



I AM A WIDOW

Widowhood: What Happens to Me After They Take Everything?

Commission on the Status of Women 63rd Session

Parallel Event Final Report

HOSTED BY

Global Fund for Widows

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The Honorable Lord Ahmad
of Wimbledon

SPECIAL GUEST

The Honorable First Lady
Callista Mutharika

PANELISTS

Widows Rights International (UK) | Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization (Kenya)
Malawi Widows Association | Women's UN Report Network - WUNRN

WRITTEN BY

Nicole Mecca

EDITED BY

Heather Ibrahim-Leathers



Widowhood: What Happens to Me After They Take Everything?

Written by: Nicole Mecca | **Edited by:** Heather Ibrahim-Leathers

Parallel Event:

63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
March 13, 2019

Hosted by:

Global Fund for Widows, Heather Ibrahim-Leathers

Moderated by:

Lois Herman, Women's UN Report Network

Keynote Address:

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, *United Kingdom*

Panelists:

Heather Ibrahim-Leathers, *Global Fund for Widows*
Andrina Mchiela, *Malawi Widows Association*
Zarin Hainsworth, *Widows Rights International*
Dianah Kamande, *Come Together Widows & Orphans Organization*

Special Guest:

Callista Mutharika, *Former First Lady of Malawi*

Opening Statement (Lois A. Herman)

If you saw a woman being removed from her home, subjected to extreme violence, struggling to provide for her children, and unable to provide even the most basic of needs; would you stay silent, allowing this injustice to occur?

Certainly, the compassionate and responsible approach says we must not. However, this situation is the reality for many millions of women who find themselves widowed while we stay silent in the face of their struggle every day.

With the launch of the Make Widows Matter Campaign at this CSW, we will be silent no longer, bringing attention and concern to the most vulnerable women who are often left in the shadows. During this panel, we will discuss the challenges widows face and how to best address them, so the issue is invisible no longer.

The Right Honorable Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

The Right Honorable Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon opened his remarks with a moving personal story, sharing the tragic passing of his father in 2009, ending the 48 year marriage between his loving parents. Following this death Lord Ahmed watched as his 69 year old mother's health spiraled downward. Shortly after in 2015, he lost his mother to, "a broken heart." In addition to the lifestyle and economic adjustments his mother was forced to make, she carried with her an overwhelming sense of loss, as all widows do.

In addition to witnessing his mother endure widowhood, Lord Ahmad also recalled the experience of his aunt who was widowed at 39 years old. Despite suffering through the same sense of overwhelming loss, she was also forced to devote her lacking energy to tireless amounts of paperwork and red tape in order to make arrangements to keep custody of her children. She was fortunate, as she did have a stable source of income and was thus able to continue supporting and caring for her children. However, not all widows have this ability.

It is these experiences that shone light on the issue of widowhood for Lord Ahmad. However, not everyone sees this suffering firsthand. As an issue that is not well understood it has become NEGLECTED, according to Lord Ahmad. Thankfully, the British government has committed to achieving the SDGs, which cannot be done without addressing the issue of widowhood.

When considering how we can improve the situation of widows, Lord Ahmad underscores that we must commit to investing in the lives of women early, so they may obtain an education and become empowered, thus preparing them to face challenges independently later in life. In addition, Lord Ahmad acknowledged the failing of cultures, which should exist to enhance the peoples of each area, rather than hold them back, as many customs surrounding widows do. Thus, it is necessary for us to fight for a cultural change of the fundamentally unjust practices of disinheritance and harmful traditional practices, which contribute massively to global poverty.

The abuse of widows does not only exist on the micro level from household to household. As the number of widows worldwide grows, our response to their needs has not. Currently, there

are a quarter of a billion widows in the world. As Minister of Freedom of Religion, Lord Ahmad has traveled to meet war widows in Iraq, whose narratives included coping with the loss of their partners all while enduring the physical violence of the conflict. Particularly high rates of widows can be observed in war torn regions, including Syria where 80% of women are now widowed.

Areas with such astounding rates of widowhood also bring our attention to the issue of the young or child widow. Recently, the United Kingdom criminalized forced marriage and is now proud to campaign across the globe promoting the eradication of early and forced child marriage. Child marriages force young women to drop out of school, preventing the development of their voice and autonomy. Even worse, when the husbands of these young brides die, their entire lives are blighted. They will be forced to spend the remaining years of their lives burdened by the shame and neglect accompanying widows. Contributing to the problem intergenerationally, often, the children from these marriages end up as victims of child marriage and abuse, as well.

