

Dear Faith & Policy Coordinators,

As I am sure you are aware, Mothers' Union members advocate across the world to challenge injustice, and promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life. One of the areas we campaign a lot on, as well as addressing through practical action, is gender equality, ending violence against women and the empowerment of women and girls throughout the world.

Mothers' Union members engage with many decision makers around the world on this topic, and at the international level, we campaign with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which brings together hundreds of Governments to address the issues facing women. Mothers' Union attends the Commission on the Status of Women in March each year, with staff and members from around the world. During the Commission we represent the views and issues of concern to our worldwide membership, to national Governments and international institutions, with the aim of influencing Governments around the world to make laws and policies which reflect the true needs of women.

The theme for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 2018 is: *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of **rural women and girls**.*

As a member led movement, Mothers' Union always seeks the views of our membership, to make sure that we truly are representing you, and therefore each year we ask members to feed their views, opinions and experiences on the theme, to us. This will inform our official statement to the UN which will be published by October, and will inform our work at the Commission in March.

We would be very grateful if you could complete, and circulate the questionnaire to all members within your remit as appropriate. It can be completed online at: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UNCSW2018/>, and the questions can also be found below in the body of this email. Please feel free to copy or print these as required.

The questions can be completed individually, or as part of a group activity (for example in a literacy circle or at a branch meeting).

We would be grateful for all comments, stories, examples and recommendations on this theme, even if you feel you don't have a wide range of expertise in this area, and even if you don't live in a rural area yourself.

If you would rather let us know your thoughts by email or post, please send them to: policy@mothersunion.org, or to: Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Please make sure that all responses are sent back to us by Friday 15th September at the latest.

We will also be inviting members around the world to apply to attend the United Nations Commission on the Status in 2018 with Mothers' Union, on a self funded basis, over the coming weeks, and will provide more information on this soon.

Thank you in advance.

With every blessing,

Rose

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1.	Which Mothers' Union province are you from?	
2.	Name (optional)	
3.	In your opinion, what are the key issues and challenges facing rural communities in your country?	
4.	<p>In your opinion, what are the unique issues and challenges particularly facing women, women's empowerment and gender equality in rural communities in your country?</p> <p>Please give examples if you have them.</p>	
5.	<p>Please rank the top five issues and challenges facing rural women in your country, which are of most concern to you (if any):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Child mortality <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict <input type="checkbox"/> Depression and suicide <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Early marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Education of girls <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusion from decision making roles/lack of participation <input type="checkbox"/> Food insecurity 	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender based violence <input type="checkbox"/> Harmful cultural practices <input type="checkbox"/> Human Trafficking/modern day slavery <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of education/illiteracy <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of equality with men <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of services and infrastructure (i.e. health facilities, banks, postal services) <input type="checkbox"/> Loneliness and isolation <input type="checkbox"/> Malnutrition <input type="checkbox"/> Maternal health <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Unequal laws (e.g. land rights, inability to inherit, rights of widows etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state):	
<u>COMMENTS:</u>		
6.	<p>What do you think the root causes of the issues identified above are? Please explain and give examples where possible?</p> <p>Comment:</p>	

7.	In your opinion which factors make the experiences of rural women in your country worse?	
8.	Are there particular groups of rural women who are more marginalised or excluded in your country? Please state, and give examples where possible.	
9.	In your opinion, what are the unique opportunities and benefits available to rural women in your country? Please give examples.	
10.	What work (if any) is your Mothers' Union doing to address the issues affecting rural women? Please give examples.	
11.	Are there any other key issues around the experiences of rural women that you feel should be included in Mothers' Union's representation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 2018? Comments:	

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Rose Wright (Policy Manager)

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