

## **The United Nations' Role in Women and Children's Well-Being**

Janice Shaw Crouse

**THE UNITED NATIONS WAS FOUNDED** right after World War II in the hope of providing a mechanism that would resolve conflicts without nations resorting to armed conflict, thereby fostering peace and prosperity around the globe. The UN was meant to become the hub through which the Member States (now numbering 193 nations) could communicate, and bring the weight of the assembly of nations in order to solve problems together. In 2015, as the UN celebrated its 70th anniversary,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kim Holmes, Distinguished Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, wrote that the anniversary was “a chance not only to look back on the history of the organization, but to think about its future.” He added, “The UN has accomplished many things; it also has been a disappointment in many areas.”<sup>2</sup>

Holmes' critique of the UN is fair enough. With a budget of US\$5.4 billion (not counting the peacekeeping budget of \$9 billion or the disaster relief budget that exceeds \$29.8 billion),<sup>3</sup> it is rather shocking to find in a quick Google search more than 24 million entries on “what's wrong

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1. “About the UN: Overview,” The United Nations, available at <http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/overview/index.html>.
  2. Kim Holmes, “How to Improve the UN,” *The Daily Signal*, June 13, 2015, available at [http://dailysignal.com//print?post\\_id=188120](http://dailysignal.com//print?post_id=188120).
  3. “70 years and half a trillion dollars later: what has the UN achieved?” *The Guardian*, September 7, 2015, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/07/what-has-the-un-achieved-united-nations>.

with the UN.”<sup>4</sup>

“The UN gets into trouble,” Holmes writes, “when it engages on issues that are primarily political, especially controversial ones.” He added,

It is not only that developing countries tend to look upon the U.N. as a stage to redress their grievances against the West and to use these grievances as a means to shame it into providing more foreign aid. It is also the fact that Europe’s dominant liberal culture of social democracy tends to prevail in the workings of the UN’s social and economic bodies.<sup>5</sup>

Many of the problems related to the UN originate in a shift in emphasis from the stated mission of establishing peace and prosperity around the globe to a focus on promoting a radical leftist social agenda. That radical social agenda stems largely from the not-so-gradual rise of the radical feminists’ influence and power within the UN’s operations.<sup>6</sup> I have written about the UN operating on a three-legged stool—essentially a triumvirate wherein UN agencies and NGOs are now (and have been for a long time) coequal in influence to official delegates,<sup>7</sup> which is a serious deviation from UN procedures and results in major distortions and expansions of the UN mission.

From my experience of more than 20 years at the UN—including working as an NGO delegate advising official delegates and also as an official U.S. delegate appointed by President George W. Bush to two sessions, The Children’s Summit (2002) and the Commission on the Status of Women (2003)—I have learned that whatever the theme of the session and whether it is an official or NGO meeting, there are always several common characteristics. One is that any involvement of conservatives

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4. “UN Budget for 2016/2017 adopted by UN General Assembly,” General Assembly of the United Nations, December 23, 2015, available at <http://www.un.org/pga/70/2015/12/23/general-assembly-adopts-un-budget-for-2016-17/>.

5. Holmes, “How to Improve the UN.”

6. For an example of how the treaties are implemented see Janice Shaw Crouse, “Gender Equality Gobbledygook,” *Townhall*, January 19, 2007, available at [http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2007/01/19/gender\\_equality\\_gobbledygook](http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2007/01/19/gender_equality_gobbledygook).

7. Quoting Janice Shaw Crouse in, “Report: United Nations Attempts to Fix all Women’s Problems,” by CWALAC Staff, May 31, 2013, available at <http://archives.cwfa.org/report-united-nations-attempts-to-fix-all-womens-problems/>.

brings out hostile reactions and bullying behavior. The left, increasingly, views the UN as their exclusive club—their playground, if you will.<sup>8</sup> I have seen the roadblocks that conservatives face, everything from minor difficulties in getting a badge, meeting locations being changed at the last minute without notification of the conservatives, blocking accreditation efforts of conservative groups, to major hard-nosed efforts to get conservative NGO groups kicked out of the UN. It is not uncommon in final negotiating sessions to see leftists become vicious and vindictive when things do not go their way.<sup>9</sup> They will then demand that the conservatives agree with their positions in order to reach consensus and brand us as “obstructionist” when we are unwilling to bend<sup>10</sup>—ignoring the fact that they, too, are unwilling to bend. Nevertheless, it is the conservatives who are expected to “compromise” and thus achieve “common ground.”<sup>11</sup>

Increasingly, the Left’s route to implementing UN policy is for the UN to focus on women’s and children’s “rights” treaties that can be used to enforce their radical agenda around the world.

