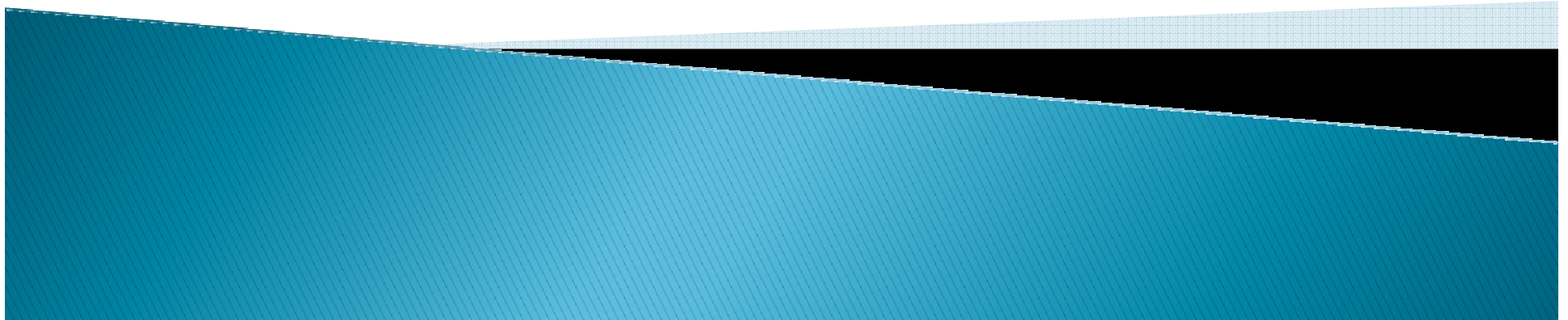


The case for Empowerment through Intergovernmental Action

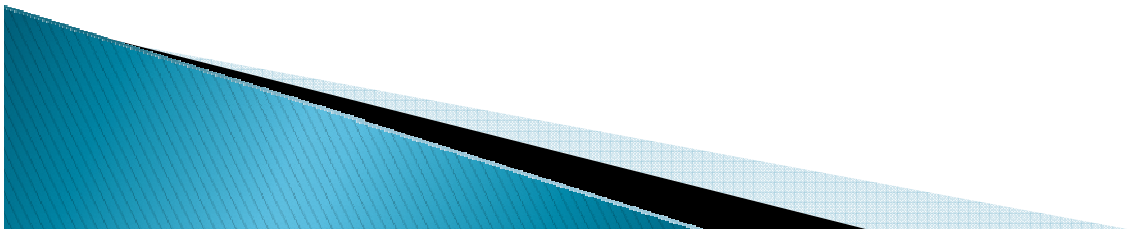
Lessons from the quest for gender equality and the
empowerment of women

Patience W. Stephens, Director, Intergovernmental Support Division, UN–
Women



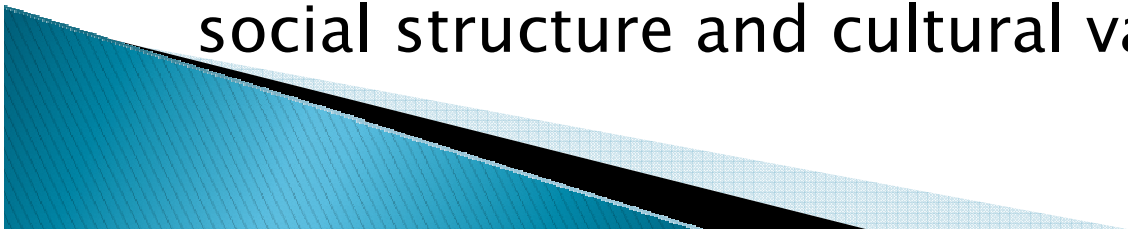
An empowering approach –(Recap ––Green and King)

- ▶ Build enabling environment (**Intergovernmental action**)
- ▶ Convene across state/society to solve common problems (**Strong civil society action**)
- ▶ Cross the river by feeling the stones (beware blueprints) (**Question the status quo and find new paths**)
- ▶ Spot and use critical junctures (**Reform as needed if indicated**)



Meaning of Empowerment: who empowers?