The UK has expressed their commitment to solving the issue of widowhood, including child widows, and calls every government, partner, and NGO to make that commitment, too, thus attacking deeper social norms and root causes of discrimination. As Lord Ahmad reminded us, achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is a top priority of the UK, but they cannot lead the way alone. We must work together in pursuit of this objective, pushing forward for equality, access to justice and social protections. Widows have the potential to become high achievers, but we must help them by removing barriers preventing them from becoming all they can and should. Widows are the backbone of communities around the world, and when they are properly protected, empowered, and supported they will be powerful agents for prosperity, peace, and change. Lord Ahmad powerfully concluded his remarks, calling us all to “Make it happen.”

Heather Ibrahim-Leathers

Heather Ibrahim-Leathers, Founder & President of Global Fund for Widows, followed Lord Ahmad to expand on the experiences of widows. She opened by reminding the audience of the true magnitude of the issue of widowhood.

Widowhood impacts over 300 million women around world, 115 million of which live in abject poverty as a direct result of their widowhood status.

In order to understand the issue of widowhood, we need to define a widow. This is where the problem begins. While ‘a woman whose husband is deceased’ seems to be the simplest definition, it leaves room for ambiguity. The de facto widow’s husband is in fact deceased, but how do you define husband? If he is a husband under statutory law, the process will most likely be straightforward. But as most marriages in the Global South are a cultural marriage, is there any registration or marriage certificate serving as proof of the union? As most marriages in the

Global South lack these forms of verification, there is thus no way of the widows to collect a death certificate for her husband, as there is no proof of their marriage.

A widow may also be considered a functional widow, wherein her husband has voluntarily or involuntarily abandoned her due to state or non-state actors. In the case of a missing husband, as is a common occurrence in areas of conflict, we must ask if he is missing as a result of state or non-state actors. We must consider, when will the government issue the death certificate of someone they have taken? And at which point will ISIS or other rogue entity issue a death certificate? In effect, the definition of a widow is messy.

Another common misconception, which Lord Ahmad also addressed, is the idea that widows are elderly. The majority of the widows participating in Global Fund for Widows' Egypt project were widowed under the age of 39, while 100% of the participants in the Tanzania project were widowed under the age of 39. What do most young women in these area have in common? They are mothers of young children. The widows have even more in common, including poverty, struggle, taboo and shame.

Of course, the widows grapple with the loss of their partner, struggling emotionally with the loss. However, broader human rights violations are brought against the widow, causing further struggle and despair. In this area, we see widows endure **three main human rights violations**: the act of disinheritance, harmful traditional practices, and discrimination.

In acts of **disinheritance**, the husband's family will rush to government offices to collect the husband's death certificate while the widow is immediately removed from her marital home. She may never again be able to access any of the land or assets she once owned, including those she brought into the marriage, earned, or purchased throughout the course of the marriage. Shockingly, she may also be unable to inherit her own children, as certain matrilineage and patrilineage customs ascribe higher value to the children in the estate than to the widow herself, preventing her from inheriting their guardianship. If there is a bride price or dowry paid, as in most instances, the widow may be also considered property and inherited herself.

In addition to disinheritance, we see widows facing **discrimination** on the basis of gender. Today, 39 countries around the world prevent the widow from inheriting, and 102 countries have a legal, customary, or social practice that restrict a widow from access to land or valuable assets. We call this institutionalized economic violence.

What are called '**harmful traditional practices**' against a widow are perhaps the most troublesome. These practices can vary but include violent forms of abuse, typically of a sexual nature over a prolonged period of time intended to purge the widow of the sin of her husbands' death. These practices are emotionally damaging, persist due to shame and taboo, and are culturally endorsed.

These three major violations have **various implications**.



