

News from the UN & Around the World

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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2020. UNANIMA International starts this new year having had a very successful 58th Commission for Social Development at the United Nations in New York. The priority theme was “Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness”. This was significant as it is the first time in the history of the United Nations that it has specifically addressed homelessness. One of the key highlights for UNANIMA International was hearing the real experts—those who have experienced homelessness—speak at the United Nations. They reminded us again and again “don’t talk about us without us”.

UNANIMA International held and contributed to a number of significant events during the Commission. We were fortunate to be able to organize for Mary McAleese, Former President of Ireland, to give the keynote address at the Commission, and for her to participate in our side event: “The Hidden Faces of Homelessness from the Perspective of Women and Children/Girls.” Her reflection after the event to members of UNANIMA International was to “keep on doing what you are doing. The proof of your activism and advocacy was so evident at the United Nations. I was and am incredibly proud of that humble determined effective witness to love and care for one another, thank you for allowing me to be part of that wonderful experience.”

I send my thoughts and prayers to you and your communities during this difficult time, as we face and fight the coronavirus and its implications as a global community. As always we must keep those furthest left behind in our hearts and minds and actions, as their already tenuous situations will certainly be exacerbated during this challenging time.

Jean

HIGHLIGHTS

1. UNANIMA International's 2019 and 2020 Woman Of Courage Awards
2. Whats Happening at the UN
3. CSOCD58
4. Grassroots Stories
5. Board
6. Website and Publication Launch

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info@UNANIMA-International.org

Woman of Courage 2019 - Mary McAleese

UNANIMA International's annual Woman of Courage Award Ceremony was held in the Delegates Dining Room at the United Nations in New York on the evening of Tuesday February 11th— another significant event to take place during the exciting two weeks of the 58th Commission for Social Development. The ceremony was held to award and honor the 2019 winner, Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, for her numerous and rich contributions to both civil and church society. This award celebrates her ongoing commitment to the struggle for peace, justice, equality, human dignity and respect for all, especially individuals and families left furthest behind.

Mary McAleese, who was President of Ireland from 1997 to 2011, had "Building Bridges" as the theme of her presidency, which was reflected in her efforts towards reconciliation and peace building within Northern Ireland. She worked towards justice, social equality, social inclusion, anti-sectarianism and reconciliation, and she was a voice against the forces of oppression, discrimination, and poverty. Both courageous and deeply appreciated by many, including the women at UNANIMA International, Mary displays and gives action and a voice to the values of UNANIMA International and the United Nations.

The evening was very special, with opening remarks spoken by Molly Gerke, UNANIMA International's Executive Assistant, the presentation of the award conferred by UNANIMA International's Executive Director, Jean Quinn, and an acceptance speech given by Mary McAleese. Mary was presented with a Woman of Courage award sculpture, and an original painting based on the theme of 'home' and 'homelessness' created by artist Carmel McMahan. It was wonderful that so many of UNANIMA International's Board Members, supporters from other NGOs, UN delegates, and Mary's personal guests were in attendance to hear Mary's inspiring words. Her words of encouragement that UNANIMA International must continue its important work, and her thanks that she was able to be a part of it, was particularly validating to us as an organization.

UNANIMA International also launched its two new publications at The Woman of Courage Award Ceremony. These publications are titled: "Hidden Faces of Homelessness: International Research on Families" and "Family Homelessness Through the Lens of the United Nations 2030 Agenda." The excitement of showcasing our research, enjoying the performance of Irish musicians, having a chance to meet President McAleese, and being able connect with colleagues who join us in the fight to end homelessness, made for a very exciting and important evening for UNANIMA International.



Woman of Courage 2020 - Sr. Seraphine Ratavy

On November 23rd, 2019, UNANIMA International's annual Woman of Courage Award Ceremony was held at a community of the Daughters of Wisdom in Madagascar. The Ceremony was held in celebration of UNANIMA International's 2020 Woman of Courage recipient Sr Seraphine Ratavy, DW. Having travelled to Madagascar for the award and a presentation on UNANIMA International, Executive Director Jean Quinn had the pleasure of presenting Sr. Seraphine with her award.

