



cfuw fcfdu

CSW68 DELEGATES' REPORT - 2024 -



11-22 March 2024



CSW68

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

WHAT IS THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN?



The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is “the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the **promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women**” (UN Women). Established in 1946, it is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Each year has a **priority theme** and a **review theme**. All the events and discussions by member states, agencies, and civil society (NGOs) revolved around these themes. The priority theme provided the focus for our organizational statement and parallel event. This year’s themes were:

PRIORITY THEME

Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by **addressing poverty** and **strengthening institutions** and **financing** with a gender perspective

REVIEW THEME

Social protection systems, access to **public services** and **sustainable infrastructure** for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (agreed conclusions of the sixty-third session)

CFUW WRITTEN STATEMENT

Ahead of CSW68, [CFUW submitted a Written Statement](#) on the priority theme. The statement called for six specific action points:

AS CHAMPIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY, WE CALL ON MEMBER STATES TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING CONCRETE ACTIONS:

1. Ensure publicly funded quality **primary education** for all



2. Accelerate actions to meet **Sustainable Development Goal 1** targets

3. Develop and maintain a system where innovations and **best teaching and learning practices** can be shared



4. Invest in evidence-informed, targeted strategies to dismantle the systemic barriers of **economic exclusion** experienced by those in equity-deserving communities

5. Invest in community-based, **women-led poverty eradication** initiatives



6. Invest in **reskilling and upskilling** of workers in industries significantly impacted by artificial intelligence technology

THE OPENING OF CSW68



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous delivers opening remarks at the opening of the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 11 March 2024, at UN headquarters. [Speech: 'We can and must choose to end poverty for women and girls' | UN Women](#)

Secretary-General António Guterres speaking at the Townhall Meeting with Civil Society on the Occasion of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

[Speech: 'The patriarchy may be pushing back, but so are we' | UN Women](#)



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

“

At our current rate, 340 million women and girls will still be living in extreme poverty by 2030. We cannot allow this to happen.

”



WHAT WAS NEW THIS YEAR? ...AND VERY SIGNIFICANT

CFUW's active participation in the negotiation process!

This year, we were invited to participate in the [Rapid Response Group](#), providing input to Canada's negotiating team. Civil society organizations do not directly participate in negotiating the Agreed Conclusions; it is the Member States that do. WAGE (Women and Gender Equality Canada, formerly Status of Women Canada) represented Canada.

For a description of the Agreed Conclusions process, see last year's [CSW67 Report, Vol. 1](#).

Thank you to everyone who provided input and to our National Advocacy and Policy Specialist, Kenzie Zimmer, for submitting CFUW's responses and for writing our statement on the Agreed Conclusions.

Barb DuMoulin, VP International Relations



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous delivers closing remarks to the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, UN headquarters, 27 March 2024.

Speech: Gender equality - just, prudent, and essential for everything we all aspire to | UN Women

[CSW68 AGREED CONCLUSIONS](#)

[CFUW STATEMENT ON THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS](#)

The Commission also adopted [a Resolution on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS](#).

CFUW PARALLEL SESSION



WOMEN RISING FROM POVERTY:

STRATEGIES, TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS, EMPOWERING INITIATIVES

— A UNCSW68 NGO CSW/NY PARALLEL EVENT —



**MESERET
HAILEYESUS**

Executive Director,
Canadian Center for
Women's Empowerment

— PRESENTING ON —

"Economic justice:
Navigating pathways
to women's economic
safety through
inclusive policy"



**YVONNE
JONES, MP**

Member of Parliament
for Labrador (NL)

— PRESENTING ON —

"Women rising from
poverty from a
'northern
perspective"



**HEIDI
YETMAN**

President, Canadian
Teachers' Federation

— PRESENTING ON —

"Using development
cooperation work to
improve access,
retention, and
educational
opportunities"

MARCH 12, 2024 ■ 10:30AM - 12:00PM ET ■ CCUN 10TH FLOOR

Having three perspectives meant a more nuanced, balanced session. It was outstanding and impactful; we received much positive feedback. Our ED, Jaime, estimated that about a hundred people could not enter the room. Several Canadian government representatives attended in support of Yvonne Jones, the MP for Labrador. Each presenter identified the problems but also identified solutions or pathways forward.





