushed Member States to adopt by consensus a resolution to move forward the gender architecture discussion to the next GA session. States agreed to advance toward strengthening the UN system in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment, but it was clear that they needed more detailed information before they would act.

The options for the new gender entity were: (a) the status quo, (b) an autonomous fund/programme, (c) a department, and (d) the composite. Member States asked the

Secretary-General to provide a detailed paper on the options set out in the Deputy Secretary-General's paper focusing on the 'Composite Entity' option with hopes of facilitating substantive action by the General Assembly within the 2009 63rd session (Letter, 2008). The GEAR Campaign called for a hybrid model and therefore supported the Composite model, which would consolidate all four gender entities and build the new gender entity from what already existed and go beyond. If adopted this model would combine the key functions that GEAR had been supporting.

GEAR Campaign Communications and Structure

In 2008, a communications strategy and a formal structure were created for the GEAR Campaign to function transnationally. The structure of the campaign would include the working group co-facilitators (later expanded into the facilitation committee), the Global Focal Points, the Regional Focal Points, and the New York Lobbying Group (GEAR Campaign Working Group). The overall purpose of the GEAR Campaign Working Group was to determine strategic directions of the campaign including broad policy decisions; to map out a comprehensive advocacy strategy for the campaign and develop responses to major new developments; to assure systematic multi-directional global-regional-national communications; to coordinate campaign materials and generate campaign statements (GEAR Campaign Working Group Explanation, 2009). Furthermore, the GEAR NY lobbying group meet monthly to strategize and share information about the UN reform process. The lobby group took particular advantage of its organizational diversity. Not only do the women's rights groups focus on their own constituencies, but also they have broadened their group to include human rights and other global justice organizations to widen its reach. Thus an organization, like Amnesty International, that

often speaks with Member States about other issues can bring GEAR into the conversation as well.

Each of the organizations involved has added value to the meaning and purpose of the campaign. The group has many responsibilities including continuous lobbying in New York at the Headquarters of the UN as well as nationally and regionally when it can be applied. They also identify leaders and allies as well as opponents in mapping strategies and monitor UN discussions. Working with the UN Secretariat and the UN agencies to advance the women's entity and creating alliances amongs civil society is critical to the functions of GEAR.

GEAR's communication strategy ensured a dynamic and multi-tiered, multi-directional methodology of consultation. At various moments during the campaign, facilitators of GEAR had faced challenges regarding its communication and criticisms from the working group. These setbacks were often due to the limited capacity of the core group. One enhancement in the campaign was the development of four listservs. They follow the same structure of the working group: a broad GEAR listserv that encompasses the over 300 organizational signatories to the campaign as well as those generally interested; a GEAR working group listserv that includes all contacts from the working group; a GEAR focal points listerv which includes the global, regional focal points and the facilitation committee; and finally the GEAR NY lobbying group listserv. Information dissemination and media outreach were top priorities for the group. International Planned Parenthood Federation Western Hemisphere Region designed a logo pro bono to further distinguish the GEAR Campaign. In 2008 the group was using a participatory shared website and ultimately the GEAR Campaign European regional focal point designed a

website which in 2010 transitioned into a global GEAR website. These mechanisms assure effective communication and efficient information sharing.

2009: Shaping Relationships and Building Trust

At the conclusion of the 2008 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September, Member States adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary General to develop a paper on options for the new gender entity, which would address the identified gaps and challenges of the current system's work on women and gender equality. This resulted in the Modalities Paper made available at the closing of the 2009 Session of the CSW that outlined the four options. The paper assesses the ability of each option to fulfill the functions previously outlined in the UN Deputy Secretary-General's papers, from August 1, 2007 (Concept Note, 2009) and July 23, 2008 (Letter, 2008), with a particular focus on the composite entity. In 2009, the Secretary-General endorsed the composite option as "the most promising." Supporting the composite, the GEAR Campaign proceeded to update its campaign statement and organize strategy meetings at the CSW to prepare for the next stage.

In March 2009, the GEAR Campaign organized its annual Strategy Meeting (this time in two sessions) to discuss strategic directions for the campaign around the 53rd CSW in New York and beyond. The first session of this year's strategy meeting took place on March 1, 2009 and gathered 36 participants from 29 different organizations around the world. The main objective was to bring together GEAR Global Focal Points, Regional Focal Points, and allies in order to share regional information and updates as well as determine lobbying and advocacy strategies during the CSW. The following week, 25 participants from 16 different countries attended the second strategy meeting, the key

objective of which was to report back on GEAR activities during the first week of the CSW and strategize for the second week and beyond. Overall, 37 organizations from around the world were represented at the two meetings. The meeting dialogue provided supporters with both short-term and long-term advocacy, lobbying and outreach strategies.

In response to the continuing lack of movement by the UNGA on gender architecture, a global GEAR petition was developed at the 53rd session of the CSW to put pressure on Member States and the UN. The petition focused on the timely establishment of the new gender entity and the meaningful involvement of civil society. Under the direction of Amnesty International, a member of the GEAR NY Lobby Group, the petition grew into a yearlong action with strong support from many organizations worldwide. In June 2010, GEAR Campaign representatives presented the 64th President of the General Assembly (PGA) with a petition signed by over 34,000 individuals from 165 countries and territories.

As the 2009 CSW came to a close, the GEAR Campaign maintained momentum, with widespread and outspoken support from governments as well as the inclusion of strong language proposed by the GEAR Campaign in governmental documents. As the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, emphatically said in his statement on International Women's Day,

> No issue needs or deserves the leadership of the General Assembly more than the pursuit of gender equality. During the 63rd session of the General Assembly, our 192 Member States have an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in an historic way. I have committed myself to presiding over the establishment of a new UN entity for women – one with the authority, presence and resources required to orchestrate the multifaceted campaigns for gender equality. (Brockmann, 2009)

Although there seemed to be overwhelming support for the new entity, movement from the General Assembly was slow because of the politicization of the reform process as mentioned previously.

