



CSW 65

Women's Full and Effective Participation and
Decision-Making in Public Life

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN 65
Summary Report

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Commission on the Status of Women 65th Session

15-26 March 2021

Virtual Participation

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. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Priority Theme

"Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls". The session will also review the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session, *"Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development"*.

NGOs that are accredited to and in good standing with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) were permitted to designate representatives to attend the annual sessions of the CSW. GWI members in good standing were invited to register CSW65.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place virtually/online (including the general discussion, ministerial round tables and interactive events). Negotiations of Agreed Conclusions would likewise take place virtually. This format took into account the constraints and opportunities as they might present themselves in the changing and evolving environment of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related safety and health guidelines implemented at the United Nations Headquarters. All side events and parallel events took place fully virtually.

Agreed Conclusions

The outcome of the Commission's consideration of the priority theme during its 65th session takes the form of agreed conclusions, to be negotiated by all Member States. The Commission on the

Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on “Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” on 26 March 2021.

The CSW65 agreed conclusions is now available on the CSW65 website:
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw65-2021>

Translations in the official United Nations languages will be added as they become available.

Foreward

In his opening statement to Commission, Ambassador Mher Margaryan stated that CSW 64 in 2020 was the first intergovernmental body to be affected by COVID-19. The pandemic continues to impose limitations.

Regarding the 2021 CSW 65 theme, the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and attaining the 2030 Agenda:

- Women are still underrepresented in all aspects of decision-making.
- Violence Against Women is also pervasive for women in public life.
- Women and girls are disproportionately affected by inequality including access to essential services.

The Commission has a responsibility that “no one gets left behind” and that we must” build back better”. All stakeholders need to unite to take the bold step to ensure gender equality and make a meaningful outcome for women and girls for now and for the generations to come.

The UN Secretary General, Antonia Guterres pointed out that CSW meets for the second time in the context of a global pandemic that is having a devastating effect on women and girls. Women are 24% more like to lose their jobs with an expected income drop of 50%. The pandemic has spread the parallel pandemic of violence against women from sexual abuse to child marriage. The damage is ‘unaccountable’ and has highlighted the great power of women’s leadership, leadership that has proven to be more effective in those countries where women are heads of state. Since women only account for one quarter of parliamentary elected leaders, it will take another 130 years to correct this imbalance. With the masculine bias currently in place, we need to reshuffle the deck and increase the number of women in senior leadership positions, also ensuring women’s full participation in the peacekeeping process, mediation and peace building.

What we need is not more training for women, but training for those in power on how to build inclusive systems. The Pandemic is the time for a reset.

Thus the stage was set for the work of the Commission for 2021.

2 Ways GWI Members can Attend CSW 65

1. Via the United Nations and UN Women

Open to UN Member States and ECOSOC Status NGOs (including GWI INDICO Registered Representatives)

- a. Official UN CSW 65 Events
 - ❖ Opening and Closing Ceremonies
 - ❖ Panel Discussions and Round Tables
 - ❖ Side Events
 - ❖ Official Meetings
 - ❖ Gender Equality Forum
- b. CSW Outcomes: Member State Agreed Conclusions

Virtual: webtv.un.org

GWI Participation

- ❖ Written Statement
- ❖ Agreed Conclusions Zero Draft Submissions
- ❖ Almost 70 GWI Representatives



2. Via the NGO CSW CSW 65 Forum

Open to everyone (Civil Society).

- Parallel Events
- Consultation Day
- Exhibit Hall
- Conversation Circles
- Regional Caucuses
- Artisan Fair
- Interactive Forum

Virtual: www.ngocsw.org

GWI Participation

- 2 Parallel Events
- NGO CSW Geneva Consultation Day
- Conversation Circles

GWJ Documentation

GWJ CSW65 Written Statement

Decades of progress towards women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life are undergoing appalling reversals.

GWJ Sponsored CSW65 Written Statements

GWJ National Federation and Association CSW65 Statements

Canadian Federation of University Women

Women Graduates-USA

Friends of GWJ Sponsored CSW65 Statements

NGO Committee on the Status of Women

Soroptimist International

Women's Federation for World Peace International

Zonta International

Recordings of CSW65 meetings and side events

The recordings of the CSW65 official meetings remain available for viewing on demand. To watch the recorded webcasts, please follow the links on the official meetings page at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw65-2021/official-meetings>

Many CSW65 side event organizers recorded the live streams of their events and the links for these recordings are available via the schedule of CSW65 side events at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw65-2021/side-events>

NGO CSW Parallel Events on Pathable

The NGO CSW 65 Pathable Platform will be available for **ONE YEAR** after CSW 65 has finished. Check the Pathable Platform for recordings of parallel events. Also check out the files and comment sections of events for more information or answers to questions.

