During the last four months I took part to some important side events which were hosted in FAO during the 45th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Rome from 15-19 October 2018.

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the only intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder within the UN system dedicated to food security and nutrition. The Committee supports country led process towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for everyone. Its unique features are its inclusive participation and science-policy interface. The CFS processes ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders are heard particularly those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.

Many of the Side Events have been organized by the CSM (Civil Society Mechanism). The Civil Society Mechanism is the largest international space of civil society organizations, Indigenous peoples and social movements with the purpose of facilitating small-scale food producers and civil society participation and articulation into the policy processes of the United Nations Committee on World Food Security1 (CFS). Participation and inclusiveness have made the CFS a unique experience in the UN, particularly for organizations of small-scale producers. In fact, most processes and results of the CFS have shown that many of civil society concerns and proposals have been heard by the Member States and included into their decisions.

Beyond the plenary room, several noteworthy side events focused on nutrition and human rights happened. Among the most significant ones I attended:

- Celebrating the International day of rural women: from the field to the CFS and back

The side event intended to highlight the struggles, perspectives and demands of rural women, especially female rural workers, on the occasion of the International day of Rural Women. Within the framework of the human rights based approach the side event analyzed and debated on the gaps to be filled to ensure rural women's rights, and their fundamental role as subjects of rights and agents of change in achieving food security and nutrition.

-Defend the defenders – how to effectively protect those who fight for the right to food?

Those who defend the right to food of their communities are often themselves at risk. Those who defend their rights related to lands, fisheries and forests, are often stigmatized, repressed, and criminalized, particularly if they come from a women’s or indigenous peoples’ organizations. An increasing number of reports from UN Human Rights bodies, including the UN Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights Defenders, Right to Food and Indigenous Rights.
Peoples, provide worrisome evidence that those who defend economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, are among the most threatened human rights defenders in many countries. Lastly, the World Food Day was celebrated with the official ceremony. This year's theme - "Our actions are our future: a Zero Hunger world by 2030 is possible" - underscores the urgent need to step up collective efforts to reach the Zero Hunger goal. World Food Day is celebrated in over 150 countries around the world.

Nanda Nobile, ICW-CIF Permanent Representative to FAO

UN Geneva Report

I am grateful to Dr Kim and Kowani for the opportunity to speak about the important topic of violence against women at the highly successful Indonesian Women's Conference in September organised by Kowani and attended by almost 2000 delegates, drawn in partly by the presence of the charismatic President of Indonesia. This was followed by the ICW General Assembly and my first opportunity to meet many representatives from our national councils from India to Lesotho, ICW board members and delegates and speakers. It was also a special occasion as ICW celebrated its 130th birthday as the oldest women's NGO in the world.

The GA was also an important opportunity for me to update national councils on the important work carried out by the Geneva representatives which included attending sessions of the Human rights council and CEDAW committee which each meet three times a year for three weeks. I was delighted to see that the words ‘child widows’ had been included in the ICW programme of work for the next 3 years alongside child marriage.

In October I was invited to speak about child marriage and child widows at a global consultation with religious leaders in Kingston, Jamaica which was a wonderful opportunity to see gender and health issues from a different perspective. During this week, I took part in an open air protest against sexual violence and rape and met young school children discussing how to reduce violence in schools. A personal highlight for me was meeting a truly inspirational woman, now in her 70s who as a baby was abandoned in the hospital by her parents when they found out she had been born with severely deformed legs. A doctor treating her decided the best way to help her was to amputate her legs and give her prostheses. But in order to do this, she needed to strengthen her leg muscles, so she started swimming. She found she enjoyed this and totally committed herself and went on to swim the 2.5 miles across Kingston harbour and was awarded sportswoman of the year when she was young. Currently she is the Secretary General of the Young Men’s Christian Association in Kingston. She said, “if you believe in yourself, there is nothing you cannot do”.