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### Nicole Fox, Assistant Professor of Sociology, travels to the United Nations Headquarters, NYC

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## Nicole Fox

### Assistant Professor of Sociology ~ travel to the United Nations

It is with deep gratitude that I wish to thank the Center for International Education for supporting my recent travel to the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York, to present at the 59<sup>th</sup> Commission for the Status of Women (CSW59). This was a particularly exciting meeting as it was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Conference, where UN delegates prepared a Platform for Action that worked to achieve greater equality and opportunity for women globally.

One of the most moving parts of attending the CSW59 was observing how excited people from all over the world were to be at the UN. As Americans, we think little about the UN on a daily basis as many of us, especially those on the University campus are privileged to have our basic needs met as well as our educational, spiritual and developmental aspirations. However, in many parts of the world this is not the case, and the aid and support of the UN makes a significant difference in people's daily lives. For example, in a panel presented by women survivors of the civil war in what is now South Sudan, they discussed how much UNWomen's support meant to their community. It helped civilians gain access to clean drinking water as well as support women in leadership positions in the peace process that was previously dictated by only men.

At the meeting, I was also reminded of the ways in which women suffer differently and often disproportionately during war, famine and disease because of their roles as wives and care takers. For example, a woman from Sierra Leone spoke of how women were disproportionately affected by the Ebola outbreak because they were the ones who traditionally cared for the sick and weak. Women activists explained this to the World Health Organization (WHO) who assured them there was not a gendered distribution of Ebola, and asserted that they would not be collecting sex segregated data on patients. This reminded me of the challenges researchers and activists face in trying to illuminate gendered experiences when sex segregated data is not collected at even the most basic level.

I had the honor to present on a panel titled: "Feminist Sociological Perspectives: Gender-based Violence and the Continued Struggle for Equality in a Post 2015 Agenda." My presentation focused on the challenges facing Rwandan women genocide survivors 20 years after the violence. The challenges I spoke to included poverty, trauma and memorialization and how these particular challenges often restrict access to the very resources that are intended to alleviate such challenges. I had the privilege to be on a panel with incredibly smart, insightful and dedicated sociologists from around the United States.



Nicole Fox, UNH assistant professor of sociology at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York



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