



CSW COMMUNICATIONS

SUMMARY OF GWI'S NATIONAL FEDERATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS THE CONTRIBUTIONS

Graduate Women International (GWI) has opened a very important discussion on the GWI Discussion Network as an opportunity to submit communications to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in order to help identify emerging trends and patterns of injustice and discriminatory practices against women. From this discussion were raised several issues impacting women in different parts of the world. One of the main concerns raised arose from the current pandemic situation, putting women across the world at risk of seeing their fundamental rights being violated.

The Indian Federation of University Women's Association (IFUWA) released a communication to voice out the rising cases of gender-based violence (GBV) in India due to lockdown measures across the country. Their communication provided alarming numbers – the country has recorded a 89% increase in domestic violence since the beginning of the pandemic. GWI joins the IFUWA in demanding more victim-centred policies to address GBV in India, and not only a focus on punishing the perpetrators. Victims' voices should be listened to, and they should be provided with effective support, giving the courage to other victims to reach out without fear of being further harassed if they file a complaint.

The COVID-19 crisis and lockdown measures have also resulted in girls being driven away from schools. The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Ottawa and its group University Women Helping Afghan Women expresses concern over the unknown consequences of the pandemic crisis on girls' fundamental right to education in Afghanistan. In the country, increased poverty puts girls are at risk of never going back to school and being forced into early marriage instead. Discrimination and systemic unjust practices in Afghanistan have also been pointed out by CFUW Ottawa regarding the peace process to date. Women have not been included enough in intra-Afghan negotiations yet, and their participation on both sides (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban) is a necessity to build a strong peace agreement, considering issues that distinctly affect women, and strengthening their constitutional rights. GWI and CFUW Ottawa insist on the urgent need for the Afghanistan authorities to ensure that women and girls are equally included in all policies and decisions made, in order to achieve a durable peace and ensure women and girls' rights, particularly their right to education.

The discussion also raised the issue of grave violations of human rights inflicted on vulnerable groups of women in Spain and in Canada. The Federación Argentina de Mujeres Universitarias (FAMU) alerts on the issue of sex slavery in Spain, where women originating from Eastern European countries, Spanish America or other poverty-stricken countries are held against their will and forced to prostitute in places, which look like regular bars on Spanish roads, especially in the Southern part of the country. Women are lured out of their countries with decent jobs promises but once in Spain, their passports are taken away and used as a means to blackmail them into repaying their "debt". GWI joins the FAMU in condemning this blatant violation of human rights and raising awareness of a needed answer from the Spanish government.

Finally, the CFUW-Ottawa brings to light the ongoing National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, which two-volume report calls for transformative



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Empowering women & girls through lifelong education

legal and social changes to solve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country. The report highlights the multigenerational and intergenerational trauma and marginalisation faced by Indigenous peoples and especially by women, who are in prey to systemic violence. GWI and CFUW-Ottawa wish to raise awareness of this specific issue and join the calls for justice directed at governments, institutions and civil society in Canada.

GWI thanks its National Federations and Associations (NFAs) for their precious contributions. Communications collected should be submitted by GWI to the CSW.