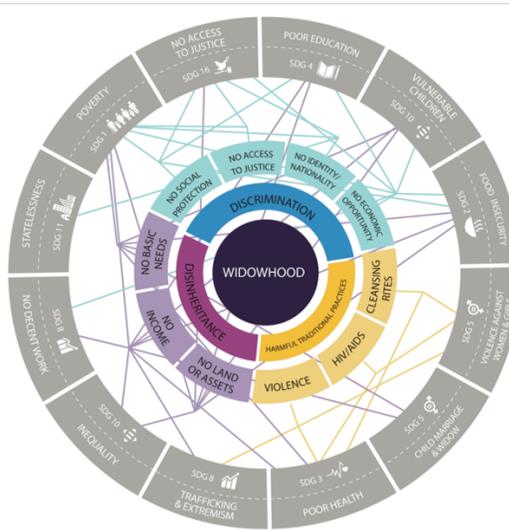
VIOLATIONS
Against the Widow

Disinheritance leads to a loss of a family's income, contributing to the inability of the widow to service basic needs for her family and small children. Thus, the widow is forced to remove her children from school, as was the case for Ibrahim-Leather's grandmother herself, a thirty five year old widow and mother of four. The widows themselves are not the only ones who suffer as a result. Once the children are removed from school, the widow may have the common instinct to protect her daughter, and her marries them off as children. Her sons become vulnerable to radicalized indoctrination, as a UNDP report found 33% of extremist recruits in Africa came from widowed households.



IMPLICATIONS
of Those Violations

Discrimination serves as a barrier to accessing justice, social protections, and economic opportunities. With young children and limited skills, she faces almost no opportunity at safe, much less dignified, work.



INTERSECTIONALITIES
of Widowhood

Finally, with **harmful traditional practices** come a variety of health issues including the transmission of HIV/AIDS, ostracization, fear and shame, and the risk of being drawn into human trafficking.

In all cases, the widow loses her place and voice in society, which has allowed widowhood to remain absent from our global consciousness. It is this place and voice that we must restore immediately to progress further.

Global Fund for Widows along with the Global Alliance for the Last Woman First of over 100 organizations worldwide have provided insight into the realities of widowhood. The stories of the widows lead us to believe that these human rights violations not only lead the widows directly to poverty, but is deeply interconnected with the Goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda. This graphic demonstrates the complicated and, quite frankly, tragic web of the implications widowhood has on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Please note, disinheritance not only leads to poverty SDG1, food insecurity SDG2, poor health SDG3, poor education SDG4, child marriage and the child widow SDG5. This cycle continues, including almost every single SDG.

So, what do the widows need?

Ibrahim-Leathers reiterated the point of Lord Ahmad; they need economic empowerment. Widows need accessible and safe forms of work, access to capital, and the ability to generate a sustainable income. They need protective laws including equitable marital laws, access to justice, and criminalization of acts of disinheritance and harmful traditional practices. Finally, they need social protections including marital protections, social pensions, and education plans.

Equitable marital protections are critical. These should include the registration and documentation of each and every marriage, and to alleviate any ambiguity of the widows' role in the marriage there must be clear and equitable succession laws. If married, a husband's death certificate should only be issued to his surviving widow, and a period of absence should be defined after which a widow whose husband is missing may be allowed to claim her husband is deceased, claim an inheritance, and to move on with her life.

Social pensions and cash transfers are critical to alleviating the burden of poverty for widows. Plans should be non-contributory, inclusive of informal work, and adequate to provide for the widow's needs.

The most common request of the widows in Global Fund for Widows' 5.4 million-person network is to keep her children in school. Thus, the implementation of an education plan should do just that.

Fortunately, some countries are leading the way in the protection of widows. In Namibia, the Married Persons Equality Act of 1996 gives women equal status to men in every marriage, calling all valuable assets be owned jointly and equally by husband and wife. As a result of these

policies, Namibia ranked 10th in the world in the Gender Gap Index; higher than the US, France, and even the UK. Namibia also received a high rank on the African Union's Economic Empowerment Scorecard, all resulting in the achievement of SDG's 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, and 16. The Indira Gandhi Widow's Pension Scheme of 2009 addresses poverty among India's 46 million widows via cash transfer to a bank or post office, resulting in a significant alleviation of the burden of poverty on widows. More importantly, the widows achieved a noticeably elevated sense of social- and self-worth because they were suddenly seen as women of means, in possession of a bank account. Thus, SDGs 1, 2, 3, and 10 achieved. Finally, South Africa's Child Support Grant of 1998 guarantees schooling for all children up to the age of 18. It is a policy that benefits 55% of South Africa's children, 98% of whom live in a female headed household or with a widow. As a result, poverty was significantly reduced, 50% of women held bank accounts, and household savings increased ubiquitously, all helping achieve SDGs 2, 3, 4, 8, and 16.

With this information, the gravity and magnitude of the elusive and emerging issue of widowhood should be more apparent. Addressing widowhood shall assist in alleviating global poverty, the achievement of the SDGs, and doing so while leaving no one behind.