## Women’s Rights

A 2013 article which cited the ten top accomplishments of the UN lists “promoting women’s rights” as number one.<sup>12</sup>

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8. Here are leftist critiques of my work at the UN and throughout culture on family, marriage, faith and other issues—especially addressing conservative opposition to UN treaties like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: Pam Chamberlain, “Janice Shaw Crouse: A Warrior with Words,” *The Public Eye* 24.3 (Fall 2009), available at <http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v24n3/janice-shaw.html>; Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 80-157, available at <https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/globalizing-family-values>.
  9. Janice Shaw Crouse, “The UN: Is it Worth Fixing?” *Townhall*, March 6, 2007, available at [http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2007/03/06/the\\_un\\_is\\_it\\_worth\\_fixing](http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2007/03/06/the_un_is_it_worth_fixing).
  10. Timothy Herrman and Stefano Gennarini, “US Bullying Angers Developing World and Leads to US Defeat at UN,” Center for Family & Human Rights, March 22, 2012, available at [https://cfam.org/friday\\_fax/us-bullying-angers-developing-world-and-leads-to-us-defeat-at-un/](https://cfam.org/friday_fax/us-bullying-angers-developing-world-and-leads-to-us-defeat-at-un/).
  11. Here is another critique of conservative women daring to be involved in the public square: “The New Phyllis Schlafly: Janice Shaw Crouse,” Women’s Law Project, October 14, 2009, available at <https://womenslawproject.wordpress.com/2009/10/14/the-new-phyllis-schlafly-janice-shaw-crouse/>.
  12. Flora Khoo, “10 Things Accomplished by the United Nations,” *Borgen Magazine*, October 10, 2013, available at <http://www.borgenmagazine.com/10-things-accomplished-united-nations/>.

The United States contributes more than any other nation to the UN budget—22% of the regular budget and 29% of the peacekeeping budget.<sup>13</sup> While that does not earn the U.S. more direct power in terms of votes, it enables the radical feminist NGOs in the United States and their cohorts in other Member States to have outsized influence.

After long-term strategizing and laying of groundwork, 1975 was designated the UN’s “International Women’s Year,” followed by “The United Nations Decade for Women” from 1976 to 1985—which included a World Plan of Action and a dramatic increase in NGOs with the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). All of this happened following the drafting in 1972 of the controversial Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>14</sup> This proposed treaty is promoted as a women’s rights treaty (focusing on the “women’s rights” agenda rather than the human rights of women).

Further, the UN began defining women in a revolutionary way—as “mother, worker and citizen,” intentionally leaving out “wife”<sup>15</sup> and thus implying that the “wife” role is insignificant and unnecessary, even a handicap to women’s well-being and economic security. This anti-wife theme has progressed to the point of “maternal bullying”<sup>16</sup>—a narrative trying to convince women that marriage means a man will control a woman’s life by violence and abuse, especially when she is pregnant. This narrative also encompasses the idea of male irresponsibility and reinforces the idea that society discriminates against pregnant women.<sup>17</sup> Marriage and children, then, are inherently limiting for women’s potential and well-being.

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13. Holmes, “How to Improve the UN.”

14. For an explanation of the problems related to CEDAW, see Janice Shaw Crouse, “The Stalking Horse Named CEDAW,” *The Free Republic*, January 18, 2004, available at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1060258/posts>.

15. Arvonne Fraser, “UN Decade for Women: the Power of Words and Organizations,” in *Women and Social Movements: 1840 to Present*, Thomas Dublin and Kathryn Kish Sklar, eds. (Alexandria: Alexander Street Press, LLC, 2016), available at [http://wasi.alexanderstreet.com/help/view/un\\_decade\\_for\\_women\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_words\\_and\\_organizations](http://wasi.alexanderstreet.com/help/view/un_decade_for_women_the_power_of_words_and_organizations).

16. Janice Shaw Crouse, “UN Speak at the CSW: New Wine in Old Bottles,” Concerned Women for America, March 5, 2012, available at <http://archives.cwfa.org/un-speak-at-the-csw-new-wine-in-old-bottles/>.