In June 2009, the European GEAR Working Group developed a funding position paper that called attention to the insufficient funds the UN gender equality bodies receive (Funding Position Paper, 2009). In fact they concluded that less than 1 percent of the entire UN expenditures are allocated to gender equality bodies. Their analysis pointed out that in 2008 the combined budget of UNIFEM, DAW, OSAGI and INSTRAW was approximately $220 million whereas UNICEF's income in 2008 was $3 billion and UNDP was $5 billion. Obviously, the financial and programmatic incongruity amongst UN entities is vast, but the capacity of the other entities compared to the gender equality bodies, which serve half the world's population, is inadequate. Moreover, this analysis makes evident the UN's weak commitment to women's rights and as a result explains one reason why the UN system was failing in its attempt to address gender equality internationally. Unequivocally, the establishment of the new gender entity would need an increased and robust budget to be developed to its potential.

"On September 14, 2009 - the last day of the 63rd General Assembly, a resolution was adopted that strongly supported the creation of a consolidated gender entity based on the composite and called upon the Secretary General to produce a proposal spelling out its particulars to be submitted to intergovernmental negotiations" (Bunch, 2009, 9). The resolution supported the composite entity led by an Under-Secretary-General. GEAR Campaign advocates were excited, but still reserved. Charlotte Bunch, former executive

director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University and key representative for GEAR, told the International Press Service,

> We are very relieved that the General Assembly has finally taken decisive action to create the new gender equality entity on the eve of the 15th anniversary of the Beijing women's conference… we consider this a great victory for women's rights as well as for the coalition of women's and other civil society organizations that have worked hard for over three years to bring this entity into being… (Deen, 2009).

Although Bunch expressed overall excitement about this resolution, the process was frustrating. Daniela Rosche, head of Oxfam's gender campaign and representative from the GEAR European working group, said that while she welcomes the principle on this much-needed women's agency, "the attitude of some Member States to weaken its mandate at the last minute is deplorable" (Deen, 2009). Text regarding the entity's future purpose was removed and thus made room for Member States who might fundamentally oppose women's rights to negotiate more regressive substitute statements. GEAR supporters were advocating for an entity that would provide critical leadership. Just as UNICEF is the driver for children's rights and UNDP is the lead for development, the new gender entity would be the leader on issues related to women's rights. Hopeful that the UN would agree to establish a new entity to advance women's rights and engage with women's rights organizations and grassroots organizations, GEAR campaigners put more pressure on the UN and Member States.

2010: UN Women Born

Secretary General (SG) Ban Ki-moon's office produced the proposal that was called for at the end of December 2009. The "Comprehensive proposal for the composite gender equality entity" outlines the mission statement and organizational chart, provisions for funding and the Executive Board (A/64/588, 2010).   In essence, the report proposed

guidelines for taking action on the new entity. In response to the report, GEAR Campaign supporters developed an in-depth analysis of the remaining gaps and failures of the report (GEAR Campaign Response, 2010). They noted that "it falls short of what is needed on several important issues related to country level operational capacity, long term funding for the entity, civil society participation, and a clear timeline for the appointment of the Under Secretary-General to head the entity" (GEAR Campaign Response, 2010). The lobby group began to schedule meetings with governments gathering intelligence about the way forward and share their opinions about the paper. At GEAR NY lobbying meetings, individuals teamed up to meet with governments, ensure that there was regional balance and that both allies and opponents were being addressed.

As another CSW approached, the campaign worked to actively engage with civil society, governments, and UN staff. Again, GEAR organized a strategy meeting and parallel events at the Commission and initiated a highly visible action during one of the official sessions. After UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke at the UN's official observance of International Women's Day on March 3rd, NGO representatives held up signs that read "GEAR UP NOW!" in the balcony. In his address to the UN on International Women's Day, Ban Ki-moon was adamant that the creation of the new entity would, "provide more coherent programming and a stronger voice for women." The action was greeted with enthusiastic applause and strong support. GEAR was visible and successfully garnered attention from the press and CSW delegates.

Over a dozen media outlets highlighted GEAR and supported the creation of the new entity. In remarks to the CSW on Friday March 12th, Hillary Clinton, United States Secretary of State, claimed that "a single, vibrant agency dedicated to women run by a

strong leader with a seat at the Secretary General's table, would help galvanize the greater levels of coordination and commitment that the women of the world deserve" (Remarks at the UN CSW, 2010). Finally, governments initiated a resolution that was co-sponsored by 180 countries and introduced by the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and Group of 77/China (JCC) representing the global South supporting the creation of the entity – reinforcing the widespread assumption that the new gender equality entity would indeed be established (E/CN.6/2010/L.7, 2010).

Finally, on June 30, 2010 the UN General Assembly set forth a resolution on system-wide coherence to create the structure for the entity (A/RES/64/289, 2010). GEAR released a press release, which stated,

> We have high expectations for this new agency to be a solid foundation for advancing the human rights of women as central to global policy efforts to reduce poverty and move toward greater realization of peace and democracy in the world. The coalition of women's groups and other social justice, human rights and development organizations that played a pivotal role in this effort will now turn its efforts toward ensuring that the new body has the human and financial resources necessary to succeed. (UN Women Born, 2010)

Media outlets also hailed this occasion after the five-year process. At last, UN Women was born.