CSW planning committee: Dr. Linda Coles, Grace Hollett, Amy Linthorne (videographer), Barbara DuMoulin. Absent: Sandy Thomson. Speakers: Mesi Haileyesus, Yvonne Jones, Heidi Yetman.

Watch the recording [here!](#)

“ Planning a presentation is a lot of work. I want to thank everyone who made this such a success! *Barb DuMoulin* ”

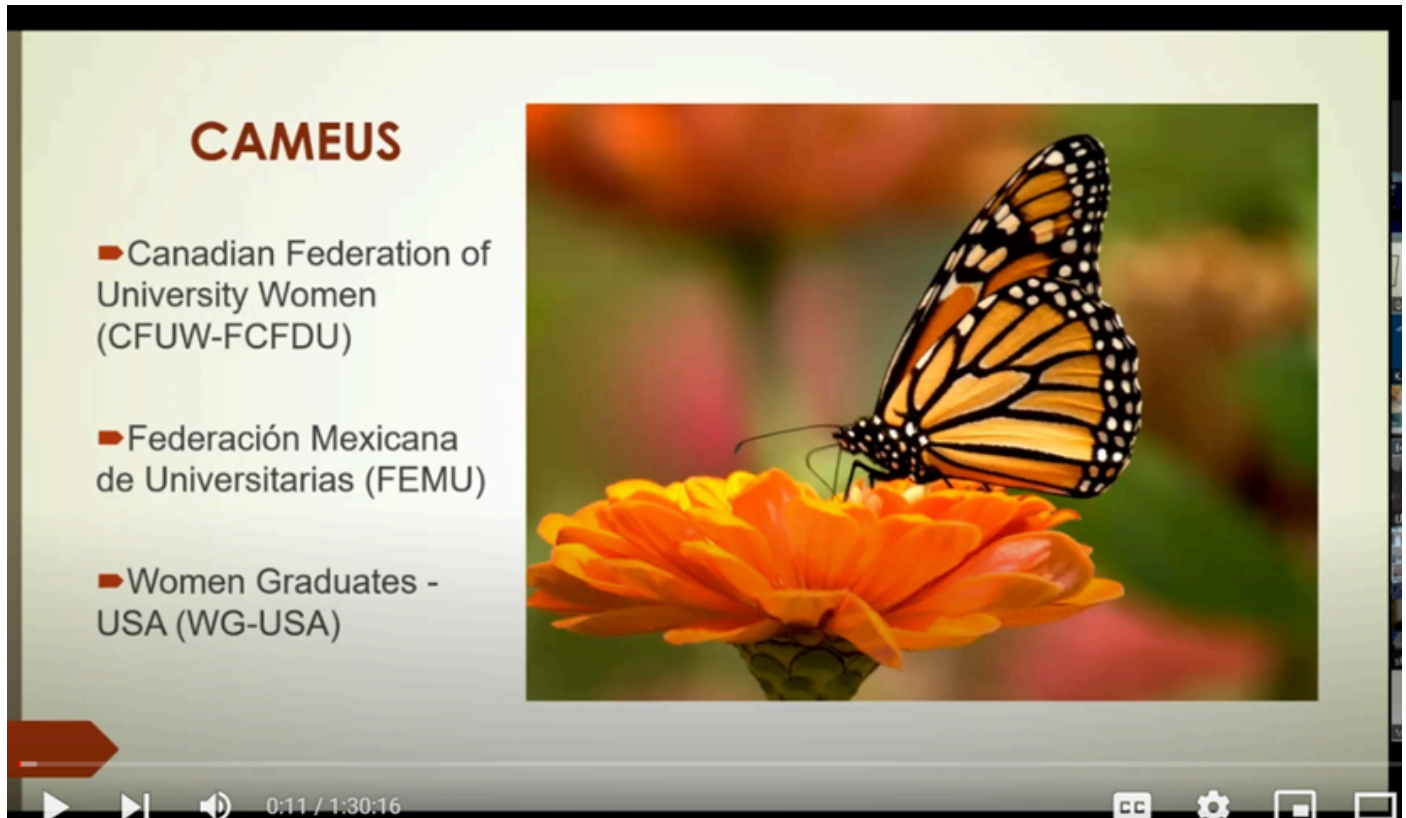


Our speakers, together with Canadian government representatives and Joy and Barb.

