

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SPECIAL EDITION

DECEMBER 2023



2022-2024 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

- Barbara DuMoulin, VP International Relations
- Joy Hurst, President
- Jaime Beagan, ED, non-voting
- Grace Hollett, chair for CAMEUS
- Dr. Linda Coles, CCUNESCO Representative
- Amy Linthorne
- Phyllis Scott
- Trish McCracken
- Sandra Thomson, consultant, UN Women Agency observer
- Shelagh Stevens, consultant



“My thanks to everyone who has contributed to the work of CFUW International Relations and to those who contributed to this report. Thank you also to the National Office staff for their ongoing commitment and support.”

Barbara DuMoulin, VP International Relations

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP)



At the end of August CFUW applied for observer status at COP.

What is COP? Why is it important?

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an annual international high-level climate summit. At COP, world leaders gather to work on solutions to tackle climate change. There are now 198 Parties (197 countries plus the European Union) to the Convention making it one of the largest international meetings in the world.

In CFUW who monitors COP? The Advocacy sub-committee on Environment & Climate Change has monitored COP for several years. Since COP is an international summit, it is monitored by both Advocacy as well as International Relations. There is a member of the IR committee on the Environment & Climate Change sub-committee.

Why has CFUW applied to be observers? What does it mean to be an observer?

Being observers will enable CFUW to become active observers at COP rather than being passively reliant on reports. Since CFUW has several environment and climate change adopted resolutions, COP sets the stage for Canadian and international policy.

When will we get observer status? We may not know until after COP29 if our application is successful (it is a slow vetting process).

What is the Paris Agreement? The Paris Agreement is an international treaty adopted in 2015 at COP21. The parties agreed to work toward limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels by 2050.

Where is this year's COP 28 being held? COP28 takes place from Nov. 30 to Dec. 12 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Where can I find out more about what happens at COP28? Stay tuned. The Environment & Climate Change subcommittee will provide a report in January.



UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

We launched our SDG informational campaign in September in connection with the SDG high-level summit held in New York.

What are the SDGs?

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth.” – <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Why should we be aware of them?

There are many reasons, but one for us to keep in mind as a civil society (an NGO) is that all CFUW advocacy is directly related to the SDGs.

What is the current state of progress? Will we achieve the goals by 2030?
[Read the 2023 report](#)



What are the 17 SDGs?



The SDG Summit – revitalizing the SDGs!

SDG summits take place every four years. This year's summit took place in New York on September 18-19. It was the "centerpiece" of the High-level week of the General Assembly.

What happened at the summit?

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the full report of the Summit by Sandra Thomson, CFUW UN representative. Of note is the Canadian reports.

For the Canadian perspective:

[National Statement at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, United Nations, New York, New York, July 17, 2023 - Canada.ca](#)

[Canada's 2023 Voluntary National Review – A Continued Journey for Implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals - Canada.ca](#)

[List of projects funded by the Sustainable Development Goals Funding Program - Canada.ca](#)

Unite To Act Campaign



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



What is CFUW uniting to act for?

SDG 4 "Quality Education" – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all.

This campaign is to unite for global mobilization on the United Nations Sustainable Development goals accelerating impact by organizational and individual action. Commitments to action are being captured on a global digital map. <https://act4sdgs.org/global-map/>

Although we have always focused on education across the continuum from early learning to the graduate level and lifelong learning, our focus for this campaign is:

SDG 4, Target 4.4 - Increase the number of people with relevant skills for financial success.

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

<https://en.unesco.org/education2030-sdg4/targets>

Women have historically made up a significant portion of employees in low or semi-skilled, low-paying industries, particularly the service sector. These jobs are rapidly disappearing with automation and the rise in self-service as opposed to full service (e.g., self-checkouts, online banking vs. in-branch services). The need for retraining or training for the future (digital skills) is critical.

Target 4.4 aligns with the UN Thematic Action Tracks #2 and #4 for Education.

<https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit/action-tracks>

Action Track 2: Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development.

Action Track 4: Digital learning and transformation.

Who is overseeing this at CFUW?

The VP of Education, Kathy Wosnick and her education committee.

"She Belongs in School" – CFUW's ISP project for 2023-24



Each year CFUW recommends an International Service Project for Club support. For 2023-2024, the project is "She Belongs in School." This project will bring High School Education to vulnerable girls in Mozambique.