GEAR then began campaigning for a strong individual to lead UN Women. They drafted criteria and questions for candidates and created a list of high-level skilled women who were qualified for the Under-Secretary-General (USG) position. Michele Bachelet, the former Chilean president, was ultimately appointed the head of UN Women with strong support from the GEAR Campaign. Bani Dugal of the Bahá'í International Community UN office and GEAR facilitation committee member believed that, "her dedication to the advancement of women and girls, and her commitment to working with civil society and

the women's movement will guide the work of this ground-breaking entity and rally member states to strengthen their efforts to achieve the equality of women and men" (GEAR Welcomes, 2010). Since Bachelet's appointment, GEAR Campaign representatives have had ongoing contact with her office and UN Women's transition team and have had multiple in-person meetings with the USG and her staff. Though the USG seems interested in pursuing a strong relationship with women's groups, it is still unclear what formal mechanisms will be created to ensure systems of accountability and the participation of civil society organizations.

CHAPTER FIVE: Methods for Analyzing GEAR's Contributions to Global Gender Equality

Summer 2010 brought ease and a sense of accomplishment for GEAR activists. Since the resolution was adopted, advocates were certain that the new entity would be established. Some of the GEAR NY Lobby group members celebrated this occasion and I was fortunate to be present. Members realized that this process must be documented, and I found myself situated in a unique location as an employee of a women's rights organization and as a graduate student in the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University. As an observer and member of the GEAR team, I believed that I could provide testimony about the active participation of women's rights organizations in the creation of a new UN gender entity and cite the long historical involvement of women's movements in UN processes overall.

Examining the type of impact GEAR had on the creation of UN Women, I sought to map the campaign's activities and illustrate its effectiveness in order to understand the role that GEAR played in the entity's UN Women's establishment. Although I learned that quantifying the impact directly is nearly impossible, I was able to collect data qualitatively and extrapolate significant strategies and techniques that GEAR advocates employed to meet and even go beyond their original objective. I investigated the strategies used over

the last five years to observe the efforts of a transnational campaign monitoring intergovernmental processes. Women rights activists employed soft power to develop strategies that are a significant part of international relations. My thesis thus seeks to add to the literature on the intersections between global feminist activism and global governance.

I began my research recounting the advocacy that feminists had performed over the last 60 years to propel the women's rights agenda forward in the United Nations. By documenting these important moments in women's history, I was able to evaluate and analyze progress while making connections between GEAR and women's long history of organizing at the UN. While researching this subject I found that most of the authors writing about women and the UN were involved with women's movements to some extent and were dedicated to the issues of gender equality.

Simone de Beauvoir has written that, "representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth" (Beauvoir, 1989, p. 143). Challenging knowledge and creating new ways to address traditional international relations concepts is an epistemological approach that feminist theorists have applied to their understanding of global processes. Feminists writing about these experiences know that "only when these processes are revealed and understood, through forms of knowledge that come, not from those at the center of the system, but from those at the margins…can progress be made…" (Tickner, 2001, p. 94). Therefore, the feminist interpretation of global affairs forms the nucleus of my argument. Similar to my predecessors, I frame my analysis through a gendered lens harnessing the women's rights movements' framework.

Archival Research

Because GEAR is a relatively little known campaign beyond the United Nations, I had to use campaign materials to explain its history and aims. This meant reading through GEAR archives housed at CWGL and creating a narrative to accompany campaign documents. For example, GEAR organized numerous meetings, strategic conversations, and events. I reviewed meeting minutes, advocacy statements, and reports to attain a better sense of the strategies GEAR activists used and the challenges they faced. At this point I concluded it would be advantageous to speak to those who had witnessed and actively participated in GEAR.

Survey

In an attempt to gather quantifiable data from the GEAR Working Group I designed a survey that assessed the impact GEAR had on the creation of UN Women. Unfortunately, only about a fifth of the GEAR Working Group responded. Therefore, I have not included those findings in my analysis.[4] The survey identified characteristics of the responder, areas where the campaign was highly effective, and if the campaign should continue beyond 2012. I assume that the reason for such a weak response was due in part to a number of the challenges that I identify in the next chapter.

Interviews

Since the details of the United Nations gender architecture are rarely written about in depth from civil society perspectives, I needed to attain firsthand accounts of what happened and how UN Women was established. One method to achieve this was to interview some of the key players in the Campaign. I took advantage of an important

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[4] As of March 2011 at the time the survey was conducted only 13 out of 67 members of the GEAR Working Group list responded to the questions.

annual women's rights meeting within the UN to guarantee an opportunity for face-to-face interviews with a handful of the key leaders within the campaign's focal points who are based abroad. Prior to the 2011, 55th Commission on the Status of Women, I reached out to longstanding activists from the GEAR Campaign Working Group who planned to attend. I was curious about what they would make of the GEAR Campaign as active participants in its advocacy and design and how they envisioned its next stage.

It is important to mention that those attending the official CSW sessions need accreditation to enter into the United Nations. It is similar to having membership to an exclusive club; sometimes organizations are able to get the membership independently, but often one requires intervention by another group to gain admittance. I note this because although throughout this analysis I articulate a level of diversity amongst GEAR members, being present in these spaces connotes a level of privilege and power that often excludes rural, urban and poor women and men. Furthermore, the feminist and women's rights organizations representing women's voices must reluctantly follow this model for attaining accreditation to attend UN sessions.

> NGOs are not of equal status. There are three categories of membership: general, special, and roster. The number of representatives who may attend and the opportunities for speaking depend on the status of the NGO. Most are in special consultative status although some of the older and larger ones have the more privileged status of general consultative status and small newcomers are often given roster status. (Merry, 2003, p. 971)

Most of the GEAR working group member organizations have this special status, can attain accreditation from partner organizations or are brought to UN sessions as part of a government's delegation.