Parallel Event Documents:

- [Event Handout](#)
- [Theme Deep Dive Research](#)
- [Economic Case for Investing in Education](#)
- [Follow-up Report on Economic Abuse](#) report by UN Women Observer and CFUW UN Representative, Sandra Thomson.

CAMEUS VIRTUAL PARALLEL SESSION



“This session marked the culmination of much collaboration among the three federations comprising CAMEUS: Canada’s CFUW, Mexico’s FEMU and WG-USA. In addition to presenting a session that met the requirements of the CSW68 theme, we also had to ensure it supported the mission of CAMEUS. The CAMEUS group decided to continue our focus on refugee women who had successful stories to relate. The topic was **“Challenge to Empowerment: Experiences and Replicable Strategies of Refugee Women.”**”

Grace Hollett

Watch the recording [here!](#)

MEETINGS, DINNERS, AND RECEPTIONS



CANADIAN DELEGATION ORIENTATION MEETING

Each year, **Senator Marilou McPhedran** hosts an orientation for Canadian delegates. At this meeting, each person stands and identifies themselves and the organization they represent. It was so encouraging to see so many young people, and noteworthy that this room was too small. A healthy sign of Canadian participation in CSW.

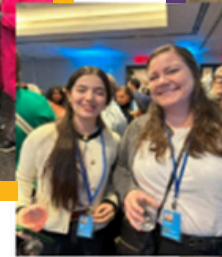


CFUW DELEGATE DINNER

After the meeting with Senator McPhedran, the CFUW delegates met for a very special dinner at our favourite Italian restaurant.

RECEPTION AT THE CANADIAN PERMANENT MISSION

It was a great networking opportunity for CFUW. Our ED, Jaime Beagan, and Deputy President, Linda Sestock, attended. The speakers were Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and Cassidy Caron, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and President of Métis National Council.

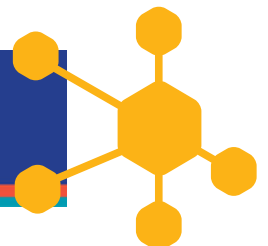


NETWORKING WITH OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

CSW is our principal opportunity to get together. We met with both International Alliance of Women (IAW) and Graduate Women International (GWI) and attended parallel sessions presented by both organizations.



Graduate Women International
Empowering women & girls through lifelong education



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

IAW EVENTS



Informal IAW reception: Barb and Linda with Mme. Diallo Hadja Ilyassou from Guinea, Africa (Linda got to use her French as she spoke no English).



IAW dinner: Joy and Barbara are in the middle. Upper left, back row is Alison Brown, IAW President.



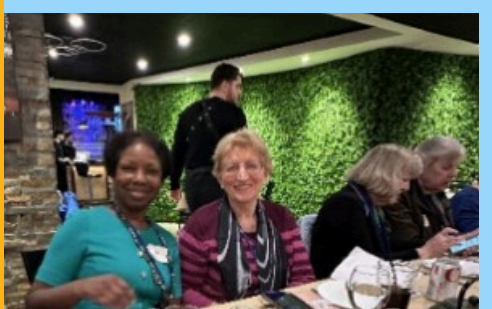
IAW presentation on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

GWI EVENTS



GWI hosted two breakfast meetings and one dinner.

Joy with Stacy Lara, GWI ED



The Presidents (below):

Jaya Dantas, AGW; Patrice Wellesley-Coles, GWI; Sally Chamberlain, WG-USA; Joy Hurst, CFUW; and Grace Hollett, past President of CFUW.



The WG-USA Lunch (above): The lunch was held after our very successful in-person parallel session. It was a lively affair with multiple tables. CFUW chose to “spread ourselves out” by sitting randomly rather than a group.

THE UN CONCERT



A Special Evening: Six of us attended the UN Concert, performed by the UNSRC Symphony Orchestra (musicians who work at the UN), in partnership with United Voices 4 Peace. The concert, entitled “Global Women in Music,” featured music composed by women and conducted by one of the composers.

THE CFUW DELEGATION



Sunday night Caucus meeting: We discussed what to expect, gave out CFUW scarves and business cards and got to know each other.

