REPORT FROM THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION OFFICE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION AND THE 65TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Priority Theme:

Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

Review theme:

Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development

CSW65 WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE · EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING
15-26 MARCH 2021 | END VIOLENCE · ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY | #CSW65
Commission on the Status of Women

15TH - 26TH MARCH 2021

THE ANGLICAN DELEGATION AT UNCSW65

Eight Anglican women were nominated by their provinces and selected as the Anglican Consultative Council's formal delegation to the 64th Session (2020) of the UNCSW which was ultimately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegates agreed to carry their preparations through to the following year and represent their provinces and the Anglican Consultative Council for UNCSW65 in 2021. The delegation drew together women who are leaders in their church, diocese or province and have experience and interest in gender equality, gender justice, the empowerment of women and girls, and women's leadership. Half of the delegation consisted of young women aged 18 to 30. Take a look at the biographies and expertise each of our delegates brought to the UNCSW65.

THE CHURCH OF PAKISTAN

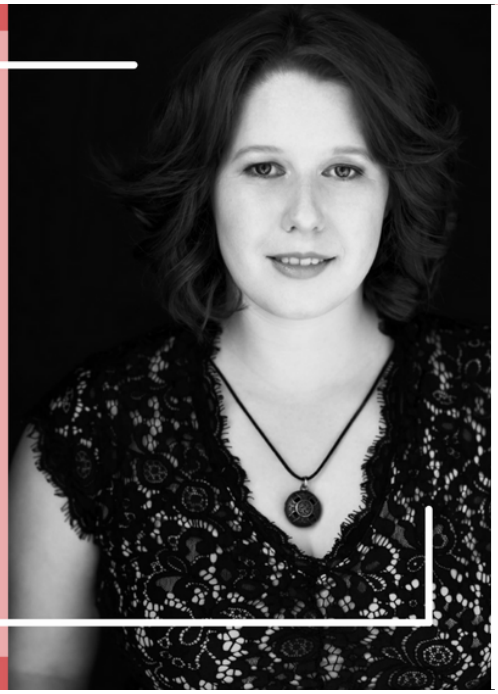
Amal Sarah, aged 24 from Lahore, Pakistan. I am a Postgraduate student, studying M.Phil. from Forman Christian College, University. I serve as the youth representative in Central Cathedral of Praying Hands and voluntarily serve in the Diocese of Raiwind-Church of Pakistan for the empowerment of women, children and youth.

AMAL SARAH

At the Women Development & Service Society (WDSS) in the Diocese of Raiwind-Church of Pakistan, Amal gathers youth, men and women from Diocesan parishes to create awareness on domestic abuse and how they can cope with its consequences. She also engages with the local community by organizing various capacity building programs in the Diocesan parishes.

BRIDIE BOYD

Bridie works to raise up young women into leadership roles, helping to give them a voice in Church governance. She also raises awareness through key conversations on the issues the church itself faces regarding gender equality, and collaborates with others to create safe spaces for those who have faced gender abuse and misuse in the Church.



THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND & POLYNESIA

Ms. Boyd is employed as a Children and Youth Worker, and as a Chaplain's Assistant in a girls school. She spent her teenage years in the Middle East and England, where she obtained a great passion for gender equality. She works to include young women in ministry and church governance, and promotes inclusive liturgy, and better processes around spiritual abuse.

BISHOP SARAH MULLALLY

Bishop Sarah is currently working to amend the UK's Domestic Abuse Bill to ensure protection for and consideration of all survivors of domestic abuse. These amendments aim to highlight the importance of safe reporting pathways, particularly for migrant women; criminalise non-fatal wounds as indictable offences; and remove financial impediments on the path to justice.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally is the 133rd Bishop of London. The Diocese of London includes 500+ worshipping communities, 1,000 clergy and ministers and 159 CofE schools (56,000 students). She sits in the House of Lords as one of the Lords Spiritual and is a member of the Privy Council. Before ordination into the Church of England, Bishop Sarah was the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England.

IGREJA EPISCOPAL ANGLICANA DO BRASIL

Reverend Daébs lives in Salvador, Bahia-Brazil and works as an assistant minister in the Anglican Parish of Bom Pastor. She is currently working on gender, race, sexuality, education and human rights issues in her professional capacity. She is part of the coordination of the Collective Women Public Policies and Society - MUPPS and coordinates the Interdisciplinary Group of Gender and Education - GIGE.

REVEREND BIANCA DAÉBS

Reverend Bianca has been facilitating workshops and conversation circles on the topics of prevention of and ending domestic violence. She also uses social media to improve networks of communication and information between women, which has been especially important in the COVID-19 pandemic.