GEAR Focal Point Interviews

In early February 2011, I emailed regional and global focal points to schedule brief interviews with those who planned to attend the CSW. The best time to undertake this project was at an annual strategy meeting held in the offices of the International Women's Health Coalition on February 27th. There were over 30 participants present from the campaign and my objective was to target a select regionally representative group that was politically and organizationally invested in GEAR and UN Women. I chose the focal points that had been involved with GEAR for more than three years and were actively engaged through email listservs and had organizational buy in to the campaign.

Each focal point was interviewed about the same questions and for the same length of time. I informed the interviewee the reason for the interview and explained the format. A digital audio recording device was set up and all interviewees consented to allow me to use the recording for my research and cite them in this project. Since the four focal points are colleagues, I formatted the interview as informal and structured the conversation with open-ended questions. Once I escorted the interviewee from the strategy meeting, we proceeded to a small office where we would be able to have a private conversation. Even though the traffic on the streets of New York City posed a challenge to our focus and the recording, the discussions were frank, thoughtful and provided a useful articulation of the gender equality architecture process at the UN.

Interviewees included the following GEAR representatives on February 27, 2011: Lydia Alpizar, AWID, GEAR global focal point, Costa Rica; Mabel Bianco, FEIM, GEAR regional focal point, Argentina; Naisola Likimani, FEMNET, GEAR regional focal point, Kenya; Bandana Rana, South Asian Campaign for Gender Equality/ SAATHI, GEAR regional focal point, Nepal; Daniela Rosche, Oxfam Novib and former European GEAR

Working Group, GEAR regional focal point, Netherlands. Based on six basic questions, I was able to obtain useful feedback about the campaign from the focal points.

I began the interview by asking an introductory question, "Over the course of the five years, what has been your role in the GEAR Campaign?" By asking this I hoped to determine what their responsibilities were in advocating for GEAR and have the focal point explain their level of engagement. I was curious not only to measure the UN aspects of this campaign, but also the ways in which the campaign may have affected women's movements. Antrobus (2004a) elucidates that "engagement in UN debates… have made women at all levels more knowledgeable about the political economy of neoliberalism, a subject which women had not paid much attention hitherto" (p.123). Therefore, the next sets of questions are focused on how participating in the Campaign impacted women's movements and social justice organizations.

My second question was, "has the GEAR Campaign and women's activists working on the gender components of UN reform made uncommon alliances? If yes, how so,"; and third question was, "what have been the benefits for your organization in participating in the GEAR Campaign?" I referred to the term 'uncommon alliances' to explore if and how GEAR advocates were connecting with activists outside of their usual partners. I then transitioned to the critical questions that form the basis of my thesis. Interviewees were asked to explain, "How, if any, the GEAR Campaign has been effective? Are there lessons learned? What were and are the challenges that the campaign faces?" And finally, I posed to the question, "What have been the key ways that GEAR has influenced the UN reform process and give examples?" Overall, these last two questions were the most substantive, and where interviewees provided meaningful

responses. Finally, since GEAR's goal was attained, I wanted to know, "Why shouldn't the Campaign continue or why should the Campaign continue?" The last question was met with a variety of answers and perhaps I should have rephrased it to emphasize the degree to which GEAR should continue.

Interview with GEAR founder

Genevieve Cato, an M.A. student in women's and gender studies at Rutgers University, is currently archiving the GEAR Campaign materials at CWGL and decided to take her project a step further and interview Charlotte Bunch, CWGL's founding director and senior scholar and an integral part of the GEAR Campaign. GEAR was the brainchild of Bunch and June Zeitlin, former WEDO executive director. Their historical analysis of what took place would contribute greatly to this project. I was able to assist the graduate student in shaping her questions, observe the interview and have access to audio files from the interview. The interview was designed a bit differently than previous ones because I believed that Bunch could provide clear analyses of where GEAR was successful and where it experienced setbacks.

On April 26, 2011, Cato interviewed Bunch about her perspectives on the reform process. Cato began by asking her to explain her role in the GEAR Campaign as part of the facilitation committee, previously a co-facilitator, and GEAR NY lobby group and why she became involved in the UN's gender equality architecture campaign. From here, the conversation moved to identifying the challenges and setbacks that GEAR faced working alongside the UN and with the group of civil society organizations. As was mentioned previously there were many actors involved, and Cato asked about the working relationship between GEAR and UN Member States and "how GEAR cultivated

relationships with the UN and Member States." Next she asked "if the GEAR Campaign did anything differently than previous women's rights organizing?" Often strategies learned from past experience are critical to future advocacy so examining these methods is another way to measure the campaigns effectiveness. Subsequently, Bunch answered questions about the significance of UN Women and addressed current fears for the new entity. Finally, Cato posed, "Overall, what are the three lessons that women's movements should learn from this process?"

Interview with UNIFEM representative

In addition to speaking with members of the GEAR Campaign, I wanted to gain perspectives from an employee of the former UNIFEM. I chose to interview Joanne Sandler, a longtime feminist activist, ally of the women's movement and UN bureaucrat. We set the interview for March 14, 2011, a couple of weeks after the closing of the CSW. As Sandler had been involved in the gender equality architecture reform process from the inside, I thought her insight would give a unique and different understanding of what had occurred. I digitally recorded the interview and received consent from Sandler to use our conversation in my analysis

Similar to the focal point interviews, I began with an introductory question and asked, "What has been your involvement in UN reform specifically the gender equality architecture?" Again I was interested in gauging her level of involvement in the process. Second, over the course of the five years advocating for a new gender entity there was disagreement regarding how the new entity would be different from UNIFEM. Therefore I asked, "What will the differences be or should be between UN Women and the former UNIFEM and what are the positive and negative takeaways from the former UNIFEM and

the newly created UN Women?" Third, identifying moments when Member States would be more open to reform is difficult and thus I asked, "What were the key tipping/turning points in this process and when did you know that it would be likely that UN Women would happen?" I would like to learn from strategies the GEAR team used and understand the plethora of factors that played a role in establishing UN Women. To identify the civil society campaign as the only force in UN Women's creation would be naïve. Fourth, I asked Sandler to "share some of the challenges during this process with regard to bringing together the four entities, DAW, UNIFEM, INSTRAW, OSAGI?" Fifth, it was critical that I uncover ways that civil society works with the UN. Asking, "How has the relationship evolved between NGOs and inside the UN and do you think civil society involvement is increasing or decreasing?" Finally, I asked her to share her hopes and fears for the future of UN Women? The interview lasted over an hour and highlighted a number of key issues.