GWI Parallel Events

Mock Trial: Women and Girls' Empowerment through Responsive Quality Education

Concept Note: During Commission on the Status of Women 65th session (CSW65), GWI will host an interactive Mock Trial, similar to the judicial system complete with judges, debaters and onlookers who will have the opportunity register opinions via interactive polls. Mock trials are an engaging way to raise awareness about critical issues, in this case, challenges and inequalities in distance learning. Analysis and sound reasoning combined with effective communication to the judges will be critical to success of the Mock Trial. Statements derived from GWI experienced knowledge base about the challenges and inequalities stemming from the emerging distance learning culture will be presented for debate by invited subject expert panelists. A panel of judges will then deliberate to decide the validity or non-validity of each statement. The goal is for attendees to, thereafter, engender discussion within their organisations on how to address current critical issues of digital learning and schooling. Beforehand, all participants will be supplied with written statements related to digital learning. Solid arguments “pro and contra” will be formulated to address two statements. Participants will present convincing arguments to the judges who, after careful deliberation, will determine the “validity” or “non-validity” of the proposed statements. The “valid” statements with its underlying arguments will be communicated to the GWI membership and to civil society at large. The trial will not only serve as an interactive learning experiences but will also be fun. All GWI participants are encouraged to read/study the pre-written statement and supporting document that will be provided beforehand to gain the necessary insight and knowledge necessary to “defend/support/endorse” or to “oppose/attack” the statement. Statement of debate will be presented then timed discussion will commence - defenders with arguments for the defense of the statement and the offenders against the statement will introduce viewpoints. Then Both parties make their case for 10 minutes each in the arena and following which the judges will have 10 minutes to come to reach a decision and 5 minutes to announce their verdict: valid or non-valid. Two statements will be debated during the 1.5-hour event.

Women and Corruption

Video: NGO CSW65 Virtual Forum: Virtual Meeting Details (pathable.com)

Event Flyer: <https://graduatewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Women-and-corruption-FLYER-FINAL-19-March.pdf>

Women and Corruption Parallel Event addressed the GENDERED dimensions of corruption, as women experience corruption in unique and specific ways. Adding to the disproportion of women as victims of corruption is the COVID 19 pandemic. In all sectors of women’s daily experiences, there is patriarchal power that can expose vulnerable women to corruption. Power, money, and privilege are part of the male domain that enable corruption to be a definite dimension of gender inequality. This is especially true for women who experience compounded marginalization as indigenous women, elderly women and widows, ill or disabled women, and women who are migrants, refugees, or displaced. So, in today’s complex and volatile world, corruption is everywhere. Women best be aware of ways to prevent victimization by corruption and understand corruption interventions. This Panel considered tools and good practices for women to be alert to corruption and deal with corruption, individually and collectively, on personal, family, and community levels.

Partnered GWI NFA Parallel Event

Reclaiming Our Humanity: Urgent Need for Women's Leadership in Migration Issues

The three North American NFAs - Mexico, USA, Canada (CAMEUS) - worked together to address the movement of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants seeking to escape poverty, violence and conflict in their countries. Experts will discuss a framework of women's leadership to replace the current devastating policies of the political economy, racism and isolation.

Event Reports submitted by GWI Representatives

Commission on the Status of Women, Sixty-fifth session (CSW65) - Opening of the session, 1st plenary meeting, 15 March 2021

Commission on the Status of Women, Sixty-fifth session (CSW65) – Civil Society Briefing, 19 March 2021

Virtual Townhall Meeting of Civil Society and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General and UN Women. Tuesday 16 March 2021 [2]

Connect2Include.Include2Connect, Side Event [2]

Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change, March 17, 2021

Women's Empowerment/ El Empoderamiento de la mujer, March 16, 2021, Parallel Event, Sponsored by BPW (Spain) – Business and Professional Women's Association

2021 Equal Pay Day Forum - Nicole Faux; Dr. C. Nicole Mason; Leah Rambo; Scher Khawaja; Gloria Middleton; PowHer NY

Shifting masculine norms to promote women's economic empowerment, Side Event, 22 March 2021, OECD Development Centre, Austrian Development Cooperation - Gary Barker of Promundo-US, Marlon Bascombe of CariMAN (Caribbean MenEngage Global Alliance); Juanita Lopez, Colombia