"She Belongs in School" is a 60 Million Girls Foundation Organization project. It involves a mobile learning lab which brings the school to students' homes. The Mobile Learning Lab is solar-powered, self-contained, and consists of a server, RACHEL (Remote Area Community Hot Spot for Education and Learning), several tablets or other devices for users and a solar panel. Educational resources can be uploaded to RACHEL to allow users to access through a Wi-Fi connection, without internet connectivity. For a country such as Mozambique, with little infrastructure in remote areas, it is significant that the lab is self-powered and self-contained. The Mobile Learning Lab project can be easily replicated. Each lab costs approximately \$5000.

She Belongs in School – Supporting Access to Secondary Education (SBIS-SASE) is a part of Save the Children's much larger project, funded by Global Affairs Canada (2021-2026).

CFUW's contribution to the "She Belongs in School" project will focus on young pregnant mothers and girls who have experienced child, early and forced marriage and are approximately 16-19 years of age. The "She Belongs in School" project aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which states, "to ensure access to quality education for all, on an equal footing, and promote lifelong learning opportunities."

Club or individual members can donate towards the cost of the Mobile Learning Labs. Any donations must be made directly to the organization "60 Million Girls" by going to <https://60millionsdefilles.org/>. This site provides instructions for donating online or sending a cheque. Please add CFUW in the note section. Personal tax receipts are issued automatically for online donations. If donating by cheque a tax receipt will be mailed to you.



The president of the 60 Million Girls Foundation, Wanda Bedard, spoke to members of UWC Vancouver about "She Belongs in School" at a luncheon at Hycroft on September 19th.

On September 26th CFUW hosted a webinar with the 60 million Girls president, Wanda Bedard, and her associates in which they described the project and the remote server "Rachel" to the attendees. the recording will be available in the January 2024 Club Action newsletter.

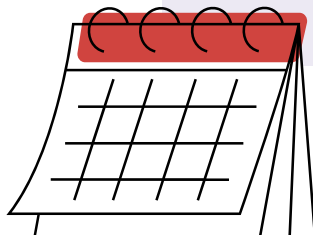


International Days Highlighted this Fall



October 11th: International Day of the Girl Child

October 17th: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty



CFUW AT THE UNCSW68

March 11-22, 2024



The most important event on the IR calendar! Work starts with the Written statement submitted early in October.

Our Written statement - My thanks to everyone involved in researching, writing, formatting, and submitting the final draft. It was a truly collaborative effort!



The themes for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW/68) are:

- **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)

Education is key to lifting women and girls out of poverty and paving the way to gender equality! Click [HERE](#) to read CFUW's written statement.

DELEGATES TO THE UN CSW68



Participating in UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the primary opportunity for CFUW to contribute to global dialogue regarding the status of women within the United Nations framework. It also provides a platform for meeting with our international partners and an opportunity to influence domestic policy as Federal Ministers attend the session. CFUW has special ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) status, as such we are entitled have 20 delegates attend CSW.



CFUW at the CSW in New York

CFUW –20 delegates

Present a Parallel Session

Attend:

- Governmental Sessions at the UN
- NGO parallel sessions
- Regional briefings
- Canadian Briefings
 - Global Affairs Canada (GAC),
 - Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE)
 - Reception with Canada's Ambassador at the Permanent Mission

Interact and support other Civil Society Organizations

Write a CSW follow-up report for CFUW members

Applications opened in October and closed at the end of November. If you did not apply you still can participate in all virtual parallel events as well as watch sessions that are live-streamed or recorded to UN Web TV. Information on how to apply to the UN NGO/NY forum for parallel events will be provided in the Club Action News closer to CSW.



GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

CFUW is the largest NFA or National Affiliate of Graduate Women International (GWI). Twice a year we publish GWI e-blasts of particular interest to our GWI-supporting clubs.

This year we focused on introducing the CFUW members who are on GWI committees. Each provided an update on what their committee was doing:

CFUW GWI E-Blast - October 11th

CFUW GWI E-Blast - Reports

On November 7th we held a **CFUW Townhall with GWI Supporting Clubs to discuss the GWI dues**. Susan Lane, CFUW VP Finance and GWI Assistant Treasurer reviewed the dues and the need for a top-up resulting from the exchange rate. For a full explanation please see the **PowerPoint**.