CHAPTER SIX: Analysis of the GEAR Campaign and Its Legacies for Future Women's Rights Activists Working with the UN

> Today, NGOs and women's organizations increasingly challenge the power and scope of traditional political institutions within the state and lobby international agencies to reinterpret development policies. As the civil society expands in most countries in response to this era of limited government, these new organizations are touted as the real arena for citizen participation and the foundation of present or future democracy. (Tinker, 1999, p. 2)

Feminist activism and women's rights advocacy employ a variety of strategies at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Whether by creating strong transnational networks of supporters or by enhancing their legitimacy with government actors, women's right activists entertain a power that is simultaneously subtle and powerful. Building on different entry points, including women's presence at the signing of the UDHR to the adoption of CEDAW, the creation of UNIFEM, the organizing at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the establishment of UN Women, women's rights activists and their allies have advanced their agenda at the UN. Many of the activists involved are outsiders to the UN, but have insider astuteness.

The relationship between an independent variable like the GEAR Campaign, and the dependent variable, UN Women, is difficult to assess. Although there are multiple factors in the creation of UN Women, the GEAR Campaign provided the only feminist civil society perspective. It exposed a community of women's rights activists and grassroots women to issues of UN architecture as well as raised critical feminist

perspectives during the reform process to the UN. Relationships and links between GEAR advocates, the United Nations and civil society organizations proved to be an important method for strengthening the campaign's demands and actions.

> Intermediaries such as NGO and social movement activists play a critical role in interpreting the cultural world of transnational modernity for local claimants. They appropriate, translate, and remake transnational discourses into the vernacular. At the same time, they take local stories and frame them in national and international human rights language. (Merry, 2006, p. 3)

Straddling multiple spheres and spaces, GEAR Campaign activists connected local to global and global to local. Between the Working Group, the wider network of organizational supporters, the UN and Member States strategic messages were imparted. Based on several semi-structured interviews, research within GEAR archives, and first hand observations, a number of themes have emerged regarding the strategies and approaches GEAR implemented.

I focus on three areas: the challenges, the effectiveness and the future of the campaign. First, the challenges, which GEAR advocates experienced by undertaking a UN process such as the reform of its gender equality architecture, were overwhelming. Not only were there questions about how to gain support from UN allies, but also it was clear that GEAR faced challenges within its own network, especially related to funding, and communication. Second, GEAR's overall effectiveness was deeply rooted in the political and activist strategies of women's rights movements. It created a trust of knowledge with its production of materials, which gave it legitimacy with UN actors as well as women's rights activists to identify areas that needed reform. Furthermore, the diverse network of activists involved with GEAR strengthened its capacity in moments of contention. The third and final area for analysis is a discussion of the future of the campaign. Because its

objective has been accomplished, should GEAR continue? GEAR supporters are currently grappling with the campaigns future purpose and its transformation to meet new concerns.

Challenges

From the onset and throughout its existence, GEAR has had to contend with a number of setbacks. Although there were a myriad of challenges, I do not want to produce a laundry list of problems, but rather explain key issues that will allow activists in the future to address these concerns from the outset.

First, GEAR had to mobilize constituents: translate a UN process into activist terms and make activists understand the importance of this process during a moment of disenchantment with the United Nations. Bandana Rana, South Asia Regional Focal Point, noted that when she spoke about the reform process, "people found it very difficult to relate to when there were such burning basic needs were required," at the local level (Interview, February 27, 2011). She further explained that, "mobilizing was difficult and I had to ask myself, am I just selling a dream?" As a result of working within a UN space, which GEAR is external to, activists consistently questioned their involvement in the campaign because they were committing invaluable time on a UN project. Charlotte Bunch, Facilitation Committee member notes that because of all the other priorities of women's rights activists it was, "difficult to get activists to spend time on structure" (Interview, April 26, 2011). Similarly, Lydia Alpizar, a Global Focal Point, shared her view that the, "normal challenges with UN processes are that they are slow and understanding technicalities is difficult" (Interview, February 27, 2011). Feminist scholar, Peggy Antrobus (2004a) claims that women who focus on these spaces often receive criticism from colleagues about caring more about international than local concerns.

GEAR had to consistently struggle with two key challenges: the UN's inefficient and bureaucratic system along with the indifference from many women's rights groups. Mabel Bianco, Latin America Regional Focal Point shared that there were "many voices in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, were against the idea and were disinterested and skeptical about the possibilities of change" (Interview, February 27, 2011). According to Alpizar there had been, "resistance from the region," and many communicated their "cynicism, criticism and skepticism about whether a new UN entity would really respond to the present urgent needs of women." Women's rights activists fervently engaged in UN processes in the 1990s, yet after September 11, 2001 feminists witnessed a, "fundamentalist backlash against women's advancement, and women have had to struggle to maintain the ground gained…" at the UN (Antrobus, 2004a, p. 115). Although such apathy continues to exist, "the UN remains the only forum in which a global women's movement might engage governments in relation to agendas in which they are heavily invested" (Antrobus, 2004a, p. 105).