MARTINE DUSHIME

Martine works with single women under the age of 21 experiencing unplanned pregnancies. She utilizes a holistic healthcare approach to support these women who have been ostracized in their communities. Apart from medical treatment, she offers advice on reintegration into their communities whilst coping with the challenges of raising their children.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BURUNDI

Ms. Dushime is from the Saint Emmanuel Parish of Gikungu where she acts as a youth leader. She is a fifth year student of medicine at the University of Burundi. Within her field, she specializes in assisting victims of gender-based violence using a holistic healthcare approach.

REVEREND NAVINA THOMPSON

Reverend Navina amplifies the voices of women and marginalised communities on social media platforms and actively engages on all issues in the area of gender justice. Whenever she has the privilege of preaching or leading intercession in her own parish, she raises issues of human rights and challenges the congregation in their complacency, asking them to lend their voices to the cause.

DIOCESE OF CYPRUS & THE GULF

Reverend Thompson received her Diploma in Theological Studies at N.E.S.T in 2017, and in 2018/19, she spent 14 months in Famagusta, North Cyprus as curate to the Parish of Ammochostos. Navina was priested in May 2019 and returned to the UAE in June. She is currently waiting on a second posting from her Bishop (Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf) and continues to assist with ministries in Abu Dhabi.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Clare Hendricks is a freshman at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana, USA. She is pursuing a degree in Psychology and Pre-Law. In March of 2018, Clare was a delegate to the 62nd United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on behalf of the Episcopal Church. Clare is passionate about creating positive change for women across the world, and is excited to attend the United Nations again.

CLARE HENDRICKS

Clare is involved with local organizations on her college campus to expand research efforts for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. She is also interested in studying the effects of COVID-19 on Native women and girls in the state of Montana.

ROBYN ANDRÉO-BOOSEY

Robyn manages the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's Preventing Violence Against Women Program. The Program aims to equip church leaders to play their part in shifting the culture that drives violence against women. She is also co-directing a volunteer-led campaign, IC Change, that is calling on the UK government to ratify the Istanbul Convention on violence against women.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Ms. Andréo-Boosey's background is in international relief and development, gender equality, and addressing violence against women. This has included working for the United Nations in Geneva, Tearfund, and Restored. Robyn is passionate about equipping the Church to play its part in tackling these areas.

ADVOCACY AT THE UNCSW65 & ANGLICAN PRIORITIES

The Anglican Consultative Council's statement to the UNCSW65 (also in Portuguese, Spanish and French) was the foundation for the delegates' advocacy demands, encouraging them to call on Member States, United Nations agencies, civil society partners and decision-makers to make impactful decisions during the conference. Here are some of our statement's key points.

A NEW WAY TO ENGAGE: VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE UNCSW65

Due to the travel restrictions and health concerns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women was held virtually, though some official sessions were open to New York-based Member State representatives. Official sessions were livestreamed on UN Web TV and civil society engaged primarily through the NGO/CSW Online Forum.

The ACC delegation participated in a number of faith-based events, including the event "What's Faith Got to do with it?". This event, organized by the Anglican Communion and the Mothers' Union, was a space for women of faith to share the role their faith has played in their work as gender justice advocates. Delegates Reverend Bianca Daébs, Robyn Boosey, and Bishop Sarah Mullally were among the panellists. Additionally, the staff team supported Amal Sarah to host her own event titled "Denied Rights of Women and Girls: Who is responsible?", a webinar intended to highlight the factors contributing to the denial of women's rights globally and how to create innovative solutions to tackle these inequalities.

The staff also worked to provide opportunities for pan-Anglican representatives to engage in fellowship and sharing. We hosted an online gathering that gathered the Mothers' Union, United Society Partners in the Gospel, the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN), and other individual Anglicans who attend UNCSW, including the Presiding Bishop's Delegation of The Episcopal Church, where attendees engaged in an informal advocacy and fellowship session. Additionally, they also attended Ecumenical Women Orientation Day and the Ecumenical Women Virtual Advocacy Dinner where delegations from different Christian denominations and communions met each other and networked during the UNCSW. Ecumenical Women is an international coalition of church denominations and ecumenical organizations that seeks to give those traditionally excluded from political decision-making bodies opportunities to speak truth to power.

ZOOM DEBRIEFS

A few of our delegates and the Director of Gender Justice, Mandy Marshall, on a call during the UNCSW65 discussing their experiences and learnings during the conference. Delegation calls were a time for reflection and sharing that brought the women together in a conference that can otherwise feel isolating.

LOOKING AHEAD: WHAT'S NEXT?

Delegates spoke of UNCSW as a deeply transformative experience. Attending events, advocating at roundtables and being part of a community of women fighting for equality left a permanent mark, one which they shared in their reflections with our team post-UNCSW. Below are reflections from some of the delegates as they prepared to take their learnings and experiences from UNCSW into their own advocacy journey in their provinces.

