

Events attended by Suzanne Hanchett

1. Consultation Day (March 11)
2. Session on “Investing in the Hardest to Reach Girls” (hosted by ICRW and Save the Children, March 12)
3. Session on “Strategies for Empowering Rural Women” (hosted by DAWN and the Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung, March 12).

Some key themes: Child marriage, small farms struggling against large corporations, women farmers as protectors of biodiversity, large investors taking over rural lands since 2008, communication (especially the power of storytelling), the need for *actions* to implement existing laws and policies, March 11 CSW award to mayors of two U.S. cities – San Francisco and Los Angeles -- for passing CEDAW as an ordinance, despite the U.S.’s not signing onto the Convention. Racial discrimination against African American farm workers in New York State, U.S.

Memorable quotes and comments:

- Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka: *We need a people-centered approach. Rural women must be part of decision-making.*
- Anastasia Mikova, film maker: *Women don’t always know how strong they are.*
- Gia Gaspard Taylor, Network of Rural Women Producers: *Extractive industries ignore environmental concerns.*
- Ruth Faircloth, Rural Migrant Ministry: *[What I am most proud of:] Making it here from my life as a farm worker....*
We rural women need to stand up and say, “We are somebody.” Women coming together here and all speaking together have a powerful voice. Let’s not just talk about it. Let’s do it.
- Maria Luisa Mendonça: *Since the 2008 financial crisis there has been much investment in rural lands, causing displacement of rural populations and forcing them to migrate to cities.*
The plantation model of agriculture... generates violence.
- Marilou McPhedran, Canadian MP: *We have good international frameworks. “It’s time to go local.”*
- Urvashi Gandhi: *Dialogue is more effective than debate. We need “conversations.”* Meesha Brown, PCI Media: *Media can make change on both a micro and a macro level.*
- Yeva Avakyan, Save the Children: *“When there is no data, there is no accountability.”* Lyric Thompson (ICRW): *Legal and policy changes occur first, ...but there is inadequate investment in programs....*
Girls’ clubs and other groups help girls to learn communication and negotiating skills. But “You can’t expect girls to make all the needed changes on their own.” Institutional and economic changes also are needed.
- A Sesame Street staff member: *A microphone and a million views can be very empowering.*
- Mercia Andrews, Rural Women’s Assembly: *South Africa has a “resource curse.” Farm lands and biodiversity have come under attack (by extractive industries and agribusiness).*
- Agnes Kirabo, Good Rights Alliance: *The CSW probably has power to do more than it presently does. Our declarations on women are not at all binding. They just let us do this, so we will go home smiling.*
- Debra Jones, Moderator of the March 12 Save the Children panel: *Not investing [in children] actually costs a lot.*