Sr Seraphine Ratavy, DW was nominated as the Woman of Courage 2020 for her many and important contributions made during her mission in Nomad, Papua New Guinea, which is in the remotest part of Daru-Kiunga and only accessible by small plane. During her time in Papua New Guinea, Seraphine used her agricultural skills to work with women close to the main station, as well as setting up a women's club at which she taught sewing, and trained young women to help her. As she became established, her outreach increased to the surrounding villages, which were very isolated. Eventually she found the small Gebusi Tribe, living a few hours walk and a canoe ride from Nomad. These people became the focus for Sr. Seraphine in this area, and she worked with the men and women in all fields of learning. A worthy recipient of the Woman of Courage award, Sr Seraphine was unassuming and humble in her acceptance.

UNANIMA International was extremely pleased to present this annual award to Sr Seraphine, who in her ministry and personal life embodies the qualities which we believe are essential for the advancement of women everywhere: solidarity, and a passion for human rights and the poor. During the presentation the Executive Director noted UNANIMA International's admiration of Sr. Seraphine's outreach and the lengths she went to to work with even the most isolated communities, what we often refer to at the United Nations as the "furthest left behind". She congratulated Seraphine on her courageous work and thanked her deeply for her commitment to UNANIMA International's values.

Filled with dancing, singing, and drums, the joyous occasion was truly one which touched the hearts of all its attendees. Among the attendees were Sr Seraphine's community, family members and Daughters of Wisdom leadership from all around the world. Sr. Cathy Sheehan, DW, one of UNANIMA International's Board of Directors, and Daughter of Wisdom Member of Congregational Leadership Team, Sr Isabelle Retailleau DW, were among the many Daughters of Wisdom in attendance. Here are a few words on their experiences:

"I was blessed to be gathered with the General Leadership Team and Entity Leaders of the Daughters of Wisdom this past November in Madagascar. A high point of our time together was the celebration and presentation of the Woman of Courage Award to Daughter of Wisdom, Sr. Seraphine Ratavy. We gathered with the Sisters of the Province of Madagascar and Sr. Seraphine's family for the presentation by Sr. Jean Quinn. I was so touched by the love and admiration those gathered had for Sr. Seraphine and the important work she accomplished in Papua New Guinea. The celebration was joyous and captured so beautifully the culture of Sr. Seraphine's country of Madagascar. We prayed, we listened, we sang and we feasted!" - Sr Cathy Sheehan, DW

Through the presentation of the award to Sr. Seraphine by Sr. Jean Quinn, we were proud of the way she assumed the mission with much courage and commitment. During the celebration,

this joy was expressed with such energy and love and we were so happy to see that such commitment and courage for the mission are acknowledged. Through appreciating the involvement of our Sister to bring these peoples to take charge of their destiny, the mission of the Congregation and of all the Daughters of Wisdom with the poor and the needy of our world is celebrated.

- Sr Isabelle Retailleau, DW



WHATS HAPPENING AT THE UN

NGO Committee Updates

Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH) - After the great success of the 58th Commission for Social Development the WGEH is coming together with a new executive team to strategize on next steps as a committee. The long term aim is to see a goal on Homelessness within the United Nations Agenda.

NGO Committee for Social Development – The NGO CSOCD is also in a moment of transition with a new executive team being selected this month. At present the committee is reviewing the 58th Commission for Social Development, and creating an outcome document from CSOCD58 to be used at the grassroots level for implementation and advocacy. The committee is also beginning to come together with ideas surrounding the 59th Commission for Social Development which will have the priority theme, “A socially just transition to sustainable development: the role of digital technologies in social development and the well-being of all”.

NGO Major Group - Migration (MG)

The NGO CoM co-sponsored two side events during CSOCD58 in February. “Children's Homelessness: a matter of building a more cohesive and inclusive society” and “Migration and Homelessness: Hope from the Margins,” explored the intersection of migration/displacement and homelessness. UNANIMA International’s Executive Director, Jean Quinn, was a speaker at the latter of these events. She spoke about her experience bringing and finding hope “from the Margins”.