Andrina Mchiela

Andrina Mchiela is the Chairperson for the Malawi Widows Association, a fairly new organization working on the ground to help widows. Mchiela expressed a particular gratitude for the opportunity to speak, because a public platform like the one arranged by the CSW does not currently exist in Malawi. At last, she can share the story of the widows.

Malawi, a small country, faces a demographic imbalance: of the 17 million total population, 52% are female. Further, there are 1.2 million widows overall. This is the magnitude of widowhood in an impoverished country.

Many women in Malawi survive on less than one dollar per day. Images of how the women live would alarm the CSW audience, and widows' quarters are even worse. Despite the widow's incredible vulnerability resulting from gender-based violence and discrimination, most organizations fighting gender inequality are not inclusive of widowhood. Thus, few opportunities for help exist for the Malawian widows.

Treatment of widows in Malawi is similar to what is observed in other places. It is generally defined by local culture, tradition, religion, and beliefs. Thus, the disempowerment and challenges a widow faces do not start at the moment of her widowhood. In Malawi, it starts the moment she is born. From that moment, males and females are treated fundamentally different, including in the areas of education, employment, access to credit, and even political participation. Considering this reality, in society, a woman always holds a lower status than a man publicly as well as in a marriage.

To reiterate, widows are marginalized, vulnerable, and abused. They also face larger hardship as a result of having everything taken from them. With nothing to contribute, they cannot

participate in local markets, contributing to the economy. They become food insecure, the number one complaint among Mchiela's network of widows. As a result of poverty, they fail to find school fees for their children, new streams of income, and are prevented from owning or accessing land.

In this patriarchal society, the women are highly dependent on the man such that when he passes, she is left crippled. Mchiela herself was widowed herself at the age of 42, but because she received an education, she was educated and could avoid such crippling. She was able to find work allowing her to continue educating her children. However, not all widows are so lucky. The trend in Mchiela's area is for children of widows to be forced into prostitution or child marriage, both contributing to the vicious cycle of poverty.

In cases where educated individuals have written a will, it is rarely followed. Extreme poverty among widows is aggravated by widespread property grabbing: what little property and assets her husband left will be taken away. A widow cannot expect to keep the money and/or property she has earned and contributed before or during the marriage. Once her husband passes away, his family, immediate and extended, grabs everything that is left. The woman is left at a loss. She becomes nothing but a victim of the culture. This has large scale implications on the women of Malawi.

After everything is taken, local culture calls for widows to be cleansed of the bad spirit of her husband. To accomplish this, widows are forced to have sexual intercourse with a brother or cousin of her deceased husband, posing potential health risks for the women and diminishing her self-worth and confidence. The government has attempted to step in to diminish these damaging practices, but the laws are not followed. Traditional leaders continue to benefit from the system and practice of cleansing, so it persists. To escape the rule of the law, traditional leaders have taken these cleansing rituals underground, where they are performed in secrecy. HIV/AIDS have become a serious threat to the widows in particular as a result of the cleansing rituals directly.

In addition to these issues, the problem of dowry adds yet another layer of complexity. In Malawi, when a woman is married her husband's family pays a dowry for her, as is common in many places across the world. Later, when her husband dies, this transaction allows her to be treated as property. Thus, the widow herself is devastatingly inherited along with her property by another individual. She cannot have ownership even over her own life.

Despite these struggles, the government of Malawi has passed several protective laws to combat these issues. The Gender Equality Act of 2013 is intended to prevent harmful traditional practices, and the Deceased Estate: Wills, Inheritance and Protection Act of 2010 is intended to minimize the effects of property grabbing from the deceased's estate. However, these laws are limited as they are not binding or well-known.

The challenge at hand is how we can protect these Malawian women and widows from this broken system. As a country, it is time for Malawi to express their support for those who are

widowed or who will become widowed. We in the Malawi Widows Association are putting forth effort to protect these widows, learning from our colleagues who are also helping widows, as well as through our partnership with ActionAid.

We as widows have been pushed aside for a long time. It is time to have inclusive programs targeting specifically the most vulnerable group: widows.

Zarin Hainsworth

Zarin Hainsworth opened her remarks with a powerful anecdote: When a 12 year old girl in India was asked about her marriage, she could not answer. She did not remember much about the day she was married or the process by which she was selected, as she was only 6 years old at the time and unaware of what was occurring.

