

Fri 15 March 2013



The issue of domestic violence has continued to be high on the agenda throughout the second week of CSW at the UN in New York.

The Australian Commissioner for Sex Discrimination, Elizabeth Broderick spoke of the impact of domestic violence and highlighted the cost as \$13.6 billion each year. Interestingly, domestic violence has often been considered as a result of poverty, however research reveals it as a significant causal factor of poverty. Indeed, there are strong links between domestic violence and welfare dependency; community impoverishment and the wealth of a nation.

On Monday, Australia was applauded for introducing in 2012 the world's first legislation on 'Domestic Violence Leave' for the workplace. This provides the victim with paid leave to obtain alternative accommodation, child care and any other forms of assistance required.

Indigenous Talking Circle

The Indigenous Talking Circle has been a significant ongoing forum that has found common experiences amongst First Nations People. In particular, the alarming increase in the imprisonment of Indigenous women.

Significantly, research has found that almost 80 percent of prisoners have directly experienced domestic violence within the home.

Human trafficking

The trafficking of women and girls remains high on the agenda and is increasing in nations such as America, Canada and the Ukraine. (The Ukraine has the highest rate in the world).

A representative of the Holy See spoke of the potential for NGO's to work in partnership with religious organizations to effect change. An amazing example is found in South Africa where the Church is transforming the lives of women (who have been raped and tortured during conflict) and child soldiers. Both groups are vulnerable to being shunned by their families. Faith based organizations are now enabling the education of these people to become leaders of change within their communities.

Elsewhere there are powerful programs (led by men) which are also transforming lives. Such programs harness the leadership of the church, the education system etc while challenging popular images of masculinity. However systemic change needs to occur, especially that which reflects the importance of men as partners and fathers.

Lt General David Morrison (Chief of the Australian Army) gave an inspirational address outlining the transformation that is occurring within the defence force through a concerted

effort to increase the number of female recruits and to open up all trades for their participation.

In New York, the Archdeacon for Mission (Episcopal Church) considers inter faith dialogue as extremely important, since America is such a multicultural society. There is also much advocating by the church against the use of guns. Indeed, since the December shooting at Connecticut School, the number of murders has almost tripled with 2400 deaths occurring in America over the past three months.

Finally, events at CSW have called on the potential of religious organizations to transform the relationships between men and women that lead to the **prevention** of violence. This has included the need to preach the gospel; speak up and out about 'right relationships' and the need for equality between men and women. CSW has revealed the increasing resources that equip the Church to do this. What has become evident is the need for the church to be 'part of the solution' and to be strong in its leadership on prevention.

I look forward to updating you further, when I return!

By **Archdeacon Karen Kime**