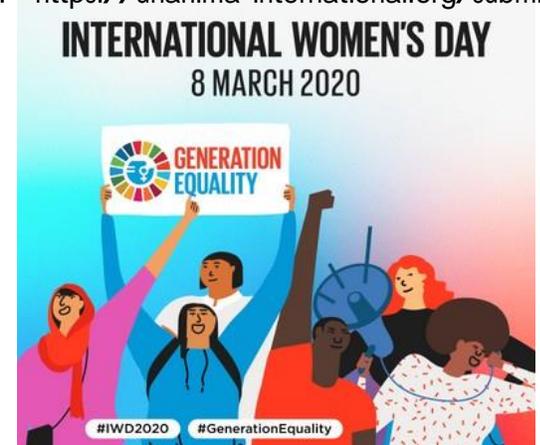


International Womens Day

Annually the global community comes together on March 8th to celebrate International Women’s Day. It is a special day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, the progress that has been made towards equality, and the gaps that still need to be addressed at the global level. In line with 2020 being the start of the United Nations’ “Decade of Action,” this year International Women’s Day was celebrated with the theme: “Generation Equality: Realizing Women’s Rights”.

While a number of events across the globe were interrupted by restrictions in place due to the Coronavirus, UNANIMA International was able to attend the official United Nations International Women’s Day event on March 6th. Although smaller than usual, the celebration was filled with excitement and enthusiasm, leaving attendees feeling empowered and in awe of the many wonderful things women and girls have achieved globally. Among many inspiring speakers was the world’s youngest female head of state, Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin, who spoke about how we as a global community cannot achieve the 2030 Agenda without achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5—Gender Equality.

During the event, UN Women launched a book titled “Gender equality: Women’s rights in review 25 years after Beijing” as part of their new multigenerational campaign: “Generation Equality”. The publication explores a number of issues and themes across the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action, many of which are inherently connected to Family Homelessness. This campaign was launched in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of UN Women. You can find a link to the publication in our resource section. How did you celebrate International Women’s Day? You can share your stories via our new website at: <https://unanima-international.org/submit-your-story/>



The 58th Commission for Social Development (CSocD58)

The 58th Commission for Social Development (CSOCD58) took place from February 10-19th, 2020 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. With a delegation of close to 30 people, UNANIMA International was incredibly active and contributed significantly across the Commission. With the theme “Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness,” our niche research and expertise into family homelessness was of great value. UNANIMA International was invited to speak, moderate and co-sponsor a total of 15 events. We were also approached for guidance on the priority theme and when looking for speakers. Thus, we were able to invite and facilitate a number of speakers to participate in the Commission, including but not limited to: Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese (Commission keynote speaker), Tony O’Riordan (good practice service provider, CEO Sophia Housing, Dublin), Keisy Ureleo (lived experience, Vanuatu), Sam Tsemberis (expert, Pathways Housing First Founder), and Elizabeth Madden (community activist and lived experience, Ireland).

In preparation for the Commission, UNANIMA International had notable input into the joint preparation efforts of the Working Group to End Homelessness and the NGO Committee for Social Development. These groups put significant time into pre-commission advocacy, draft resolution writing and civil society organizing. Throughout the Commission UNANIMA International worked with our attending delegates and colleagues at the UN to ensure the voices of Civil Society and individuals and families with a lived experience were heard. Among the many highlights of the Commission was having Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese as the keynote speaker, and Jean Quinn, DW as the civil society representative on the high-level panel on the priority theme. Each of the women spoke eloquently, advocating for the voices of people experiencing homelessness (especially women and children) to be heard and included in the conversation, for the adoption

of a global definition, housing with supports as a solution to homelessness, and most importantly that homelessness be addressed as what it is: a civil and human rights failure of the state—not of those people experiencing it.

At the close of the Commission the historic resolution on the priority theme of homelessness was presented and passed by the Commission's members. Supporting several of the points UNANIMA International and our colleagues had advocated for before and during the Commission meetings was a great display of collaboration and willingness to address the issue. While the definition put forward in Nairobi at the Expert Group Meeting was not adopted in its original form, the outcome document's description of homelessness affirmed a working definition and paves the way for a potential definition into the future. The resolution also addressed homelessness in the context of vulnerable groups and different demographics, including women and children, which was a key concern and point of advocacy for UNANIMA International. The resolution will now be submitted to the United Nations' Economic and Social Council for approval. Some of the text may then go to the UN General Assembly. Going forward it is hoped that member states will respond to these outcomes by taking greater action on the issue of homelessness. From a civil society point of view we must now explore how various countries might successfully implement the resolution.