Behind the statistics, Hainsworth reminds us, are people with stories whom we should be listening to and connecting with. The six year old bride suddenly lost everything: her childhood, education, voice, and future. This act is a complete denial of her human rights. Clearly, this is something we should never allow. However, unless we act forcibly to prevent it, we are all allowing this to take place. We can and should work with our civil society colleagues and state parties to ensure this cannot continue.

We know early and forced child marriage, an issue that inevitably leads to the child widow, is prevalent in several areas of the world. However, very few statistics are available to inform us of the magnitude of the problem. It is vital that we collect data disaggregated by marital status to inform us of how many girls are married and thus, widowed. Hainsworth reminds us to use our own voices, especially at the CSW, to request this data be collected so we can appropriately assess and address the issue of widowhood, in particular the child widow.

The child bride, who has already lost everything, is then faced with the massive discrimination that accompanies widowhood. In many western countries, the public perception of a widow is a secure elderly woman. But this is not the reality: even older widows in these places are suffering, as data has shown the elderly are the most impoverished age bracket. In other parts of the world, harmful traditional practices, acts of disinheritance, and her legal invisibility actively prevent women from inheriting. When a child is married and then subsequently widowed, she has lost everything *twice*.

The implications of cycles of poverty are tragic, but even worse off are the widows facing intersectional discrimination. Hainsworth calls us to consider what the life of a Boko Haram widow is like: she was likely married early in her village, and when Boko Haram comes to attack the village she is widowed, taken, and forcibly married again. And yet, when her Boko Haram husband is killed in conflict, and by the age of 17 she is widowed once again.

We must also consider what happens to the poor women facing particular challenges: living on less than a dollar per day, with no education, no opportunities, and no options for marriage without a dowry. What happens to them? Often, they are forced into prostitution and

trafficked. And this process persists intergenerationally: when young mothers can't provide for their daughters, they marry them off.

This is a cycle we can fight. What is currently lacking is our political will to take better action. Hainsworth calls that whatever power we each have be used to force, fight, call, berate, besiege state parties to use their power against the issue, ensuring this no longer remains a hidden, neglected, and silent issue. No girl child should face the situation of child marriage, which silences her consent and voice; nor should they face the discrimination associated with widowhood, especially at such a young age. The globe's 300+ million widows make up the largest minority group in the world. Without empowering and uplifting them, we will never reach global peace and prosperity.

Dianah Kamande

Dianah Kamande, a Kenyan widow, finds the issue of widowhood dear to her heart, and describes it as most others don't. She says widowhood is "sweet."

Through her advocacy for widows, she has found her power and voice. It is this empowerment, which she found despite the absence of a husband to endorse her ideas, that she sees as the answer to the problem of widowhood. When Kamande escaped the cocoon of widowhood, she found her power, and she sees that other widows can find their voice and power, too.

Kamande heard previous speakers' complaints that the government's laws are ineffective. However, Kamande suggests a new approach: the government is not responsible for educating widows about the laws. However, civil society organizations can and should be able to share that information. Thus, widow focused organizations should bring them in, seeking in particular resources that can train the widows to become paralegals.

As paralegals, the widows gain the power that comes with a knowledge of the law. Kamande's network of paralegal widows has made significant accomplishments. In court, these widows ban together, even dressing alike, to request changes in the law as a unified team. This advocacy strategy has been successful in Kenya, and is worth trying elsewhere.

Kamande shared her concern that widows do not utilize their voices enough: If these women are not sitting at the decision-making table, they will be the mean *on* the table. But this can be avoided so long as they use their voice to advocate for change. Passionately, Kamande asserts her commitment to seeing widows in the seats of the government after the next Kenyan election.

It is through the reclamation of the widows' voices that the narrative on widowhood can be changed. When the man dies, society seeks to find the wrong-doing with his wife. Widows should see this platform as an opportunity to show them all she is doing right. She can use her strength as an independent woman to speak out on the poor conditions for widows.

This is what Kamande herself has done, and it has been sweet. It wasn't until she was a widow that the government acknowledged her experiences and felt pressed to send her to the USA to share her story more widely. Kamande herself changed the narrative. Although what happened to her was tragic, she saw it as her own responsibility to change her life – and she did. Now, Kamande hopes other widows will see it this way, too, and will step up to change the language and narrative publicly for all widows.

In addition to her successful advocacy, Kamande has been a leader in the establishment of Brookbank in Kenya, the very first widows SACCO which follows the Widows Savings and Loan Association (WISALA) model developed by Global Fund for Widows. Additionally, Kenya will see its very first center for widows in 2019, where widows will receive education to become lawyers and paralegals, as well as vocational skills training.