17. *Ibid.*

From 1975 to 1995, there were four United Nations World Conferences on Women (Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing). All these events, according to Ambassador Arvonne Fraser—former ambassador to the Commission on the Status of Women, former coordinator of the Office of Women in Development at the U.S. Agency for International Development, and former Senior Fellow of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute on Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota—were motivated by the idea that “when you put something in law you change culture.”<sup>18</sup> UN treaties, of course, are not law, but “customary law” has become a direct implication of the treaties; economic benefits are given or withheld by the UN according to a specific nation’s adherence to the treaties.

It would be impossible to overstate the influence of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995)<sup>19</sup>. There, a Platform for Action was embraced by First Lady Hillary Clinton, who famously said, “Women’s Rights are Human Rights” and went back home to set up women’s bureaus in every U.S. federal agency to further so-called “women’s rights,” including “political quotas and positive measures.”<sup>20</sup>

During Beijing and the subsequent Beijing+ Conferences (Beijing 5, 10, 15 and 20), “gender parity” and “gender mainstreaming” were major priorities and became a focus around the world through U.S. State Department and UN pressure and funding. Such pressure on Member States is a form of cultural or Western imperialism—local cultural or religious traditions are trampled in the rush to superimpose Western values (particularly unlimited access to abortion and free contraceptives) on other nations and socially construct radical social views and values regarding “women’s rights.”<sup>21</sup>

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18. Elizabeth Noll, “Arvonne Fraser: The Seeds of the International Women’s Movement,” *Minnesota Women’s Press*, December 29, 2004, available at <http://www.womenspress.com/main.asp?Search=1&ArticleID=830&SectionID=3&SubSectionID=29&S=1>.

19. Note: I trained a nine-member team for the Institute on Religion and Democracy to participate at the Beijing conference and wrote a daily news page, “The Beijing Bulletin,” which described the proceedings and was faxed to 1,500 media outlets.

20. “Women in Power and Decision-Making: The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20,” UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, available at <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/in-focus/decision-making>.

21. Janice Shaw Crouse, “Paying for ‘Gender Equality,’” *Townhall*, February 28, 2008, available at

Next, the UN began linking feminism to economics and environmentalism in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the more recent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—both efforts had more emphasis on “women’s rights” than on the economy and environment. Both efforts undermined traditional values and pushed an anti-life agenda, “demography, not destiny.”<sup>22</sup>

NGO leaders as well as delegates know that words have consequences, so documents are carefully crafted using vague terms with generally understood definitions, but as those words are interpreted the meanings are expanded; as a result, cultures change.<sup>23</sup> Inevitably, “reproductive rights” means abortion, and “gender equity” and “gender mainstreaming” mean quotas. Words, then, become codes that can be interpreted as policy and thus become vehicles of transformation. Each succeeding world conference on women has caused an exponential increase in the ways women’s issues are taking on a life of their own around the world, forcing governments to respond. More significantly, this revolution is increasingly viewed as being hindered by “religious fundamentalism” that embodies “deep-seated prejudices” that cause “discriminatory practices against women.”<sup>24</sup>

Women gained even greater power in 2010 with the establishment of a body incorporating all of the various UN agencies under one entity—UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.<sup>25</sup> This powerful consolidation of women’s agencies within the UN (often referred to as a “global policy-making body”) gave women unprecedented global influence.<sup>26</sup> UN Women is now among the most powerful of the various entities of the UN in

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[http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2008/02/28/paying\\_for\\_gender\\_equality](http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2008/02/28/paying_for_gender_equality).

22. Crouse, “UN Speak at the CSW.”

23. Fraser, “Power of Words and Organizations.”

24. *Ibid.*

25. Janice Shaw Crouse, “UN Considers Adding Billion-Dollar Women’s Agency,” *Townhall*, February 28, 2007, available at [http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2007/02/28/un\\_considers\\_adding\\_billion-dollar\\_women%E2%80%99s\\_agency/](http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2007/02/28/un_considers_adding_billion-dollar_women%E2%80%99s_agency/); also, “The Push for the UN to Gear Up,” Concerned Women for America, March 7, 2008, available at <http://archives.cwfa.org/the-push-for-the-u-n-to-gear-up/>.