The second challenge was the campaign's ability to mobilize funding for its work in advocating for the new gender entity. An important point to note is that the campaign is a joint effort by many groups and thus organizations were tasked to raise funds independently as well as in coalition. Funding for women's rights groups has always been inadequate, and in the last five years has contracted further due to the global financial crisis (Briefs: The Impact of the Crisis on Women, 2009). "People would be amazed at how little money was raised for GEAR," Bunch said while discussing the ongoing monitoring of the campaign (Cato Interview, April 26, 2011). Women's groups across the board have been extensively impacted by the financial crisis and when organizations have to spend time

mobilizing resources to sustain efforts it affects the capacity of the group (Alpizar, Interview, February 27, 2011). Nailsola Likimani, Africa Regional Focal Point, recalled that, "We didn't wait for resources and didn't have money for the campaign… the lack of money was a barrier when empowering sub-regions to act, but they needed the money since they are not large organizations; it was difficult to convene meetings without the money" (Interview, February 27, 2011). Alpizar further articulated that her organization AWID, a large global women's rights organization is not involved in many other global campaigns and notes that the, "achievement is that a campaign with such limited resources was able to mobilize people in the regions to be engaged." I believe this is a product of the coalition and alliances that have emerged over the last three decades among the global women's rights advocates.

Third, transnational organizing has evolved over the last decade with the rise of new forms of communication. However, with all the benefits of communicating through email listervs, social networking sites, and programs like *Skype*, the campaign has still worked to overcome obstacles to convey messages from the UN Headquarters in New York to Argentina, Fiji and beyond. Alpizar shared that, "our capacity to work together is always a challenge; sometimes the New York group is so engaged with the dynamics in New York it is easy to forget that people outside aren't really following these discussions and they need to understand that there needs to be more sustained communications." (Interview, February 27, 2011). She continued to explain that although there have been major improvements, the communication challenges have adversely impacted the campaign and consequently at different moments individuals have lost a sense of ownership. According to Likimani, the erratic nature of the UN reform process was

difficult to keep up with and explained that in her region, activists work in several languages. As a result of the inconsistent UN reform, occasionally materials that GEAR produced and documents the UN disseminated were only available in English. Often a document would need to be immediately disseminated to garner support and attention on a specific issue whereas at other moments there might be more time to edit, translate and disseminate. The inability to translate key documents quickly was an issue that GEAR supporters faced.

A key to the success of the campaign was the urgent mobilization of regional organizations. Likimani explained, "In 2008, the first step was to bring key women's rights networks to the table to bring them to discuss UN reform process and GEA. This was north, central, east and South Africa. Later on it became important to produce materials that others could use," to illustrate women's demands and lobby particular governments that were in leadership positions in the UN. In addition to the language concerns, she conveyed that "we are not as email oriented as it is in the North and it is really hard to keep up." Therefore a frustration arose because they were always, "playing catch up" (Interview, February 27, 2011). Fundamentally, access to technology both within countries and between countries is imbalanced and there is a growing global technological divide.[5] In Nepal, Bandana Rana revealed her frustration about organizing information calls about GEAR in the region: "I would organize a conference call and so many people would not be there – sometimes I would be the only one on the call," because of down telephone lines (Personal Communication, February 27, 2011).

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[5] The technological divide refers to the gap between those that have access to technology and can effectively use it and those who do not.

Fourth, the fact that the GEAR advocates were outsiders at the UN could be problematic. Charlotte Bunch explicates this challenge and details a number of other nuances:

> It's difficult to move bureaucracies… UN Women is not the women's movement; the UN is a vehicle for governments. The UN is very protective of its turf and information was very difficult to attain as there was jockeying and competition amongst the women's agencies…gender equality architecture was a political football amongst the differing regional blocks. We also underestimated how GEAR would get caught up with the donor/development division (Cato Interview, April 26, 2011).

UN structures are commonly recognized as being weighed down by technical procedures that are exceptionally tedious, and this reform was no different. Activists battling for substantive information while UN staff competed with one another. Finally, Bunch mentions the current political situation within the UN in developing nations are often at odds with donor nations. This conflict at times not only delayed the process, but also made it very difficult for GEAR supporters to advance gender equality architecture on the agenda.

Effectiveness

For the campaign to be effective a number of strategies were implemented. First, because of the lack of transparency of the process, not only were activists in the regions often excluded, foreign ministries in various capitols were also often unaware of what was happening at Headquarters. GEAR regional focal points played a key role in sharing information with foreign ministries when the UN and mission offices did not. Second, the production and dissemination of campaign advocacy materials was critical to GEAR's success. Third, continuing the women's movement engagement with the UN allowed

activists to monitor this process closely. Fourth, because of the diverse groups involved, the campaign was able to function in both civil society and UN spaces.

Regional Focal Points often acted as the interlocutor between conversations discussed at UN headquarters in New York and foreign ministry offices in Member State capitols. A unique relationship formed between the regional focal points and their national machineries. Alpizar explained that "the fact there was a sustained actor, as a collective, in a continuous way, putting pressure not only in New York, but in the regions was a very key dimension of the work done." Due in part to financial constraints at country level and States lack of resources to follow the reform processes, the GEAR focal points became a trusted source of information. In southern regions Member States are "marginalized for funds, opinions and resources in the global scenario and they realize that," working with the GEAR advocates can get them more support, explained Bianco (Interview, February 27, 2011). Naisola Likimani recounted in her interview:

> We developed a stronger relationship with the UN offices and it got around to foreign affairs ministries that FEMNET was a focal point so during the USG (Under-Secretary-General) nominations at the African Union summit a permanent secretary approached me about what we were hearing. He sought me out because FEMNET was working on this. We have seen the ministry of foreign affairs of government X call us and ask us for information and we rush to get them documents and then days later we hear that government spoke in support of GEAR [principles for the new entity].