- ▶ “Women’s empowerment happens when individuals and organized groups are able to imagine their world differently and to realize that vision by changing the relations of power that have kept them in poverty, restricted their voice and deprived them of their autonomy.” Eyben (2011)
- ▶ “Empowering women in relation to men means not only that women gain more power but that the power relationship between women and men changes fundamentally, thus creating a new social system which inevitably challenges the existing social structure and cultural values.” Meguro (2000)



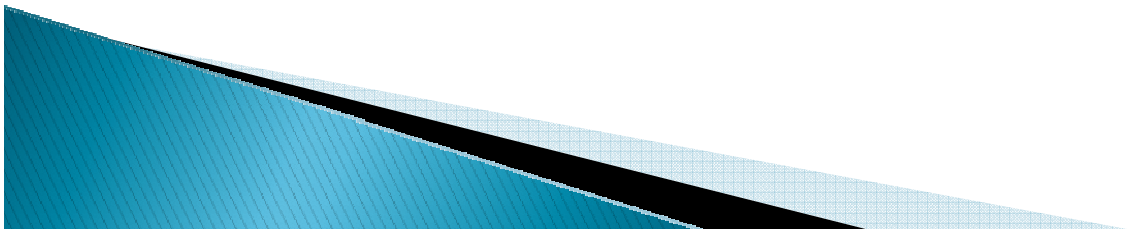
Aligning typologies



D-A-R-E STAGE	Jo Rowlands typology	FEATURES
Dormancy/Discovery/ Disgruntlement	POWER WITHIN (a sense of rights, dignity and voice, along with basic capabilities)	Acceptance/ internal friction/ emergence of leaders/ inconsistent and sporadic activism
Awakening/Agitation/ Activism	POWER WITH (ability to organize, express views)	Vocal and demanding leaders/ friction/conflict/ emergence of local, national and global actors and institutions/identification of issues/platform for action
Rebellion/resistance /re-organization /reclaiming of power	POWER TO (ability to influence decision makers, whether the State, economic power holders or other)	Strengthened leaders and institutions/ questioning of legal system/laws/norms; quest for global platform/ intergovernmental engagement
Engagement with institutions and stakeholders in structured manner; expansion of demands; new strategies/ approaches		<u>Intergovernmental action</u> / reform; reformulation, revision and expansion of goals / change and revision of demands/demands for implementation/ <u>intergovernmental action</u>

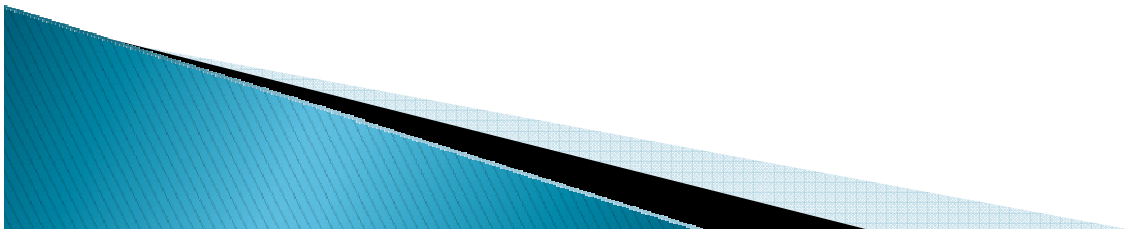
Fundamental Message

- ▶ For social/population groups whose empowerment changes fundamental relations with other groups and requires that existing social and cultural values are challenged (Meguro's definition), the pathway to empowerment requires strong, sustained intergovernmental initiative, action and leadership
– -- **an enabling environment.**
- ▶ Key enablers for women's empowerment?
Intergovernmental and civil society action.



Why intergovernmental engagement and action

- ▶ Ultimately implementation will depend on government action
- ▶ intergovernmental discussions reflect the complexity of national implementation challenges
- ▶ Intergovernmental fora bring pressure to bear to reach consensus
- ▶ Intergovernmental decisions/resolutions are required for change in the UN approach
- ▶ **BUT action by civil society and the women's movement spurred and accelerated intergovernmental action**