Throughout the Commission UNANIMA International also allocated resources to social media, increasing our advocacy reach globally. For further information on UNANIMA International's activities, live streams, and direct links to UNTV, please visit our Facebook and Twitter pages. To find further information on the Commission, official concept notes and outcome documents/resolutions, you can visit the Commission's website here: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division/csod58.html>



UNANIMA International Side Event - The Hidden Faces of Homelessness

As part of the 58th Commission for Social Development, UNANIMA International held a very successful side event at the United Nations on Tuesday, February 11th, 2020. Titled: “ Hidden Faces of Family Homelessness from the Perspective of Women and Children/Girls,” the event comprised a panel of speakers who presented from a variety of perspectives and areas of expertise. This enabled an open dialogue to discuss the drivers of family homelessness, good practices from various state and non-state stakeholders, policy recommendations, and to give a voice to women and children/girls who have experienced Homelessness/ Displacement.

The event was moderated by Sister Winifred Doherty, Main NGO Representative to the United Nations from The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. After welcoming the audience and thanking the co-sponsors of the event, she introduced Micheal Tierney from the Irish Mission to the United Nations, who made opening remarks and welcomed Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese. Following on from her keynote address at the Commission for Social Development’s High Level Panel Discussion the day before, President McAleese continued to express her stance on homelessness, which is that “a safe, affordable home should be a right for everyone.” She spoke of her experience being displaced during “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland, and urged governments to take action on homelessness, advising: "A person has no home? Give them a home. That should be our response to all housing crises."

Philip Alston, the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, was the next speaker. He addressed

the audience via video message from Spain and spoke about Family Homelessness and its intersections with poverty, specifically in regards to women and children. The next speaker was Keisy Ureleo from Vanuatu. She spoke of her personal experience of homelessness and displacement following a volcanic eruption on her island, that made her home uninhabitable, and the way in which it affected her community, specifically her and her peers still in school. The next speaker was Tony O’Riordan, the CEO of Sophia Housing, Ireland (which was founded by Jean Quinn, DW), a national non-profit provider of housing and support services. Tony spoke of “Housing First,” as a good practice, an approach based on the notion that the most effective way to help homeless people is to get them into a home of their own as quickly as possible.

The final speaker was UNANIMA International’s Research Fellow, Kirin Taylor. She spoke of her recent trip to the slums of Kenya, and detailed the research into family homelessness thus far. She also spoke about UNANIMA International’s publications: “Hidden Faces of Homelessness: International Research on Families” and “Family Homelessness: Through the Lens of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.” To conclude the event the floor was then open for questions and discussions. It was a varied, thought-provoking dialogue from a range of perspectives that effectively and poignantly put a focus on Family Homelessness and the experience of Women and Children. You can watch the full event on our FaceBook [page](https://www.facebook.com/unanimaintl/videos/1023186921388896) at: <https://www.facebook.com/unanimaintl/videos/1023186921388896>



CSocD58 Reflections and Notable Quotes

"Women, children and girls experiencing homelessness remain among the most vulnerable populations, whose situations are often exacerbated by their distinct lack of access to social protection, public services, and support."

- Executive Director, Jean Quinn, DW, High Level Panel on the Priority Theme

"They promised to prioritise the left behind, to provide affordable housing, to end homelessness. This great international forum must hold them to those promises starting here."

- Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, Keynote Address

"Homelessness- not just the problem of a few households but everyone."

- Emeka E Obioha, PHD, High Level Panel on the Priority Theme

"I really enjoyed my time at the UN. It's really nice meeting people from around the world. I was really nervous about my speech but I'm glad I spoke well. It was nice to hear other people who have experienced displacement and homelessness and for people to listen."

Keisy Ureleo - Lived Experience, Commission Experience

"I don't ever recall being present in an official space where the term 'Lived Experience' was used so freely, acceptingly and sometimes curiously. This is a term that we will hear more and more of, and I do believe that it is thanks to people like Jean Quinn, Director of UNANIMA International, and Founder of Sophia Housing Ireland, who put themselves forward to introduce and normalise this term. As Jean has so eloquently said throughout the Commission "don't talk about us, without us" - this rang through to me so much, that I even incorporated it into one of my speeches!

