

Women Won't Wait. End HIV & Violence against Women. NOW! at the 57th Session of the CSW

**UN Headquarters - New York City
4 -15 March 2013**

In the framework of the **57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) of the United Nations**, the international campaign "**Women Won't Wait. End HIV & Violence against Women NOW**", with **Foundation for Studies and Research on Women –FEIM-** as campaign co-coordinator, organized and participated in many important events to bring visibility to the intersection of violence against women and girls and HIV/AIDS, within the framework of the women's rights agenda at the 57th CSW, whose priority theme was: "Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls".

On 6 March, the campaign launched its activities with its **official side event: "Keeping Violence against Women and HIV on the Women's Rights Agenda"**, to present the lessons learned on how to incorporate the addressing of violence against women in the national responses to HIV. The event, in the North Lawn Building of the UN Headquarters, was organized together with UNAIDS and GCWA, and co-sponsored by the Governments of Brazil, El Salvador and Indonesia.



The panel was made up by: the **Ambassador of El Salvador at the United Nations, Carlos García González**; the **Deputy Minister for Women's Protection, Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia, Dr. Luly Altruismaty**, Chief of the Indonesian Delegation; and the **Chief of the Department of STIs, AIDS and Viral Hepatitis, Ministry of Health of Brazil, Dr. Dirceu Greco**, accompanied by the **Ambassador of Brazil at the UN, Ms. Regina Cordeiro Dunlop**; as well as **Jantine Jacobi, Chief of the Gender Equality and Diversity Division at UNAIDS**, and the **project's coordinators from Brazil, Indonesia, Peru, South Africa and Ukraine**; and, as coordinator, **Mabel Bianco**, of FEIM.

The project presented by the Women Won't Wait Campaign was carried out in those five countries by organizations of women living with HIV and AIDS and women's rights defenders.

Bianco opened the panel explaining the Women Won't Wait Campaign and its project since 2011 developed a project to incorporate of VAWG in national HIV responses. The goal of the side event was to promote the incorporation in the CSW agreed conclusions the need to address violence against women and girls in the HIV response to decrease women's vulnerability to HIV. The project leaders gave statements with strong messages to transmit to CSW, based on their experiences at national level. Among these, **Baby Rivona** from the Indonesian Network of Positive Women (IPPI) stated: "positive women are sterilized without our consent or we have abortions done without our consent, this has to stop!" **Lesley Ann Foster** from South Africa said: "comprehensive sexuality education is key and in my country it is demonstrated that abstinence is not effective". Both **Olga Gvozdetska** from Ukraine and **Liz Melendez** from Peru agreed that the participation of organizations "makes a difference", and **Alessandra Nilo** from Brazil said: "we know that violence against women and girls increases the HIV infection in women, but no one acts, that is what we want to be changed". **Jantine Jacobi** from UNAIDS stresses the importance of the issue for UNAIDS and how countries need to advance.

In response to the statements by the women's groups representatives, the representatives of government co-sponsors reacted. **Ambassador of El Salvador at the UN** pointed out that his country "recognizes the importance of this linkage and that is why we are



promoting the incorporation of comprehensive care centers and we have already created three in our country". The **Deputy Minister of Indonesia** said: "We need to strengthen our prevention and care programmes for victims and we need them to be sustainable and gender-sensitive. For that reason, we will work together with organizations of women living with HIV and others". **Dr. Dirceu, Chief of the AIDS Program of Brazil**, affirmed that "since 2007 Brazil has incorporated the fight against violence linked to HIV in its activities and we will go further on this". Unfortunately the **Ambassador of Brazil at the UN, Ms. Regina Cordeiro Dunlop**, was not able to speak because we had to leave the session room for the next meeting.

The session provided a timely opportunity for dialogue between government representatives and women's organizations and networks of women living with HIV and installed the issue of the VAW-HIV link in the discussions around the CSW Agreed Conclusions. **The campaign's new Factsheet "Addressing Violence against**

Women Through National HIV Responses-It's Possible” was distributed to all participants (<http://womenwontwait.org/dmdocuments/HI-WWW-CSW57.pdf>).

On 7 March, Women Won't Wait held its **NGO Parallel Event** in the UN Church Center: **“Best Practices for Eliminating Violence against Women and HIV to Advance Women's Rights”**, organized altogether by FEIM and GESTOS. The session was moderated by **Mabel Bianco**, who presented the Campaign and the project being developed since 2011. **Susana Fried**, currently Senior Gender/HIV Advisor at UNDP and founding member of the Campaign, shared the history of the research she led about the need for funding and advocacy for the VAWG and HIV intersection at the global level. **Jantine Jacobi** of UNAIDS presented an overview of the association that has been established between VAW and HIV, including steps and actions taken to address the link, and priorities for scaling up the response to the link towards and in the post-2015 development agenda (see presentation at: <http://womenwontwait.org/dmdocuments/UNAIDS.WWW.CSW.pdf>).