Relationships with governments and UN bodies are critical for GEAR. Clearly, regional focal points influenced the decisions of Member States and had a positive impact on likeminded governments.

One method GEAR employed to convey key messages to partners, governments, and press was the production of campaign materials. Many of the focal points I

interviewed mentioned that communication and dissemination of information was vital and

that the group had a collaborative spirit. Lydia Alpizar noted that the,

> Campaign was successful in articulating a vision for what we wanted, writing it
> down and having people who had experience doing the advocacy that was required
> at different levels and we also built on accumulated experiences from the last two
> decades… not only did we say this had to happen but how it had to happen
> providing information on the ground for people to do with capitols. (Personal
> Communication, February 27, 2011)

Naisola observed that there was a "sense that someone was watching," and recalls that

"there was a big stall in the process and we started writing opinion pieces. We had a flurry

of pressure. It was like there was a GEAR eye in the sky," monitoring the UN process

(Personal Communication, February 27, 2011).

Furthermore, GEAR built a connection with the UN and its women's machineries

at a moment when the organization has been struggling to illustrate its significance to the

women's movement and the world.

> Keeping the women's movement engaged with the UN was difficult because with
> the level of disappointment on the impact of the UN is having and the legitimacy
> and credibility the UN has lost. I am a strong believer in multilateralism and as a
> feminist internationalist, the UN continues to be an important venue. Currently it
> has been part of world politics to attack it, undermine it, make it technocratic and
> inefficient, but I am not ready to give up on it. The GEAR Campaign has been a
> way the women's groups that share that vision can continue to engage and keep
> some of the mandate of the UN alive. All of what happens with UN Women if it
> goes in a good way which we hope it will can really strengthen the UN in a
> moment when there has been a push to undermine it (Lydia Alpizar, Interview,
> February 27, 2011).

Many complexities exist in terms of the involvement of women's movements in the reform

process. Fundamentally, GEAR's main objective is to transform women's lives on the

ground through the new UN gender entity, but it success will not measured for decades.

Still, the multidimensional way that GEAR affected this process is clear. The campaign

was effective in harnessing its expertise on the UN and mobilizing constituencies because

it was able to convey its significance to the movement and beyond. Alpizar continued it is "not a small thing, the fact that people know about the process and now we need to ensure that this thing that has been created actually does what we want." According to Likimani "the level to which African women are able to participate in the planning process or apply to ASG position," is critical. "They are owning this, as this is about women. We should appreciate our contributions. To actually get people to be excited about the change that is possible through a UN body is huge."

Finally, having a diverse coalition strengthened GEAR's arguments, illustrating that there is a civil society consensus. As Bunch articulated this idea, "We are advocacy oriented activists and a coalition of more progressive human rights and women's rights groups" (Cato Interview, April 26, 2011). Or as Alpizar explained it, "We have an affinity with the human rights groups involved, but GEAR has remained a women's human rights space. The importance is that we have built a space that brings on board some of the newer groups in the regions and diversities who are part of the women's movement but not necessarily the usual suspects." Thus, GEAR strategically strengthened the movement and provides a movement building exercise to cultivate new leadership, support women's groups on the ground, and advance feminist dialogues about the UN.

Future

When I approached this topic with the interviewees, I received a variety of responses. Certainly the idea of ending the campaign immediately after the resolution was adopted for UN Women seemed risky. Rana shared that, "Our campaign was not just to get there, it was to make a difference in women's lives." Overall, there was consensus that

to stop monitoring UN Women in its nascent stage would render all the other efforts to integrate feminist demands into the new gender entity.

> The campaign was about the formation of UN Women and beyond that about civil society participation in UN Women. It has been formed, but the rest hasn't happened. I think it would be a mistake if we stopped. We would continue with or without GEAR but being part of a global collective gives us clout and support from one another. We must ensure that this is a structure with integrity and not just a token thing. Because UN Women is an amalgamation and scaling up of existing structures there is the threat of it just becoming the same thing with more money, which will be sad. We must make sure that this is not business as usual and they can't go back to the ad hoc way of working with civil society and if we don't stay involved then we run this risk. Later on we will see if there is a need and phase out, but there will be a role for us and after the first three years do an assessment (Nailsola Likimani, Interview, February 27, 2011).

Some individuals I spoke with shared concerns about the institutionalization of a political process such as GEAR and that it might loose its edge if it became a more formalized structure. However, these issues need to remain visible and women's groups must continue engagement in monitoring these UN processes. Whether it is because of the lack of financial or human resources or inadequate comprehension of addressing gender inequalities, women and gender issues are the highest priority of many development organizations, yet the issues thus raised are still the least understood by mainstream international organizations. Therefore, it is imperative that feminist and women's rights organizations and perspectives are incorporated into the development of mainstream international agendas. GEAR provides a lens that attempts to integrate feminist iterations throughout the United Nations and monitor the development of UN Women. Thus, GEAR will continue to be a vital feminist ombudsman as UN Women grows and expands.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusion and the Way Forward

Over the last sixty years women's rights organizations have been forging alliances with likeminded groups globally, exercising advanced methods of organizing, and shaping new forms of knowledge. Within the women's rights movement a diverse group of actors, geographically, politically, and economically are engaged in the pursuit of gender equality through the United Nations. UN Women brings new energy and excitement while concurrently generating new dimensions, challenges and courses for action. Inequalities globally are increasing and the UN has been tasked with addressing gender disparities worldwide and seeking out mechanisms to counter these inequities. The impact from women's groups is clear; without the force of the GEAR Campaign, the UN would have continued to disappoint one of the populations it aims to serve, women. Not because it lacks commitment to gender equality, but because the UN would have remained ill-equipped to deliver significant results without considerable structural reform to its gender architecture.

