



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL FIRST SESSION

Item 4: Implementation of GA resolution 60/251

STATEMENT ON “DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND LEARNING, ADVISORY SERVICES, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY-BUILDING)

*Statement of Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director -- 29 June, 2006; Geneva
Delivered by Cynthia Rothschild, CWGL*

Statement by Center for Women's Global Leadership

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I address you here this afternoon. I congratulate you, Mr. President, and the members of delegations on the Council; I wish you luck in your ongoing deliberations.

Women welcome the commitment to human rights as a pillar of the UN system. We have long been supporters of both the UN and of promotion of human rights education. I speak to you today from a women's human rights perspective that demands that women be allowed to enjoy *all* human rights, and to be equal partners in decision-making, whether those decisions are about bodies, families or governance.

To be blunt - **too many women and girls around the world are unaware of the human rights they are afforded by international law.** Women are often unable to avail themselves of human rights education when they have not even had access to basic education – and when they face daily discrimination that prohibits schooling or allows violence in the streets and in the home to go unpunished.

Just as you will make decisions that promote human rights education at many levels, **women around the world encourage you to “start at home,” with yourselves.** We call upon you, as members and officers of this significant human rights body – to commit to your own education about human rights issues, even -- and especially -- the issues that

are sometimes seen as controversial, such as violations related to sexual orientation and reproductive rights

Women around the world want the Council to be bold, to generate and integrate perspectives that are thorough and comprehensive -- and not selective or discriminatory. Women want you to welcome the development of new human rights standards; and to be true to the idea that the human rights framework is a dynamic and fluid one. And women want you to help foster capacity building on *these* ideas - *this* kind of human rights education – at national levels and within the UN system, where, in reality, language of rights is often under attack. Almost nowhere is this more apparent than when governments discuss women’s rights and rights of people in marginalized groups.

We call on you to explicitly commit to gender mainstreaming in all the work of Council, both as a matter of principle and as an as an educational effort.. Each and every issue the Council addresses affects women in particular ways -- whether in relation to “human security”, attacks on rights defenders, or in terms of discrimination and education.

Special Procedures; provide a critical educational function. Their work has educated and provided tools for advocates, policy makers, researchers and students around the world. It is imperative for special procedures to participate in the mandate review process. Expiring and other mandates should absolutely be continued.

NGO participation in all levels of the Council is critical to the success of human rights education, particularly since NGOs are often called upon to provide “on the ground” information to States and special procedures.

The Human Rights Council was created and exists in a context of **broad UN reform** and has the opportunity to make a great impact within and outside the UN. NGOs and women around the world stand ready to work with you to educate about human rights, and also to strengthen and bring vibrant human rights analysis into communities, governments and into the UN itself.

Thank you.