

# Policy Watch

## Welcome back!

Welcome to the updated 'Policy Watch', the regular newsletter which will contain updates about Mothers' Union's policy, advocacy and campaigns work, and information about relevant global social policy issues. After consultation with members, and a time of reflection, the publication, which will replace the former 'Faith & Policy Watch', will be shorter and more concise, containing more information about the policy work of the organisation, and how members can get involved. Thank you to those of you who gave feedback, during our consultation period!!

As many of you know, the faith and policy elements at Mary Sumner House are no longer in the same department, and the policy work has merged with the previously named 'Action & Outreach' to form the 'Development and Policy Team'.

Whilst the next year will provide opportunities for honing and clarifying our policy themes, at present our priority areas remain: tackling violence against women and girls; gender equality and women's empowerment; and peace and reconciliation, with a focus on the unique impact of armed conflict on women, as well as their role in peacebuilding.

## UNCSW

Every year, Mothers' Union attends and participates in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, seeking to represent and magnify the voice and views of our four million members around the world.

In March 2018, the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held in New York, and the theme will be around the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.



Many thanks to those of you who completed our survey. The responses have now been collated, and used to inform Mothers' Union's organisational statement to UNCSW. The statement calls for the needs and issues uniquely affecting rural women and girls to be addressed by governments and civil society around the world, including through the implementation of laws and policies which promote gender equality; women's economic empowerment and meaningful participation and representation in decision making; and combatting harmful gender norms, and violence against women and girls. Please see <http://www.mothersunion.org/mu-uncsw> for the full statement.

Mothers' Union is looking to take a small group of self-funded members from around the world to attend next year's commission. If you would like to be considered to attend, or know someone who would, please email [policy@mothersunion.org](mailto:policy@mothersunion.org) requesting further information and an application form.

**Prayer point** Please pray for governments and civil society as they prepare for UNCSW62

## 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

From 25<sup>th</sup> November – 10<sup>th</sup> December, Mothers' Union will be participating in the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. This year, we are focussing on the issue of Stigma, which refers to the negative way victims of gender-based violence are often treated, as a result of what has been done to them.



This year we are focussing on addressing stigma and breaking the silence surrounding gender-based violence; lifting the shame often wrongly felt by those affected; and shifting the blame from the victim to the perpetrator. We are encouraging everyone to talk about and raise awareness of gender-based violence, and address myths and wrong thinking around the issue.

Mothers' Union has produced a range of resources to help people engage in this year's 16 Days, including fact-sheets, ideas for conversation starters and prayer and bible reflection resources, as well as a service outline. We will also be releasing a short film about Mothers' Union's work in ending gender-based violence, which we have produced.

We are also encouraging members around the world to participate in a *Global Moment* and joint action on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November, and details of this can be found on the resources page above.

Please do let us your plans in advance, either by email at [policy@mothersunion.org](mailto:policy@mothersunion.org), or online at: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/16Days2017/> so that we can raise awareness about what members are up to, and spread the word of your activities.

## Women, Peace and Security

In addition to advocating for an end to violence against women and girls, Mothers' Union has also been addressing the issue of peace and reconciliation, with a particular focus on the unique role and contribution of women in peacebuilding. Mothers' Union's Policy Manager, Rose Wright, spoke about the topic at a key meeting of faith groups and policy professionals in Sri Lanka in October, calling for the meaningful participation, representation and inclusion of women in peacebuilding.



## Party Conferences

Mothers' Union staff attended this years Conservative, and Labour Party Conferences, providing a vital opportunity to connect with decision makers and politicians, and advocate on behalf of Mothers' Union, and our current policy focus areas.



## What is good...

**So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.**

***Galatians 6:9 (NLT)***