Women's rights groups have constantly struggled with the bureaucracy that is the UN. The struggle in many instances seems worth it, but if the UN Women fails to meet at least some of the expectations of the women's movements, its legitimacy will certainly suffer. Women's participation in the UN is fraught with obstacles. The organization was not created to enhance civil society participation in global governance or in humanitarian

trajectories. Rather, it is an intergovernmental organization made up of Member States with the objective to maintain world "peace". Acknowledging the founding purpose of the UN is critical to remaining realistic about its limits. UN Women was created by the adoption of a resolution agreed upon by governments and not civil society. Moreover, though women's rights groups have been actively engaged in these processes and, "the global governance of human rights is remarkably different and better in many ways than it was in 1945, state authorities still control the most important final decisions and traditional national interests still trump individual human rights far too often" (Weiss, 2010, p. 284).

Nevertheless, the UN has provided a venue where women's rights organizations come together, strategize and set high standards for gender equality and women's empowerment. "None of these mechanisms would have existed without women's rights advocates calling for them – women said this is something we want" (Joanne Sandler Interview, March 14, 2011). Women's rights advocates have used the UN space in a range of ways and now as the women's movement begins to shape yet another UN entity on women, advocates are hopeful that UN Women and the United Nations will deliver.

My intention for this project was straightforward: I hoped to see what added-value a civil society campaign had on the creation of a UN entity and to document the strategic dedication of women's rights activists in the development of a global organization tasked to meet the needs of women and girls worldwide. Without a doubt, GEAR was a significant force in ensuring that UN Women was shaped to serve women systematically and methodically. Along the way, those advocating for its creation experienced the UN machine head-on. Processes proved exceedingly technical, painfully slow, and highly politicized which often made it seems inconsistent and erratic. When GEAR proponents

believed they were close to achieving the new gender entity, the process was again delayed. Throughout my analysis of GEAR, then, I offer numerous examples of the perseverance of women's rights activists in the face of the UN bureaucracy.

GEAR began with the objective to "build a UN that really works for all women!" They believe that by consolidating the four existing entities, delivering robust funding, strengthening operational capacity, appointing an esteemed leader, and including meaningful civil society participation, UN Women will have a good chance at succeeding in its goals. Its aim was to position a UN women's rights organization at the same level as other UN agencies like UNICEF and UNFPA.

In the year since the resolution (A/RES/64/289, 2010) to establish UN Women was adopted, steps have been taken to ensure it becomes more than the sum of its parts. UN Women's Under-Secretary-General Michele Bachelet was appointed in September 2010 and since then has demonstrated that she is vociferously committed to the success of the new entity. "The doors have now flung completely open…women now have a voice at all the high level decision making venues at the UN, this is a huge difference," explained Joanne Sandler (Interview, March 14, 2011). With Bachelet as the leader of UN Women, activists believe that they have gained not only have a fearless advocate for women's rights, but also a strong ally. Furthermore, governments will hear from Bachelet that it is important to empower and support women. Governments will not be able to forget that they have an obligation to women to support their rights as humans, as leaders, as employees, as mothers, as daughters.

At the official launch in February 2011, supporters were excited, but skeptical about UN Women's structure and vision. Since February 2011, strategy plans and

organizational documents have been shaping the programming of UN Women with some insight from civil society and new high-level appointments have been made. UN Women is in the process of developing a small global civil society advisory group to support the organization in shaping its vision and programs. The new entity has learned quickly about the importance of including women's rights groups in its organization formally.

> In exercising its convening power, the United Nations should emphasize the inclusion of all constituencies relevant to the issue, recognize that the key actors are different for different issues and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships to pioneer solutions and empower a range of global policy networks to innovate and build momentum on policy options. (A/58/817, 2004)

GEAR strongly advocates for the explicit inclusion of women rights and grassroots organizations and anticipates that UN Women will expand its advisory groups to the regions and to country offices. Regrettably, the funding trajectory of UN Women has been met with disregard and countries have meagerly supported the entity compared to other operational UN agencies. Obviously, if UN Women does not receive the funds it needs to scale up its programming and country presence, its vision will suffer. Additional apprehension surfaces from women's rights groups who argue that funding for UN Women will diminish support for other women's rights organizations. Others refute this claim because the pools of funding from women's rights organizations and UN agencies vary greatly.

Many challenges await the GEAR Campaign. While speaking with GEAR representatives and women's rights activists regarding the importance of UN Women, I have learned that this new entity is one vehicle for women's rights activists in their pursuit toward gender equality. UN Women is not the solution to gender equality, but it is a very important conduit in making women's rights a reality. In 2005, Jain wrote that "the

women's movement needs to find new ways of moving forward, of gathering its capital of knowledge and experience and history and reshaping it into a new political force" (Jain, 2006, 166). Certainly women's rights movements that had mobilized and seized the opportunity to push for the new entity's creation generated advancements in transnational activism. Measurement of such a feat is necessary and provides a critical gauge for the next generation of activists working to transform the UN.

Sisyphus, comes to mind when analyzing the struggle of women's movements advocating for UN Women. There is no doubt that women's rights groups will continue to be involved in monitoring UN Women, but the future of the GEAR Campaign is unknown. It is unlikely that the campaign will remain in its current formulation, but certainly feminists and women's rights activists will endure and continue to monitor UN Women. Activists today – as they have for six decades -- hold the UN and Member States accountable to women's human rights commitments and international human rights standards in an effort to attain gender equality and women's empowerment globally.

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