Left to right, back: Jaime Beagan, Barbara Gustafson, Lynn Shire, Elise Russo (dual member WG-USA & CFUW), Amy Linthorne, Wendy Taylor, Barbara DuMoulin, Meseret Haileyesus (our speaker)
Left to right, front: Linda Sestock, Valerie Campbell, Sandra Shaw, Joy Hurst, Grace Hollett
Absent: Sandra Thomson, Marcia Braundy, Ching Tien, Linda Coles

CFUW, an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) accredited organization since 1998, is entitled to bring up to 20 delegates. CSW68 was the first year the Executive Director attended. As the President and VP IR are stepping down after the AGM, Jaime needs to be familiar with CSW. We also included one of our speakers (Meseret Haileyesus) as a delegate. Unfortunately, some delegates were unable to attend but some still managed to participate virtually.

I wish to thank all the delegates, whose travel is self-funded, for taking the time to participate in CSW. Your interest, camaraderie and dedication were evident at every event.

Barb DuMoulin, VP IR

The first official day was cold! We are on the plaza before the world globe, entitled "Sphere within Sphere," donated by Italy in 1996.



Fun fact!
There were
10,600
registrants
for UNCSW68

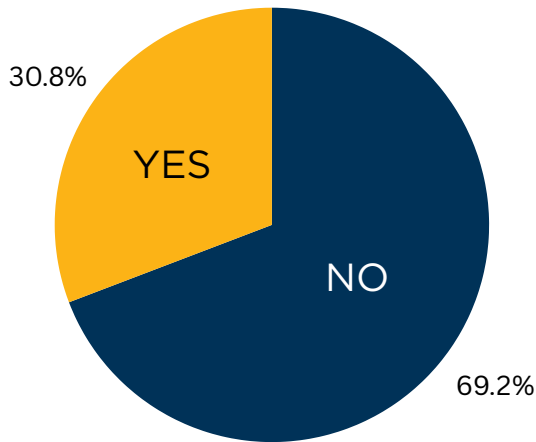


The First Timers with the President and VP IR

DELEGATES' REPORTS

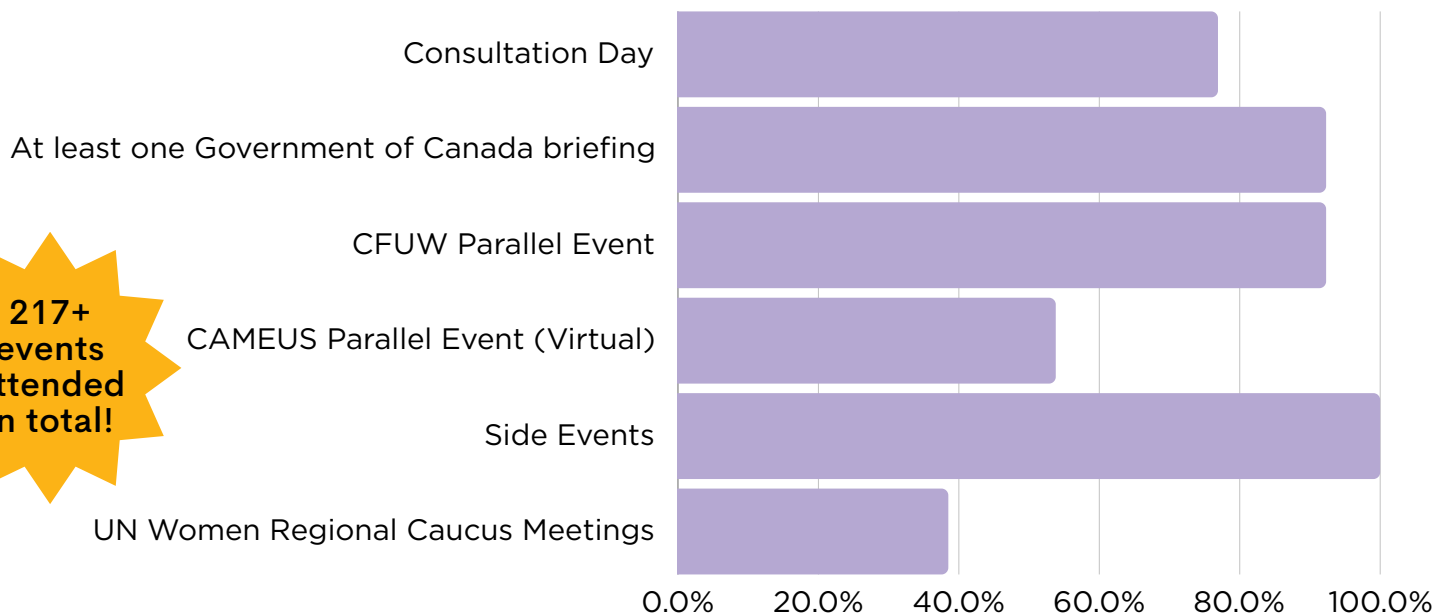
Responses and data from our post-CSW survey

