CSW55

The 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

Dear Zonta Members,

Prior to reading the statement made by Zonta International to the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, I thought it might be useful to outline some background information about the Commission for those of you who are not familiar with its workings.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meets every year, usually in late February into early March. This year the 55th Session of the CSW will meet beginning February22nd and will end on March 4th. Representatives of Member States, UN entities and ECOSOC-accredited nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world attend the session. As an accredited NGO, Zonta International takes part in the session. Each year the CSW has a priority theme as well as a review theme. This year the priority theme is, "Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work." The review theme is, "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child agreed conclusions from the fifty-first session of the CSW."

Along with the sessions of the Commission itself, there are many parallel events. They are activities which are organized outside the formal program of the session. This is an opportunity for NGOs to discuss themes of the Commission and other critical issues surrounding gender equality issues. This year Zonta will present a parallel event focusing on women's access to education in science and technology, spotlighting our Amelia Earhart Fellowships.

Prior to the beginning of the CSW, NGOs and other interested parties are permitted to transmit statements pertaining to the theme. These statements must be forwarded much before the Session begins. Zonta International sent in a statement which has been sent to you separately.

The principal output of the CSW is what is called the "agreed conclusions." These agreed conclusions on the priority themes contain an "analysis of the priority theme and a set of concrete recommendations for Governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, to be implemented at the international, national, regional and local level."

In addition to the agreed conclusions, the CSW also agrees to a number of resolutions. These resolutions are on a wide range of issues. The final report of the CSW is presented to the Economic and Social Council for adoption.

In our statement sent to the Commission, we have hoped to influence the outcome document (agreed conclusions) in many areas that are the focus of Zonta's work around the world. As noted above, our statement has been sent to you separately. If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope the above has given everyone some insight into this very important Session of the CSW.

Yours in Zonta,
Mary Ann Tarantula
Zonta International United Nations Committee Chairman