Women's Economic Empowerment – A Holistic View of Women's Economic Participation, Side event, 22 March, Saudi Arabia

Women and Corruption, Parallel event, 19 March 2021, WUNRN, Graduate Women International

*Advancing Women Leadership in Public Finance, side event, 17 March 2021
International Budget partnership*

Women's Rights and Japanese Constitution: Beate Sirota Gordon's Legacy and Implications Worldwide, 23 March, NWECC National Women's Education Center of Japan, Mills College, Oakland California

Creating Sustainable Development for Women's Empowerment with Entrepreneurship, Education & Equality, March 22, Organization of World Leaders (Owl Inc.)

Empowering Women in STEM is essential for achieving the UNSDGs, March 22, INWES, World Federation of Engineering Organisations, International Science Council

A Seat At The Table: Addressing Violence in Sex Trafficking and Prostitution, 19 March 2021, Women Graduates-USA

First Ladies and Emerging Leaders: "The Journey of 1325 & Women's Leadership", 19 March 2021, Women's Federation for World Peace International, International Association of First Ladies for Peace

Feminists on the Frontlines: Rights Defenders across the global South, 23 March 2021, Our Voice Our Futures (OVOF) consortium comprising CREA, the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE), the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), UHA1 — The East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative, WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform, and strategic partner IM-Defensoras.

Taliban Return: Implications for Women's Rights and Global Security, March 26, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan and Women Living Under Muslim Law

Mock Trial: Women and Girls' Empowerment through Responsive Quality Education, parallel event, Tuesday, 16 March 2021, Graduate Women International (GWI)

The Rapid Response to Women and Girls needs during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Tuesday 16 March 2021, Egyptian National Council for Women, UN Women Egypt and UNFPA Egypt

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Key words

Women in power and decision-making, the girl child, women and the economy, human rights of women, education and training of women, violence against women, women and poverty, women and health, women and the environment, women and armed conflict, institutional mechanisms, women and armed conflict, women and the media

SDGs Covered

SDG 1 – No Poverty
SDG 2 – Zero Hunger
SDG3 – Good Health and Well-Being
SDG4 – Quality Education
SDG5 – Gender Equality
SDG8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG7- Affordable and Clean Energy
SDG9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
SDG 10 – Reduced Inequality
SDG11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities
SDG16 – Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
SDG17 – Partnerships to achieve the Goal

GWI Resolutions Covered

Bullying (2016), Disability (2016), Harassment (2016), Tolerance of Minority Groups (2016), Young Members (2016), Child Marriage (2016), Women and STEM (2019), Sexual Health and Reproduction Education (2019), Sexual Harassment in Workplace (2019), Building Peace through Women's Education (2019)

The SDGS

Status Report from the UN Secretary General (UNSG)¹

UN SG Report on effects of Covid-19 on Women's Rights and Gender Equality includes:

- the social and economic impact of COVID-19 has been devastating for women's rights especially the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized poor women and women working in the "informal" economy.
- The SG stressed that, according to the World Bank, women in Latin America and the Caribbean were 44 percent more likely than men to lose their jobs at the onset of the crisis.
- UNICEF reported in the prior week that up to ten million more girls were at risk of becoming child brides as a result of the pandemic.
- COVID-19 had a severe impact on many fronts. Many of these issues were considered emergencies even before COVID-19.
 - impact on domestic violence as many women are trapped at home with their abusers
 - impact on education with school closures
 - overburdened elder and healthcare services with women bearing the brunt of the care economy
 - the inequalities that all of these dilemmas perpetuate

¹ CSW65 Side Event: Virtual Townhall Meeting of Civil Society and United Nations

- lack of access for women to sexual and reproductive health services and an extended disruption of supplies and services.
- the importance of women in equal roles in building the recovery from COVID-19 and addressing the serious setbacks to gender equality and women's rights.
A quote from the SG's remarks, *"Male-dominated teams will come up with male-dominated solutions."*
- The need to see the severe impact of COVID-19 as an opportunity for a reset to address the fragility in healthcare systems, social protections, access to justice, the wellbeing of our planet, and in localizing progress in sustainable development.
- *"Women need to be front and center of the recovery from the pandemic, not as a matter of charity, not even as a matter of justice and basic human rights, but as a matter of economics, of efficiency and effectiveness, of social and community resilience."*
- *"Women's full representation and leadership are a prerequisite for making the best use of all our resources. Women have proven this once again during the pandemic."*
Women have served as frontline workers and essential workers during the pandemic keeping communities afloat.
- The need for an initiative to end all forms of violence against women and girls.
- The impact of COVID-19 as an opportunity that must be seized. *"Gender equality is still a question of power as we still live in a male dominated world and a male dominated culture."*
- Going "back to normal" from COVID-19 is not acceptable. Gender equality must be placed at the heart of recovery plans. Gender equality is a question of power. *"Power is not given, it is taken."* So, we all must realize and act on this fact.