26. Crouse, “UN Speak at the CSW.”

working to impose radical policies and practices related to women's rights and gender identity.

### **Children's Rights**

Also cited among the top ten things that the UN has accomplished is reducing child mortality—certainly a laudable goal. In 1990, one out of ten children died before they were five years old. Through clear water, better sanitation, and better health and nutrition practices, that number dropped by 2011 to one in eighteen. The goal is to reduce the number by another two-thirds.<sup>27</sup> The UN has also helped to wipe out contagious diseases among children, including polio, which exists in only three countries now thanks in part to the UN's Global Polio Eradication Initiative; it has also helped to halt the spread of many epidemics affecting children through the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network.<sup>28</sup>

The UN has also done good work in enforcing laws against child marriage; promoting education for girls; providing good health services before, during, and after childbirth; and working with families and boys to promote respect for girls' rights and zero tolerance for violence against girls and women.<sup>29</sup>

Among these good emphases and outcomes, however, are some underlying philosophies that are deeply and virulently anti-religion, and particularly anti-traditional Judeo-Christian values. The major instrument through which the UN is affecting transformative changes in life issues and children's rights is the Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The UNCRC was signed by Madeleine Albright, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. President Bill Clinton did not submit it to the Senate for approval, nor has any subsequent president because opposition to the treaty is widespread. Religious groups are often blamed for U.S. opposition to the CRC, but there are substantive objections. No benefits to children in the treaty are lacking in current U.S. laws and

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27. Khoo, "10 Things Accomplished by the United Nations."

28. *Ibid.*

29. Janice Shaw Crouse, "The UN's Solutions to Teen Pregnancy," *Townhall*, March 3, 2008, available at [http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2008/03/02/the\\_un%E2%80%99s\\_solution\\_to\\_teen\\_pregnancy](http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2008/03/02/the_un%E2%80%99s_solution_to_teen_pregnancy).

policies, and there are numerous problems, foremost of which is the curtailment of parents' rights in educating and supervising their children.

As with most, if not all, UN treaties, a specific leftist agenda is implicit in the individual provisions. As Patrick F. Fagan writes, they "counter traditional moral and social norms regarding the family, marriage, motherhood and religion."<sup>30</sup> The provisions of the treaties would take precedence over U.S. laws, thus causing national sovereignty issues. Other areas are problematic: the provision for severe punishment for under-aged juvenile offenders that is in conflict with U.S. laws and, especially, the matter of the "rights" of a child vis-a-vis parental rights. Equally bad are the unintended consequences, including the potential for actual harms to children resulting from the provisions of the treaty. Fagan added:

In general, the social policy agents at these UN committees, often working with radical special interest groups, advise nations to alter the very structure of their societies to decrease the emphasis on marriage, the nuclear family, parental authority, and religious beliefs; mothers are encouraged to find fulfillment by leaving their children in the care of strangers and entering the workforce, and social or legal restraints on sexual activity among adolescents are targeted for removal. Surprisingly, these committees ignore the mounting evidence that the basic family unit of married parents who worship yields far superior social outcomes for children's health, intellectual development, and educational and income attainment, and lower rates of crime, welfare dependency, and teenage pregnancy. They also ignore polls that show most mothers would prefer staying home to raise their young children.<sup>31</sup>

Appointed by President George W. Bush (#43), I was privileged to be an official U.S. Delegate to the UN Children's Summit: The Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children. Unsurprisingly, the summit's poorly hidden agenda was to establish "children's rights" around the world. With the theme "A World Fit for Children," the summit included

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30. Patrick F. Fagan, "How UN Conventions on Women's and Children's Rights Undermine Family, Religion, and Sovereignty," The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #1407, February 5, 2001, available at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2001/02/how-un-conventions-on-womens>.