Was this your first time attending UNCSW?



After the delegates were selected and approved by the Board, we met three times on Zoom before going to New York, and once there met both formally and informally. Wearing our CFUW scarves meant easily spotting each other while we were there. Completing the post-CSW survey was part of their commitment to attending.

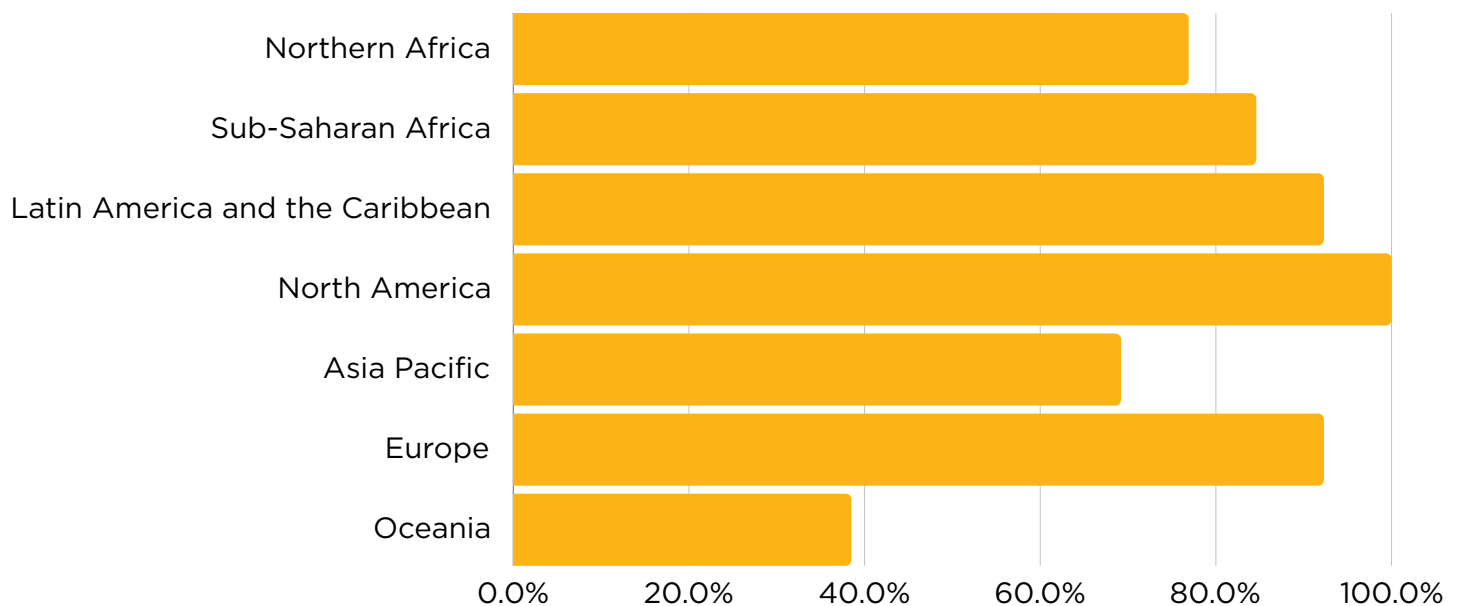
What events did our delegates attend?



**217+
events
attended
in total!**

- Consultation Day is the opening ceremony of the NGOCSW Forum.
- The Canadian briefings are daily reports on the negotiations for the agreed conclusions.
- CFUW holds two NGOCSW parallel sessions, one in person and the other virtual. The latter is with CAMEUS, our North American coalition of CFUW, FEMU (Mexico), and WG-USA.
- The Side Events are held at the UN complex; only ECOSOC delegates are admitted.
- Regional meetings are virtual.