Summary of the work of the UN SG²

- invited civil society to localize SDGs and provide doable suggestions that can be incorporated in UN's thinking and policies;
- provided UN's initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls as a model for partnerships with national governments and civil society;
- informed civil society of the UN reform to achieve parity at all levels by placing women and girls central to all future planning;
- stressed the necessity of including women to achieve a more inclusive and networked multilateralism;
- reported the meeting with eminent women economists to brainstorm new approaches and solutions to address the impact of the pandemic on trade, financial flows and the jobs needed for a sustainable recovery;
- called for the re-ignition of the Decade of Action for SDGs and for charting a path to more equal, just, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies;
- the UN has put women at the center of Covid-19 response and recovery through COVID response fund designating resources for gender-sensitive programming.

5 Transformative Actions to build women's representation, participation and leadership:

- realizing women's equal rights

² Virtual Townhall Meeting of Civil Society and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, 16 March 2021

- taking concrete steps to ensure equal representation for women
- supporting women's economic inclusion
- addressing GBV through emergency plans and
- making space for intergenerational transition by supporting young women leaders.

GWI Engagement

1. If GWI members accept the UN SG's invitation to localize SDGs, they can make real change on the ground and provide doable proposals that can be incorporated in UN policies.
2. Utilizing the rich diversity of its membership, GWI can partner with the UN and UN Women to implement the UN's recommendations to achieve more inclusive, networked and multilateral communities.
3. By implementing one and the same projects by the different NFAs, GWI can present a valuable case study that will provide UN with practical recommendations to be incorporated in its future policies.

Education (SDG 4)

The Digital Technology, Education and Covid-19: A Mock Trial

Participants placed two statements about E-learning on trial using prosecutors, defendants and judges.

- a. E-learning and digitalization as being the one and only solution to decrease inequalities and ensure inclusion.*

Concerns:

- i. Mothers having to leave their jobs, and thus their financial independence, to monitor their younger children while being home schooled.
- ii. The deprivation of less advantaged students from the in-person services provided by schools such as medical attention, meals and physical exercises.
- iii. The most pressing concern was that abuse and domestic violence might prevail unnoticed by the different authorities.

- b. Schools as providers of IT home-based education by trained teachers, while redirecting their functions to be places for practical subjects, social interaction and extra-curricular activities.*

Concerns

- i. Digitalization of education that might lead to teachers losing their jobs as fewer teachers will be needed for in-person teaching vs addressing many more students through the digital platforms.

- ii. Students, especially younger ones, might be negatively affected as far as socialization and human interacting are concerned.

Agreement on both questions:

- the inevitability of e-learning during crisis situations such pandemics and conflicts areas
- its benefit in areas that lack schools

Weighing the advantages and disadvantages of both statements, a conclusion was reached that:

- Generalization is not appropriate and that each situation should be studied within its context. What might be the solution to one problem might be the cause of another
- Neither one of the statements could be the one and only solution.

GWI Engagement

Each party considered the limitations of their choice and the possibilities presented by the other party, sharing personal and national experiences that might be modified and used by all parties / countries depending on the context.

GWI, through its NFAs, can further investigate the impact of e-learning on the different educational stages, including informal education, and share the findings with UN Women. This could take the form of a case study and requires collaboration with sample educational institutions, as well as IT providers.

GWI's NFAs, in general, followed their national restriction rules and were obliged to resort to digital educational platforms to cope with the current pandemic situation and the lockdown of all educational institutions. This necessitated that all teachers, as well as students, needed to be ICT literate.

Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change

Girls' and women's education as well as their leadership is important in making environmental projects successful. The way climate change and environmental degradation affects women and children is also of considerable concern.

UNICEF projects in African countries³ show how women's leadership, gender justice and education are essential to successful implementation of environmental projects. Health and education of women and girls were also linked – especially education which was described as transformative – along with community engagement. In countries where the youth population is very large, education is crucial. The effects of the pandemic illustrate how complex providing effective aid and support can be.