This was my experience of attending the 58th Commission on Social Development. I was there to speak on my lived experience which was an overwhelming, empowering and educational experience. I had the privilege of speaking at three separate events, each offering different aspects of my experience. The most memorable for me, was when I spoke about the connections between trauma and homelessness. It was surreal for me speaking about my trauma and how that impacted my personal circumstances."

Liz Madden - Lived Experience, Commission Experience





Left: UNANIMA International Board Meeting - February 2020

Back Row: Margaret Fyfe CSB, Hortense Demia SP, Eileen Davey SUSC, Maureen Foltz CCV, Barbara Spears SNJM, Janet Peterworth OSU, Cathy Sheehan DW, Pereka Nyirenda RSC, Ellen Sinclair SDS, Fran Gorsuch CBS, Margaret Scott AIC, Barbara Jean Head OSU, Pat Flattery CND.

Middle Row: Barbara Linen SHCJ, Jean Quinn DW, Gloria Caixeta MSC, Sharon Sullivan OSU, Noelene Simmons SM

Front Row: Ces Martin NDS, Renaude Gregoire, Josee Therrien RJM, Janice Belanger SASV,

UNANIMA INTERNATIONAL STAFF & BOARD

In February the UNANIMA International Board of Directors came together in New York City for the first Board Meeting and Annual General Meeting of the year. Following the meeting the Board Members had the opportunity to attend both the 58th Commission for Social Development, and the Woman of Courage Award Ceremony held at the UN to honor Former President Mary McAleese. Below is a reflection from Director Renaude Gregoire:

February Reflection

By Renaude Grégoire, representative of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Anne

This is my ninth participation in the UN Commission for Social Development. This year, this Commission, which brings together States, UN agencies and civil society groups, has focused its attention on homelessness and social protection. A first in the history of the UN, and UNANIMA International has co-founded this through the advocacy of the UN NGO Working Group to End Homelessness. What can we learn from this Commission, so energized and so unified by this issue? Five points.

Point one: listening to the testimonies of homeless people. In addition to those experiencing homelessness whom we have met during the course of this Commission, UNANIMA International has released two must-read publications which highlight the realities of homeless families in several countries (see <https://unanima-international.org/documents-resources/>).

Point two: using the definition of homelessness as presented in the Civil Society Declaration of the NGO Committee on Social Development (see NGO Committee on Social Development - https://ngosocialdevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/csocd58_civilsocietydeclaration.pdf).

Point three: having quantitative and qualitative data about homelessness.

Point four: discovering social policies for ending homelessness by certain States and good practices implemented by organizations who are working in the field. Links with the 2030 agenda have also been present in the conversations. I have been particularly pleased to see a table entitled ENDING HOMELESSNESS through the Sustainable Development Goals.

Point five: taking action. I remember this excerpt from a talk by Mary McAleese, former President of Ireland. Invited to speak during this Commission, through the leadership of UNANIMA International, she declared:

"Now please help us to help one another in a national and global effort to find and implement the solutions which will consign homelessness to history and offer each human being the dignity and certainty of a safe, affordable, wholesome place called home."

GRASSROOTS STORIES

Sojourner Truth House, Gary, Indiana, USA

“Every time I see a client clutch keys to her new apartment, every time I get a hug from a tiny excited child, I am re-energized to keep on.” Sister Peg Spindler, CSAA member of my congregation, The Sisters of St. Agnes, Sister Peg helped to found Sojourner Truth House in Gary, Indiana, USA over 21 years ago. The ministry is sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ of Donaldson, Indiana.

Since 1997 Sojourner Truth House has helped thousands of homeless women and children by providing 11,462 meals, and distributing 175,000 pounds of food and clothing to people. Always looking to enhance their services, in 2018 they planted a kitchen garden to provide fresh food. Sojourner Truth House has a pantry/closet providing food and clothing to clients from Gary, and to folks in the shelter. They serve homeless single women, and women with children, from four shelters in Gary and provide services for those being housed through various programs. The Gary township and Gateway Permanent Supportive Housing altogether serves 2,000 clients on average each month. Clients also may receive counseling, support services, job and basic skills training, health care screenings and referrals, as well as help finding housing.