Which country/region perspectives did you hear?



What important data did you learn?

1. It will cost an additional **\$360B/year** to achieve gender equality.
2. At the current rate, it will take **267 years** to achieve equality regarding women's economic empowerment and participation.
3. **\$6.4 trillion dollars** per year needs to go to developing countries to fulfill gender equality.
4. **1 in 10** women live in extreme poverty worldwide.
5. If current trends continue, by 2030, an estimated **8%** of the world's female population - **342.4 million** women and girls - will still be living on less than \$2.15/day.
6. Every dollar invested in ending child marriages returns **\$34** in economic benefits.
7. Failure to let girls finish their education costs **\$15-30 trillion** worldwide (WB).
8. Among children who receive minimal education, **90%** receive minimal education due to poverty.
9. Adolescent girls are **twice** as likely as boys to not be in education, employment, or training globally.
10. Globally, **100-122 million** girls are not in school, and **12 million** are married before adulthood.
11. **420 million** people could be lifted from poverty if all adults completed secondary school (UNESCO).
12. In **93** countries, paying women less for jobs of equal value remains legally acceptable.
13. According to the ILO, women and girls perform **12.5 billion** hours of unpaid domestic and care work every day, leaving them with fewer opportunities to enter the labour market and often exposed to GBV.

What important data did you learn? (cont.)

14. Investment in health in developing countries has an **8-time** return rate.
15. Up to **500 million** girls/women across the world are affected by period poverty.
16. Women in Nunavut are **13 times** more likely to suffer violence than the national average.
17. **1 out of 3** women have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual IPV.
18. In Uganda, **25%** of girls experience violence.
19. **95%** of women who experience domestic violence also experience financial or economic abuse.
20. There are over **230 million** survivors of FGM.
21. **90%** of victims of IPV in a financial literacy program run by NESS (YWCA) were able to leave due to the program.
22. In **125** countries surveyed, **85%** of women have witnessed violence against women online.
23. Indigenous persons are **ten** times more likely to be murdered than white persons.
24. **70%** of women in Ukraine are looking for work, and **3.5 million** people in Ukraine have been displaced.
25. In Cuba, **55%** of parliamentarians are women.
26. In 2023, countries with quotas elected **28.8%** women; those without quotas elected **23.2%** women. In 2023, **28.7%** of those elected in proportional representation or mixed electoral systems were women, but only **11.6%** of those elected in majoritarian or plurality electoral systems were women.
27. Women represent only **22%** of AI professionals.
28. Only **0.13%** of development money goes to women's organizations.
29. The steady increase of women in the labour market can account for **10-20%** of the Nordic region's GDP per capita growth in the past 40-50 years.



DELEGATES' INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES



AMY LINTHORNE, CHARLOTTETOWN

Memorable Quotes: “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.”

Outstanding Sessions: 1. “Eliminating Poverty: Structural Interventions through Education, Culture, and Science” - specifically the discussions on having a Gender Mainstreaming Unit within the government.
2. “Gender Responsive Budgeting” - and the implementation of Gender Monitoring Office for oversight in some countries.
3. “Driving Accountability and Leadership: The Global Platform for Gender Equality In and Through Education” - and the Global Accountability Dashboard

Key Takeaways: The majority of the current systems in place have been built by men, for men. To achieve gender equality, new systems must be built with a gendered/feminist perspective.

BARBARA DUMOULIN, SALT SPRING ISLAND; CANADA GWI

Memorable Quotes: “Empowering women is not just the right thing to do, it is the SMART THING to do.”

Outstanding Sessions: 1. CFUW and CAMEUS sessions
2. Equal Voice and Power for a Peaceful World: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward put on by the Inter-Parliamentary Union
3. A Gender Equal Future for Financial Freedom, put on by the Nordic Council of Ministers - to me they are always ahead of the game- solid, practical information and practices.

Key Takeaways: There are no easy solutions. We need to push-back the push-back which is the same message we had last year only this time through the lens of poverty. Women’s rights are being rolled back in many countries - why are men afraid? Education is key to lifting women and girls out of poverty and in reducing child marriages. More women need to be involved in AI or tech bias will not change. Climate change and war have more economic impact on women than men.