Amal Sarah, The Church of Pakistan

I am grateful to be part of CSW65 this year and I plan to share the learnings with the community in Pakistan as soon as the COVID pandemic gives us a bit relief and there is some ease from the lockdown. I will be engaging the young women from our local churches in Diocese of Raiwind and share with them the importance of being an individual, to identify their potentials and give them a platform, where these young girls can freely speak up about their issues and concerns.

There are many girls in rural based churches of the Diocese, where young girls have no access to education and even if they do have, poverty and family priorities over other things suppress their opportunity to achieve education. I believe that the importance of education must be taught still in the 21st century because many of the girls in Pakistan (mostly in villages) are deprived of this and need guidance, so that in the future, they become a light of hope for many others and play an important role in decision making. Along with this, initiatives will be taken in order to end or minimize the rate of domestic abuse and in this regard, I would be engaging both men and women equally as well as clergy to open their eyes and help one another in overcoming this menace from our society.

Bridie Boyd, The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Being able to participate in UNCSW 65 was an amazing opportunity. It was wonderful that despite being unable to attend CSW 64 due to COVID 19, so many people were able to come together online for CSW 65, and that we could still discuss the many issues facing women globally. I felt very privileged to be able to go, and the entire process has been a deeply memorable and special experience that I will hold dear for the rest of my life. I am now working to collaborate on a project with a local university on 'Jesus as a victim of sexual assault' that we are hoping to turn into a resource for young adults and survivors. I am also continuing my work of raising up young women and girls into leadership within their parish, and to engage them in governing bodies such as Synod.

Martine Dushime, The Anglican Church of Burundi

One thing I learned from the CSW was how I can navigate with intelligence and wisdom while advocating, especially in front of groups of leaders who seemed not to understand my work.

I was encouraged by the experience of other women worldwide. I am making new connections and whenever I have the opportunity to speak in a group, I try to introduce a topic on gender equality and then advocate for the cause of unplanned pregnancies and how we can help girls under 21 to make right choices about their lives in order to prevent unplanned pregnancies. On the other hand, I continue my work with those who come on my way.

Navina Thompson, The Church of Cyprus and the Gulf

This was my first UNCSW experience and it happened during a pandemic and virtually. A first on all fronts. These are issues that have always been close to my heart but attending this conference highlighted to me what practical things I could do to participate in these challenges in my community and on national levels when opportunities present themselves. Since then I have been speaking at my local church and highlighting issues of race and difference in my 'sermons/talks', voicing an alternative opinion at fellowship groups where I am the only other 'person of colour' or I am a co-leader, advocating for people to read theologies from different 'non-white' writer's and recently have read and lent and advocated for people to read 'Why I stopped talking to 'white people' about race'. I am also helping and directing my church's effort to help and empower a young lady who has escaped from a domestic abuse situation and is in 'protective council care'.

My efforts to raise awareness on issues of 'human rights' will continue as it is part of who I am but I am so grateful for all the ways that the women in my delegation have empowered and emboldened me to speak up and be more confident in how I present these issues in our churches and all walks of life. They have been inspirational role-models for me. I am in a mostly 'white' conservative evangelical church but my own leanings are liberal and progressive so its been an interesting and exciting time.

Robyn Boosey, The Anglican Church of Australia

I plan to use my experience at the CSW to further my advocacy in Australia. I will contact the women's offices in our state and federal governments to share with them the evaluation of the Diocese of Melbourne's Preventing Violence Against Women Program, building on relationships fostered through UNCSW. The report highlights the potential of faith groups to do primary prevention and the importance of investing in them. I will coordinate an advocacy letter from the IC Change campaign coalition to follow up on the commitments that a government minister, Baroness Berridge, communicated with me and Bishop Sarah when we met her during the Commission to discuss the government's timeline for ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

Through the Commission, I built a stronger relationship with Mothers' Union and will continue to connect more closely with them. (I have had follow up calls with Barbara and the CEO of Mothers' Union since CSW). I have shared my reflections and learning in my province through an online and print article in our Anglican newspaper, The Melbourne Anglican, and I will also do so in a report I will write for General Synod. My increased knowledge of the Commission will continue to influence my advocacy work on gender equality for the future.

Bishop Sarah Mullally, The Church of England

It was a privilege to join again the women of the Anglican communion delegation at CSW65. The pandemic has reminded us of the fault lines in our communities and gave increased energy to ensure gender justice. We were reminded how faith communities are uniquely placed to know the lived experience of society's most vulnerable people. Places of worship are present in every locality and are frequently engaged in issue of social justice. A faith-based organisation which does not seek to embed gender justice in its structures and relationships is failing to live as a community reflecting God's glory in the world. A movement for gender justice which fails to engage with faith-based organisations is missing out on the resources and reach which those Faith based organisations can offer. Working together we can achieve so much more than if we only operate in silos.

For more information, please contact:
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