According to Sister Peg, “We work with homeless and at-risk women and their children to get them into stable housing in a sustainable, healthy way.” This desire for stable housing for Sojourner Truth clients became a reality in 2016 with the building of The Village of Hope in Gary. This creative project, spearheaded by Sojourner Truth House, is a 40-unit permanent supportive housing complex that provides quality affordable housing for qualified residents.

The newest program undertaken by Sojourner Truth House is the Gateway Program. This program was under the auspices of Catholic Charities of the Gary



Diocese whose board requested that Sojourner Truth House take over the program. Gateway is a \$480,000+ HUD (Housing and Urban Development government program) grant for homeless adults and families with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues. Sojourner Truth House administers the payment of rent, finds landlords who will work with the program, and provides case management services for the tenants. The addition of the Gateway program fits naturally with the services offered by Sojourner Truth House and flows naturally from their mission to house the homeless in a stable home one household at a time.

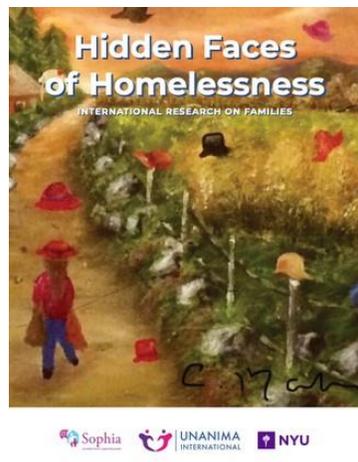
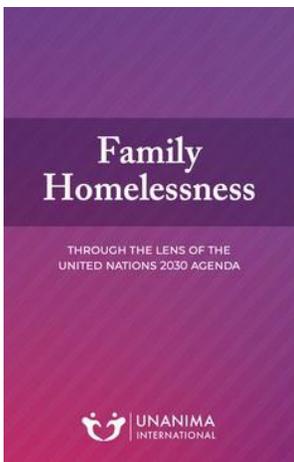
WEBSITE & PUBLICATION LAUNCH

At the Board Meeting in February 2020 UNANIMA International had the pleasure of launching our new website together with our Directors. We encourage you to visit the website and explore the information and resources it has to offer. You can find it at: <https://unanima-international.org/>.

Among the many resources are UNANIMA International's publications: "Hidden Faces of Homelessness: International Research on Families," a publication that looks at Family Homelessness through the in depth analysis of four country cases; and "Family Homelessness Through the Lens of the 2030 Agenda," which analyzes family homelessness in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights. Each of the publications feature insights from experts, service providers, and people with a lived experience, giving us a holistic look at the issue of Family Homelessness, with a special focus on women and children/girls. You can find these resources in the resource section here: <https://unanima-international.org/documents-resources/>

Our new website also offers the option to contribute to and/or support our research in a variety of ways. See your options here: <https://unanima-international.org/get-involved/>

Due to the current situation and cancelation of United Nations Events UNANIMA International's News from the UN and Around the world will be put on hold until further notice. In the meantime you can keep up to date with all things UNANIMA International on our website and social media!



Important Upcoming Dates

5 April - International Day of Conscience

7 April - World Health Day

22 April - International Mother Earth Day

23 April - International Girls in ICT Day

15 May - International Day of Families

RESOURCES

UN Women - Generation Equality, Women's Rights in Review: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/five-big-wins-ushered-landmark-beijing-platform-action>

UN TV - You can watch a number of the Commission For Social Development's Events here: <http://webtv.un.org/search?term=CSocD58&sort=date>

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and support the 75th anniversary of the UN and CSocD, UN DESA launched on 11 February 2020 an interactive timeline of inclusive social development milestones. You can access it here: <https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/1332560/DESA-Social-Development-Milestones/?fbclid=IwAR3SR0Zq--pNAqEOhCI8z1CR3GJYaqpIOXp0GKJP0ehKow5yEaVs46x-yw8>

Five big wins ushered in by the landmark Beijing Platform for Action

