

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fourth session
1 – 12 March 2010

Interactive Expert Panel VI

The evolving status and role of national mechanisms for gender equality

Thursday, 11 March 2010, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Panellists

1. Ms. Rounaq Jahan is currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh. From 1990 to 2009, she was on the faculty of Columbia University in New York as a senior research scholar at the South Asian Institute and as an adjunct professor of international affairs, School of International and Public Affairs. Professor Jahan's research interests include gender and development, governance, health, national mechanisms for gender equality, and politics of Bangladesh. She has authored/edited a number of books and is the author of numerous articles published in edited books and academic journals. From 1985 to 1989 she was the head of the Programme on Rural Women, Employment and Development Department at the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland. She has served on a number of advisory boards, and has worked as a consultant to a number of UN entities, including UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF, as well as bilateral donor and non-governmental organizations.

2. Senator Margaret Mensah-Williams has been the Vice-Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia since 1999. She is the first woman to be elected to that position. Senator Mensah-Williams is currently the Vice-President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. She is also a member of the Women's Caucus of the Namibian Parliament. During her career, she has focused on issues such as community development; women's issues; popular participation and education. Before running for public office, Ms. Mensah worked as a teacher and headed several NGOs, such as Namibia's Women's Center and the Saamstaan Housing Co-operative. Ms. Mensah has served as the Vice-Chairperson of the African Women's Development and Network (Femnet) and has been on the board of the Namibia Planned Parenthood Association. In 1989, she was on the staff of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), the United Nations mission in charge of supporting free and fair elections that led to Namibia's independence.

3. Ms. Mary Rusimbi is a gender specialist and development practitioner. She is President of the Board of Directors for Partnerships Africa Canada. Ms. Rusimbi was until recently Executive Director of the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), an NGO based in Dar Es Salaam that works in Tanzania and the SADC region. She was previously Gender Programme Officer with the Royal Netherlands Embassy, facilitating gender mainstreaming in development projects funded by them. Prior to this, she worked with CIDA, being responsible for Women and Development and Human Resources Development activities in CIDA's projects in Tanzania. She is an experienced trainer and women's rights advocate with expertise in gender and development and gender-sensitive budgeting in a number of African countries. She has authored several publications/training resources on gender issues.