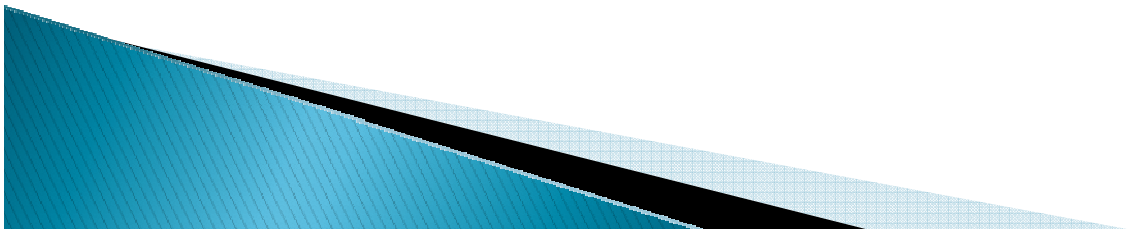


Intergovernmental bodies: CSW and CSocD

CSW	CSocD
<p>Prepare recommendations and reports to the ECOSOC on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields</p>	<p>To advise ECOSOC on social policies of a general character and, in particular, on all matters in the social field not covered by the specialized intergovernmental agencies.</p> <p>As a preparatory and advisory body of the Council in the whole range of social development policy.</p>
<p>Singular mandate: Gender equality (WOMEN and girls)</p>	<p>Multiple and more diffuse mandate: People; poverty; social integration; cooperatives; family; youth; persons with disabilities; older persons; indigenous peoples;</p>
<p>Strong initial emphasis on rights and information gathering and analysis</p>	<p>Less focused because of multiple mandates</p>
<p>Multifaceted UN system support: Division for the Advancement of Women; UNIFEM; INSTRAW; OSAGI; Regional Commissions</p>	<p>Focused UN system support – Division for Social Policy and Development; Regional Commissions</p>

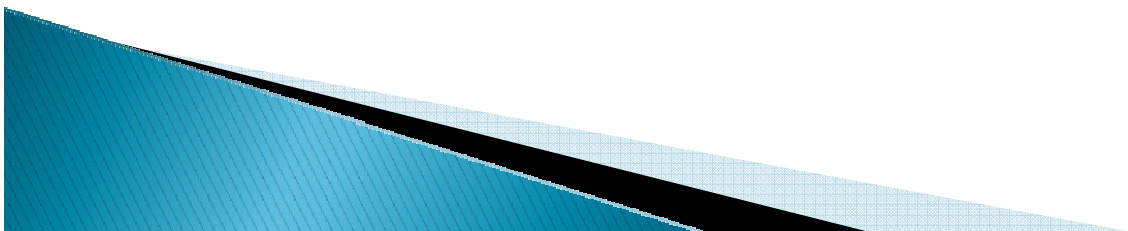
Bold/Historic moves

- ▶ 2000--Taking women's empowerment into the Security Council - resolution 1325 and successors
- ▶ Questioning the efficacy of the architecture addressing gender equality and women's empowerment
- ▶ Giving the architecture a failing grade
- ▶ Establishing the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
- ▶ It's all in the name: UN-Women



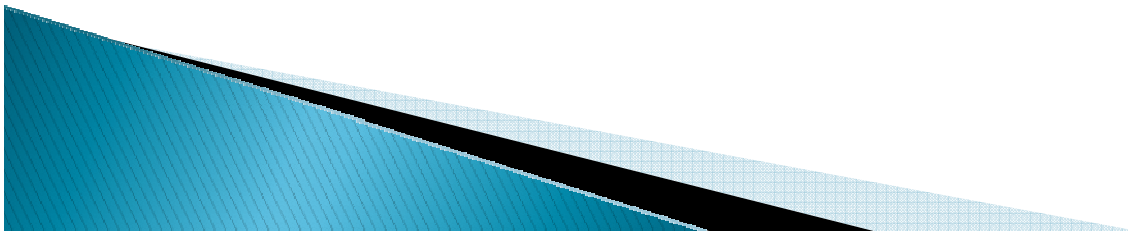
UN Women – Exploring pathways to increased empowerment

- ▶ Recognizing fragmentation
- ▶ Bringing normative and operational together: Executive Board and CSW
- ▶ Strengthening approach to normative work
- ▶ Pressing to incorporate gender equality into the work of other intergovernmental bodies
- ▶ Gender equality and Rio
- ▶ Gender equality and the post 2015 development agenda
- ▶ Strengthening work with civil society and women's organizations



Some messages on pathways

- ▶ Recognize that the pathway may not lie in how we address the issues but how well we are organized to do so and who is on board
- ▶ Review and modify the current architecture
- ▶ Identify/sharpen overarching goal across the various mandates/social groups
- ▶ Eliminate fragmentation and lack of coherence in approaches
- ▶ Latch on to global events and opportunities to chart new paths and drive the message home





**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women**