JOY HURST, EDMONTON

Memorable Quotes: "No democracy without equality!"

Outstanding Sessions: 1. CFUW's session,
2. Women Under Foreign Occupation,
3. Why Innovation matters-the CEDAW challenge for Future Generations.

Key Takeaways: Business as usual just will not work. The world has changed. The UN and UN Women has changed. To achieve the goals of equality and equity we must change our tactics now, it can't wait.



LINDA COLES, ST. JOHN'S

Memorable Quotes: "Set aside policy reports and get creative to change things that are socially embedded."

Outstanding Sessions: 1. CFUW Parallel session, Women Rising out of Poverty.
2. Dr. Andres Morales, Yucatan peninsula and promoting textile arts as a factor in the economy.
3. Generation Equality Report 2023: Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights.
4. Italy Financing the elimination of FGM; Very powerful testament from a survivor of FGM.

Key Takeaways: There are many excellent strategic plans, initiatives, and special programs, from countries worldwide. Acting and implementing ideas and programs that are successful is key. Personally, if it's possible, I would be very interested in conducting research on teachers' mental health, in the Canadian Context, using phenomenological methodology aka researching the 'lived experience' (Max Van Manen) of teachers.





BARBARA GUSTAFSON, PRINCE ALBERT

Memorable Quotes: “Women are crushed at the bottom of the economic heap.”

Outstanding Sessions: 1. What Adolescent Girls Want - side event with excellent speakers, looking at both the potential and problems facing girls on a global level. More practical and positive than many other side events that had more of a political tone.

2. The Role of the Media in Preventing Gender-Based Violence - parallel event on reporting and raising awareness of gender-based violence. Gave perspectives of journalists in Europe and North America. Sadly, still fighting against longtime stereotypes regarding women’s roles that make violence societally accepted, and stereotypes for female journalists that allow physical and psychological violence against them to persist.

Key Takeaways: Speaking in a very general sense, attending UNCSW takes one out of the personal/local perspective toward a global perspective on women’s issues. It reinforced both recognition and gratitude for Canadian laws and organizations, but also a renewed sense that we have further to go in our own country. It also made me aware of the magnitude of work needed to ensure women in other countries have similar rights and opportunities.

VALERIE CAMPBELL, CHARLOTTETOWN

Memorable Quotes: “If you educate a boy, you educate a person. If you educate a girl, you educate a nation.”

Outstanding Sessions: 1. Global cooperation to tackle period poverty (Parallel Event);

2. True crime - forced marriage in the US (Parallel Event)

Key Takeaways: Poverty is the underlying cause of many of the challenges women face - it must be addressed. There are so many issues, it is hard to know where to start. My plan is to work with my club to become more active in the community.



LINDA SESTOCK, MONTREAL LAKESHORE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB

Memorable Quotes: "Power is never given; power must be taken."

Outstanding Sessions: 1. The Townhall was a highlight.
2. Senegal permanent mission to UN: Achieving Women's Economic Innovative Models to addressing Unpaid care work.
3. CFUW event.

Key Takeaways: We are very lucky people. There is so much more to do. Small efforts can have large ripple effects. People know what they need - they just need support. People can change and governments can change (i.e. better conditions for women, etc.) when they see the value of the work women do, both paid and unpaid. It was wonderful to be able to speak French to women from French speaking African countries - to see their eyes light up was a plus for me.



LYNN SHIRE, MILTON AND DISTRICT

Memorable Quotes: "Power is never given. Power must be taken."

Outstanding Sessions: 1. CFUW's event.
2. The S-G address.
3. Ukraine's post-war recovery.

Key Takeaways: It is really apparent that poverty is both a result of and a cause of gender-based discrimination. I'd like to investigate Gender Responsive Budgeting in Canadian context, especially within the jurisdictions in which I live.





GRACE HOLLETT, ST. JOHN'S; CANADA GWI

Memorable Quotes: “Do not do the ordinary; I raised you to be extra-ordinary.”

Outstanding Sessions: 1. True Crime: Forced Marriage in the U.S.: Marriage under age 18 is considered forced. Forced marriage is considered a crime only in 9 states of USA. Child marriage is considered legal though. This session was very revealing about the lives of young girls/women forced to marry against their will and the courage it took for them to break away. The Take Aways were “empower yourself, educate yourself, tell others. It reminds

us to check Canada for child/forced marriage, which can occur without the community being aware, or be prompted to investigate.