On November 1, a webinar on **Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation** was cohosted by the CFUW E-Club and the University Women's Club of Vancouver. GWI hosted it on their Zoom platform. If you missed this event the recording is on GWI's Vimeo account: <https://vimeo.com/886976663>



CAMEUS



CAMEUS Members from CFUW, WG-USA and Mexico's FEMU are continuing to collaborate on common issues of concern, primarily those related to education and to migrants as per our MOU signed March 2023. This fall, we have been administering a telephone questionnaire to individual members of our three organizations and another to migrant-serving organizations in our three countries. The data we collect on migrants' experiences with education, violence, and poverty as they move from their original locations to settlement in Mexico, USA or Canada will help CAMEUS plan its future directions e.g., on research and seminars/webinars.

Many CAMEUS members attend the first week of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at New York, but we offer our Parallel Session virtually during the second week of CSW. The following draft title and description is being sent by WG-USA to register our application with CSW. This year's lead for CSW is WG-USA with specific tasks being shared e.g. all are looking for panelists and the session will originate from CFUW. The draft title and description below may be modified somewhat as planning continues.

Draft Title: Moving from Poverty to Empowerment: Experiences and Replicable Strategies of three refugee women. Members are contacting partners and prospective panelists.

Draft Description: Learn about the experiences of refugee women whose successful initiatives in their supportive communities propelled them from poverty to Empowerment and toward gender equality.

In the meantime, CAMEUS is investigating the possibility of offering a Side Session in future years and will explore this in person at CSW68.

An opportunity for in-person contact was presented by WG-USA when a member of FEMU and four members from CFUW attended WG-USA's AGM and Conference of October 20-22 at Chicago. They were Barbara Dumoulin, Phyllis Scott, Grace Hollett and presenter Hally Siddons. (See the report in the IR Special Edition for details.)

CAMEUS continues to circulate information about migrants to its members, is alert to new related legislation in our three countries, explores offering future Side Sessions at CSW, and works together in cooperation and friendship to promote equity, human rights, social and economic justice.

Submitted by Grace Hollet, chair CFUW – CAMEUS



Four members of CFUW attended the WG-USA AGM at their invitation. This was a self-funded trip. Barbara DuMoulin, Phyllis Scott, Hally Siddens, and Grace Hollett attended the AGM and Conference of Women Graduates USA (WG-USA) in Chicago Oct. 20-22, 2023, their 15th anniversary with the theme "Connection 2023: Celebrating 15 years of Education, Advocacy and Friendship".

WG-USA was formed in 2008. It is much smaller than CFUW with less than 200 members but extremely active in advocacy for women's education. Members are from all over the USA and regular meetings are virtual. Their President is Sally Chamberlain. For full details please read Grace Hollett's report, [CLICK HERE](#)

CFUW member, Hally Siddons, a speaker at WG-USA AGM

Hally Siddons, University Women Helping Afghan Women (UWHAW) CFUW-Ottawa, was invited to speak at the Women Graduates -USA AGM in Chicago on October 21 to share an update on the situation for women and girls in Afghanistan, and was joined by Marzia Khalil, an Afghan scholar of environmental engineering, currently undertaking her fellowship appointment at the University of California who told her own remarkable story. WG-USA has been interested in the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan for some time and in possibly starting a pilot programme of their own to help them with their education. Where could they start? What could they do? How could UWHAW give them ideas? To begin they were very interested in learning more about UWHAW's founding, our goals, and what we have done before and after the Taliban closure of universities to women in December 2022.

[Click here to view the PowerPoint](#)



***Support the Right to Learn
We Can: We Must***

METROPOLIS INSTITUTE IDENTITIES SUMMIT

Calgary, November 2023

“Migrating Identities – Conversations on Settlement and Integration in Diverse Communities Across Canada”

Migration is an important issue for us and is the primary focus of our work in CAMEUS. My thanks to the president of CFUW Calgary, Susan Miller, who stepped in to take my place when I was unable to attend.

These are her key takeaways of the event:

“... the conference pinpointed several main barriers to the integration of immigrants into Canadian society.