The project's coordinators from Brazil, Indonesia, Peru, South Africa and Ukraine presented more in depth on their experiences at country level, including lessons learned and best practices for accelerating the prevention and elimination of VAW through the national HIV responses and vice versa. **Baby Rivona** of Indonesia shared the successes and challenges of IPPI's advocacy, the usefulness of working in alliance with other networks including young people and key populations, as well as ways to promote these linkages with the government (see presentation at: <http://womenwontwait.org/dmdocuments/WWW-Indonesia.pdf>).



Liz Melendez of Peru shared her organization's experience working with the network of women living with HIV in Peru to strengthen civil society participation in the national HIV response and the incorporation of the VAWG-HIV link (see presentation at: <http://womenwontwait.org/dmdocuments/WWW.Peru.pdf>).



Telia Negrao from Coletivo Femenino Plural in Brazil presented their experience, specially the need for greater integration and the important role of women's advocacy for public policies addressing the link (see presentation at: <http://womenwontwait.org/dmdocuments/WWW-no-Brasil.pdf>).

From Ukraine, **Roman Lyubchenko** and **Velentyna Bondarovska**, presented the results of their situational analyses of the HIV response and the VAW response and what they have done so far to strengthen civil society alliances and advocacy to push the

government to address the intersection and integrate the link in national policy and programs and next steps (see presentations at: <http://womenwontwait.org/dmdocuments/WWW-Ukraine.pdf>). **Lesley Ann Foster** and **Joanna Kehler** of South Africa shared their successful experience of cross-movement advocacy, in the framework of Women Won't Wait, for the incorporation of VAWG and Human Rights issues in their country's new National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS. They also discussed gender-based violence suffered by women living with HIV at the community level and a public campaign they developed targeting the Minister of Health to demand all women's sexual and reproductive rights be respected. Finally Mabel Bianco made a reflection about successes and how to scale up the experience and distribution of the WWW factsheet.

During CSW or activities included the participation of Campaign members alongside hundreds of women's rights activists in the **NGOs 8 March International Women's Day March**, carrying their slogan: "Women Won't Wait. End HIV & Violence Against Women NOW". On Saturday 9 March, Bianco represented the campaign in the re-launching of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS-GCWA- of UNAIDS, attended by leading activists on HIV and VAWG, including many campaign members and allies. Later that day, Mabel Bianco, Baby Rivona, Alessandra Nilo, Lesley Ann Foster, alongside other women's organizations/networks representatives, participated with UN agency and government representatives in the High Level Consultation "Accelerating Zero-Tolerance to Gender based violence through the HIV response", co-convened by UN Women and UNAIDS.



Women Won't Wait, through FEIM, also presented a **written statement** to the CSW, **promoting the recognition of HIV as a key issue in the response to VAWG and making recommendations for comprehensive, rights-based approaches for the prevention and elimination of all forms of gender-based violence and HIV in women**

and girls (see at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2013/NGO/109).

Later that week, in the CSW official review panel on 12 March: "Caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS: Recognizing and valuing unpaid care work", campaign member **Baby Rivona** of Indonesia addressed the public about progress in addressing HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for women living with HIV (see presentation at:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/panels/panel5-presentation-rivona.pptx>). Campaign members also participated in many other spaces at the CSW, convened by UN agencies, government and civil society, to ensure that the link between VAWG and HIV in women and girls was kept on the agenda, including in events and meetings to prepare for the post-2015 development agenda.

Upon the closing of the meeting on 15 March, the CSW adopted its **Agreed Conclusions**, in which **Women Won't Wait celebrates the inclusion of the linkage between VAWG and HIV/AIDS**, the condemnation and call to action to prevent and eliminate discrimination and violence against women and girls living with HIV, the provision of post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection, diagnosis and treatment for STIs for women and girls who experience violence, and the call to accelerate efforts to address the intersection of HIV and VAWG and strengthen coordination and integration of policies, programs and services to address the intersection, ensuring that HIV responses are leveraged to prevent VAWG.

The CSW proved to be a strategic opportunity for campaign members to make strong, evidence and experience-based contributions for incorporating the linkages and their proposals for effectively translating them at national, regional and global levels into the CSW outcomes and the post-2015 process.