2. The Face of Poverty: The presentations included the following points: The domestic sector is comprised mainly of women and in many countries labour laws are not applied. This Feminization of Poverty often contains invisible harm to women where they may suffer from racism, economic violence, and having no legal status. In addition to financial poverty there is a poverty of exclusion, educational poverty etc. Two conclusions from the presentation were: The world is not made up of old or young but of old and young. We must agree that older persons be able to live in dignity and a woman should not be confined to or by her career choice or her religion.

Key Takeaways: 1. Universal challenges include poverty, safety, child and forced marriage, teenage pregnancy, gender norms favouring males, GBV, housing, health and food insecurity, climate change, political and financial inequalities, children out of school. Nevertheless, numerous organizations are working to meet those challenges. Need to become more aware of those challenges and where CFUW can make a difference locally, nationally, or internationally.

2. Advice from orientation session with Vicki Smallman and Senator Marilou McPhedran: Make yourself indispensable to Govt. negotiators; “help me help you” Find your people; do not assume others share your values. Be safe and leave safe. Do not let the radical right intimidate you. Find allies in different spaces and follow up.

3. North America needs to become more supportive of migrants, especially in assessing work credentials so that once here they may get a shorter route to employment for which they are qualified.



SANDRA SHAW, PERTH AND DISTRICT

Memorable Quotes: "I am not poor, I am impoverished."

Outstanding Sessions: 1. Rising from Poverty (CFUW) - stressed importance of programs to help women lift themselves out of poverty; emphasised need for awareness/education programs; women's poorer levels of education in the Canadian North, solutions must be designed and driven by the North. 2. GBV - Lessons Learned from YWCA NESS (National Emergency Survivor Support) Fund - because women need money they are staying longer in abusive relationships and longer in shelters; latter means fewer spaces for new women coming in; NESS is a low barrier financing system; net positive outcomes; need trauma informed and culturally sensitive support; poverty has a cognitive impact; Rise Up toolkit - feminine funding training.

3. Is Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence Real? Legal reform required; shift onus on women to companies that put out the platforms; need more women involved in tech; need more data - you can't fix what you don't understand; concern for growing online/offline intersection; affects non binary and trans groups; not clear what survivors need; how do you measure impact of TFGBV versus long term TFGBV; who/what is accountable; digital literacy a key to solving problem.

Key Takeaways: Youth needs to be brought into conversations - mentor them and give them responsibilities (look at a youth sector for CFUW; tie to advocacy) GBV in technology spaces is real; call it out; put together speakers programmes to encourage young women into STEM.

MARCIA BRAUNDY, NELSON AND DISTRICT

Memorable Quotes: TBA

Outstanding Sessions: Secretary General's Town Hall with NGOs; Equal participation and leadership for a more peaceful world: Lessons learned and the way forward (CSW68 Side Event): "Launching of the First Global Network of Women of Film and Audiovisual Media" (March 18th).

Key Takeaways: TBA





SANDRA THOMSON, KINCARDINE

Memorable Quotes: "Systems are designed to control; how do we dismantle the systems and what are we willing to give up?"

Outstanding Sessions: 1. Nordic Council of Ministers: Ending GBV & Economic Abuse; Unlocking the Power of Social Protection for Women and Girls.

2. Financing for Gender Equality Public & Private Commitments.

Key Takeaways: I am very interested in pursuing the opportunities to reduce the economic abuse experienced by women, i.e. what the financial institutions can do to create affordable and confidential services to women in abusive situations.

WENDY TAYLOR, ORILLIA

Memorable Quotes: "Invest in a girl, you invest in her community, her life, her country."

Outstanding Sessions: 1. What Adolescent Girls Want.
2. CFUW session, MP of Northern Affairs.

Key Takeaways: I have a better understanding of economics and how policies work. Better understanding of the SDG's. I understand that we have the data, the evidence and we just need action.





Would you recommend the experience to others?

100% YES



CSW69: A UNIQUE CSW TO COME

MARCH 10-21, 2025

BEIJING+30

“The main focus of the sixty-ninth session will be on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) and the outcomes of the [23rd Special Session of the General Assembly](#).

The review will include an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

UNWomen

See you next year!