- 1.systemic, entrenched and sometimes unconscious racism, discrimination, and bias.
- 2.byzantine labyrinth of provincial policies for foreign credentials recognition, and for licensing to practice regulated professions.
- 3.lack of sufficient infrastructure to cope with numbers of immigrants, refugees and temporary foreign workers arriving in the country, resulting in competition with our current population for access to healthcare, affordable housing, etc. – and leading to an increasing desire among Canadians to reduce or stop immigration.
- 4.insufficient data on many levels – leading to gaps in services for immigrants, and a mismatch between skills needed by Canadian employers and skills possessed by immigrants.”

Susan's recommendations on what CFUW could do:

1. We are already advocates for affordable, quality housing, daycare and public transportation – we need to continue to push these issues at all levels of government because all levels will need to co-operate to get anything done about them in the time frame that our immigration targets demand.
2. We can advocate for streamlined processes of foreign credentials recognition and licensing of internationally educated professionals in the regulated professions, and for reduced fees for these processes. We can advocate for consistent standards across the country and for labour mobility across provincial boundaries.
3. We can advocate for the collection and analysis of race-based, disaggregated data at all levels of government in the health care, mental health, and justice departments; and race-based, disaggregated data about labour market participation and civic engagement.
4. As individual clubs and members, we can participate in local anti-racism programs; we can volunteer at or donate to local immigrant service providers; we can support immigrant-run businesses. Much of this is being done by many clubs already.”

For more information, [read her in-depth report](#)

December 18th: International Migrants Day

What is the theme for 2023? "Honoring the Contributions of the Migrants and Respecting Their Rights"

Why is this day significant? On December 18, 1990, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

How many migrants are there globally? - nearly 280 million, with one in ten under the age of fifteen.

For more information go to: <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/international-migrants>



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN (IAW)

"Founded in 1904 and based in Geneva, the International Alliance of Women (IAW) is an international NGO comprising 44 member organizations involved in the promotion of the human rights of women and girls globally. The IAW has general consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and is accredited to many specialized UN agencies, has participatory status with the Council of Europe and is represented at the Arab League, the African Union, and other international organizations."
<https://www.womenalliance.org/>



CFUW is a member of IAW and submits a yearly report to them as well as updates for their newsletter. We recently reported on success in childcare, our UNITE to Act campaign for education SDG 4.4 and our ISP project. As a member of CFUW you can log in to their website and sign up for their newsletters and documents.

The **IAW 2023 Annual Special Edition International Women's News report** is posted on their website. It is lengthy but provides an in-depth study of what they have undertaken since last November's IAW Congress (AGM). The 80-page report contains updates from their crucial personnel (some in both English and French) and their national affiliates. If you have wondered what IAW does and why we belong to it, this report is well worth perusing. CFUW's report can be found on pages 60-61.

Of special interest is their Action Program 2022-2025:

<https://www.womenalliance.org/about-iaw/action-programme/>

IAW has commissions on Climate Change, the Digital Divide, Disability rights, Education, Human rights, Migration and Peace and more.

CFUW'S PLEDGE FOR THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS' 75TH ANNIVERSARY



"CFUW pledges to advocate for the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment to be enshrined in the Canadian Bill of Rights, and to educate Canadians on the importance of this right."

In commemoration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' 75th anniversary, UN Human Rights called upon member states and civil society organizations to **make pledges** to act on specific human rights issues. CFUW's pledge works towards the Resolution "A Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment is a Human Right" passed by CFUW in 2022. Read our full pledge **here**.



CALL TO ACTION

BILL C-219: AN ACT TO ENACT THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS AND TO MAKE RELATED AMENDMENTS TO OTHER ACTS

The Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights would provide the following rights:

- the right to a **healthy and ecologically balanced environment**;
- the right to reasonable, timely, and affordable **access to information** regarding the environment;
- the right to effective, informed, and timely **public participation in decision-making** regarding the environment;
- the right to bring a matter regarding the protection of the environment before **courts or tribunals**;
- the right to **request a review** of any Act of Parliament respecting the environment, any instrument made under such an Act or any environmental policy of the Government of Canada.



Bill C-219 aims to enshrine the right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment in the Canadian Bill of Rights, while also establishing accountability mechanisms. CFUW called upon Clubs to engage with their local MPs in support of Bill C-219 by using template letter for Club Presidents to send click [HERE](#). Individuals were asked to send a letter to MPs by using the [David Suzuki Foundation's form](#).

For more information about Bill C-219, please read this [brief](#).

Our thanks to our National Advocacy and Policy Specialist Kenzie Zimmer for this important work.