

UN Commission on the Status of Women 57 New York 2nd - 15th March 2013.
Main theme: Violence Against Women and Girls.

Jackie, Laksheed and Audrey had attended. As is customary, it was an intensive experience with many meetings running concurrently every day all day, both official Government sessions - often difficult to access - and NGO side events, many held in the UN Church Centre opposite the main UN Building of which all except the Ground floor remains inaccessible because of "structural faults". The temporary North Lawn building next door required special permits for access.

Pages of text were circulated daily with amendments, additions, and changes proposed by numerous governments, some traditionally regressive. Our UK Government representatives were positive, (thanks to all the preparatory work that had progressed since last July when Jackie organised a meeting for UK NGOs at UWE in Bristol) held an evening Reception for us, with the Lynn Featherstone MP, the Under Secretary for International Affairs, and enabled our evening meetings in their offices. All this had been usual before the termination of the Women's National Commission, but it has taken NGO patience to get a good working relationship with the UK GEO staff. They have been helpful, receptive to our experiences and kept us reasonably well informed about theirs.

Despite the reluctance of some nations to come to an agreed Conclusion (there were abstentions) there was a reasonably positive outcome, although topics such as prostitution and intimate relationships were excluded. Officially it was considered a successful result although most of the content was already included in previous protocols. The main satisfaction lies in preventing negation of established UN international statements

Following the NY event, a small number of NGO representatives including Jackie, were invited to meet the UK Minister for Equalities, Maria Miller MP, to discuss the outcome. An open meeting is to be held in London on 26th April. Next year's theme for CSW is to be the Millenium Development Goals.