31. *Ibid.*

a Declaration and a Plan of Action and reiterated the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Global Movement for Children in establishing “child rights” at the center of any and all decisions affecting the lives of children and adolescents worldwide.<sup>32</sup> Meeting simultaneously with the children’s summit was the Global Movement for Children, which had the stated goal of turning “young people into skilled policymakers in their communities.”<sup>33</sup>

The International Guidelines on Sexuality Education, establishing the “sexual rights of children,” are a highly controversial set of guidelines from the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that pushes “reproductive health care” and “sexuality education” beginning at age five. Tellingly, most of the research for the report comes from the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). Both entities push a rights-based approach that shifts responsibility for children’s education from parents to teachers and health authorities. The term *gender* is used nearly 200 times in the 54-page report.<sup>34</sup> Specifically, the report stresses that certain beliefs and values are unacceptable and instead provides a “global template” explaining how readers can get around parental and other opposition to sexuality education. It also describes how to plan for implementation. (This is all in spite of the fact that over half of new STDs every year occur among young people, and more than four million girls will seek abortions every year. These guidelines do not promote abstinence; instead they focus on removing the stigma against sexual activity and STDs and teach masturbation and contraception.<sup>35</sup>)

The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has launched an effort to expand their mission to mainstream

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32. “World Leaders ‘Say Yes’ for Children,” United Nations Special Session on Children, May 8-10, 2002, available at <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>.

33. “Global Movement for Children Seeks to Build on Momentum,” United Nations Special Session on Children, May 10, 2002, available at <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/activities/gmfc.htm>.

34. Janice Shaw Crouse, “A Report on the UN’s Shocking Sexuality Guidelines,” *Townhall*, August 31, 2009, available at [http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2009/08/31/a\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_un%E2%80%99s\\_shocking\\_sexuality\\_guidelines](http://townhall.com/columnists/janiceshawcrouse/2009/08/31/a_report_on_the_un%E2%80%99s_shocking_sexuality_guidelines).

35. *Ibid.*

acceptance of LGBT families and LGBT children, even though there is no evidence that homosexuality is an innate characteristic. Even so, UNICEF is endorsing same-sex “marriage.”<sup>36</sup> More bizarre, UNICEF is discouraging international adoptions.<sup>37</sup>

The United Nations Population Fund almost ten years ago began distributing a booklet, “Giving Girls Today and Tomorrow: Breaking the Cycle of Adolescent Pregnancy.”<sup>38</sup> Poverty is cited throughout as a *cause* of early marriage and early sexual activity. These same activists object to abstinence and faithfulness programs, and their approach is to view pregnancy and motherhood as the problem rather than the lack of education and opportunity. Mentioned in passing in the middle of the first page and sporadically through the document is the fact that adolescent pregnancy is actually *declining* worldwide. Even so, the booklet sounds an alarm about the problem, with the solution being safe sex; values-free, non-judgmental attitudes; access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education; readily available, free contraception; and on-demand, free abortion.<sup>39</sup>

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It is tempting to say that the UN is irrelevant. It has in fact proved important regarding its founding mission of maintaining peace in the world, but through its tentacles of power and money, the UN forces nations to implement treaties and distasteful policies by threats to withdraw development funds. The combination of unintended consequences and deliberate attempts to eradicate religious beliefs and cultural traditions that stand in the way of the radical leftist agenda makes the UN especially dangerous and harmful for women and children.

By undermining the family and the rights of parents; making women’s

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36. J.C. von Krempach, “UNICEF gives up children, and instead promotes ‘gay rights,’” Turtle Bay and Beyond, Center for Family & Human Rights, December 15, 2014, available at [https://c-fam.org/turtle\\_bay/unicef-gives-children-instead-promotes-gay-rights/](https://c-fam.org/turtle_bay/unicef-gives-children-instead-promotes-gay-rights/).

37. Kim deBlecourt, “My Problem with UNICEF,” *Nourished Hearts*, June 6, 2011, available at <http://nourishedhearts.com/issues-and-commentary/my-problem-with-unicef/>.

38. Available at [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/giving\\_girls.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/giving_girls.pdf).

39. Crouse, “The UN’s Solutions to Teen Pregnancy.”

worth dependent upon their economic contributions rather than including their value within the home and family; expanding children's rights; constructing new social and sexual norms; trying to eradicate the influence of religion and morality; and trying to destroy traditional cultural mores, the United Nations is using women and children to bolster and promote their views and interject their values into the fabric of international cultures.

Fortunately, conservative groups have frequently been successful in blocking the worst of the leftist agenda. Perhaps more importantly, conservatives have exposed the ways that UN entities abuse their roles and bully poor, third-world nations into conformity with their radical agendas by threatening to cut off aid. It is the conservative NGO leaders who have brought attention to the ways the UN has become an instrument of colonialism—exporting the worst of Western values in order to fundamentally transform other nations. These brave and valiant voices in the wilderness need to be heard and heeded by those with power and influence in the Member States.

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