Kamande powerfully welcomes even widows with no education to access these services and to change their own narrative, because they can.

Former First Lady of Malawi, The Honorable Callista Mutharika

Special remarks were shared by the Honorable Former First Lady of Malawi, Ms. Callista Mutharika.

Closing Remarks, Lois A. Herman

Herman graciously shared this special poem, *I AM A WIDOW*, in closing:

I am a widow, but I am still ME.
Of course, I mourn; and I shed tears.
But, to carry on alone, I deserve dignity.
I want respect, compassion, not your fears.

I may be old; I may be young,
With others in my care.
Stop your rituals and your hurt.
Respect for widows is only fair.

So many widows share my fate.
We are enduring, sustainable, bold.
Give us kindness; stop your hate
We persevere, with strengths untold.

I must survive, so understand.
Poverty may lure, discrimination as well.
Rural, urban, refugee, or displaced,
Our numbers grow, our challenges swell.

My memories are dear, the future uncertain,

Yet many reject me, judge me, too.
But married sisters, only a heartbeat
Makes me a widow, and not you!

Conclusion

In conclusion, several recurring themes emerged among the panelists of this UN CSW63 Parallel event, *Widowhood: What Happens to Me After They Take Everything?*, including the neglect of the issue of widowhood overall, the tragedy of the child widow, and economic opportunity and empowerment as the answer to the widows' vulnerability, hardship, and destitution.

Overall, widowhood has remained elusive to our social consciousness despite its massive magnitude. There are over 300 million women in the world who are widows; a number that jumps to 585 million when their children are included, comprising 10-12% of our total global population. Due to its many intersections, solving the issue of widowhood is absolutely necessary in the achievement of the SDGs, including SDG 1 Poverty Eradication, 2 Ending Food Insecurity, 3 Improving Health, 4 Improving Quality Education, 5 Ending Violence Against Women & Girls, 8 Providing Decent Work to All, 10 Ending Gender Inequality, 11 Inclusive Cities & Settlements, and 16 Strengthening Justice. The violence, shame, injustice and ostracization that widows face makes them the most vulnerable and marginalized demographic of women globally, yet we have failed to adequately protect and address their needs and rights. Thus, continued advocacy, outreach, grassroots and top-down approaches to the problem are urgently needed.

In areas of conflict, widowhood is seen in alarmingly high rates. Due to the tendency of men to participate in war more frequently than women, the majority of women inevitably become widows. However, societies with high rates of widows, like Syria where 80% of the female population is widowed, beg the question: Who are the youngest widows, and how can we help them? The act of child marriage, as Lord Ahmad stated, is always a violation of the bride's human rights. The child bride's youth prevents her from giving consent or endorsement of even her own marriage. Further, Hainsworth reminded us that on the day of her marriage, the child bride loses everything: her agency, educational opportunities, and future. Even more tragic is the case of the child *widow*, who is victimized by taboo and shame twice before adulthood. The stigma and shame of widowhood will inevitably follow her for the remainder her life, while most of the world stands by silently.

And yet, despite hardships, widows are resilient. Dianah Kamande, a widow herself, proved widows can find and use their voices as she called for other widows to follow her lead. Ibrahim-Leathers shared that through her decade-long commitment to serving widows, economic empowerment has had the most impactful results. Several of GFW's projects showed, after engaging in income-generating activities, widows reported higher frequencies and amounts of savings as well as improved social acceptance. Even domestic violence decreased as economic empowerment of the widows increased. The widows' small business ventures, which are often funded by a bank under their ownership, are a life changing, sustainable solution to the issue of widowhood.

The Parallel event, *Widowhood: What Happens to Me After They Take Everything?*, allowed a spotlight to shine on the issue of widowhood at the United Nation's 63rd Commission on the Status of Women. Common themes called attention to the magnitude of the issue, the vulnerability of the child widow, and the role of economic empowerment in assisting widows, all while requesting the issue of widowhood never be neglected again. Expert panelists Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (United Kingdom), Heather Ibrahim-Leathers of Global Fund for Widows (USA), Andrina Mchiela of Malawi Widows Association, Zarin Hainsworth of Widows Rights International (United Kingdom) and Dianah Kamande of Come Together Widows & Orphans Organization (Kenya) provided advice, moving personal experiences, and a firm call to Make Widows Matter.