³ [Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change, March 17, 2021](#)

GWI Engagement

Working with communities, building partnerships, respecting and encouraging female leadership and education are activities GWI members can use in all settings.

- Partnerships and alliances are certainly possible.
- For North Americans the Women's Earth Alliance might provide avenues to collaborate on specific projects.

Women and STEM⁴

The education of women depends on the economic growth in the countries. On other side, when there is an economic growth, the disposal public resources for education as a part of GDP are increased. Education gives knowledge and skills for successful participation in labour market. According the information gave on the session 60% of postgraduate students in Saudi Arabia are women. The digitalization and new technology requires more women to study STEM.

In the Netherlands and Europe women and girls in STEM education is still very low, although in the medical area it is improving rapidly with more female than male students but not yet visible in the top medical professions.

Women engineers role models are needed especially in Europe, North America and Africa. In Asia and the Middle East, the ratio of women engineers is much better. However, the gender gap in several STEM (including health) disciplines is very real in all disciplines and development levels.

We must keep on engaging families and communities in:

- promoting STEM career in girls, especially when it is contrary to cultural expectations and norms,
- engaging females in exploring socio-scientific issues
- promoting social support for females, such as peer networks and
- mentoring by more experience STEM researchers and professionals to develop females STEM leadership, advocacy and communications skills.

We need more STEM women included in management and senior positions (and not just symbolic) and not just roles but through pay, funding and access to resources.

The International Network for Women Engineers and Scientists (INWES), the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) and the International Science Council (ISC) together represent women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) across 100 nations.

GWI engagement: Awareness, in GWI-NL we already organised a STEM Expert Meeting in 2017.

⁴ [Women's Economic Empowerment – A Holistic View of Women's Economic Participation](#)

Women's Empowerment and Leadership

Women can break barriers that often keep them from realizing their full potential. Education, along with collaboration and mutual support among women, is key as are role models and partnerships. Education also affects attitudes of girls and boys, how women and men gravitate towards certain areas of study and certain careers as well as the perception of women as leaders.

it is vital that governments put into law that women be on the boards of (major) companies. This has been put into practice in Germany and The Netherlands, which should help the business sector. Women leaders should be working and represented all sections of society on an equal footing with men.

Recommendations for GWI Members

GWI members can encourage and foster leadership in younger women in their areas of interest through

1. mentorship and by example.
2. Collaboration on programmes and joint projects with other women's organizations in order to raise awareness, provide positive role models, provide training and encouragement.

NFA's should push for such laws on women's quota. Women should be working and represented by all sections of society on an equal footing with men.

Policy Making and Promoting Gender-equitable Masculine Norms

Restrictive masculinity / gender norms can significantly impact women's lives, their empowerment and emphasises the need for data to support gender-transformative policy making. It is important that these social norms and practices are well recognised by the general public. The underlying perceptions and opinions in the public and private spheres matter in terms of gender equality and need to be understood and addressed.

How policy makers and NGOs can promote gender-equitable masculine norms⁵

What must be achieved and what can be done:

- need to work on gender relations, working with families, boys and girls, women and men;
- dissolve the idea of the 'real man', 'get men to see their mistakenness'. There is evidence shows that men with more egalitarian views are healthier and happier men.
- stress the importance of early childhood intervention
- in order to build forward better and achieve a culture of equality, the right policies must be in place
- OECD Report⁶ recommendations to change attitudes hindering women's empowerment and equality. These are valid in all countries.
 - Awareness raising;
 - support for data gathering / tracking the proposed indicators;
 - evidenced based approach to policies promoting gender equality;
 - need to address these issues in schools – schools must provide ownership, mainstreaming and safe surroundings, must have teachers on board, train them;
 - early childhood interventions. Attitudes are formed in family and in education.

GWJ NFAs can advocate locally for the implementation of the OECD Report.

Women and Economic Recovery and Development⁷

The role of women in the process of economic recovery and development increases during the time of crisis as COVID19 pandemic. At the same time, the gender stereotyping consists of beliefs and attitudes that create different expectations for individuals based on their gender and can lead to biases, including on the labour market. The main challenge for

⁵ Shifting masculine norms to promote women's economic empowerment

⁶ OECD Development Centre's new publication, "Man Enough? Measuring Masculine Norms to Promote Women's Empowerment".

⁷ Women's Economic Empowerment – A Holistic View of Women's Economic Participation

women is abusing of this gender bias and takes part in on equal base in economic development improving an empowerment of women.

The protection of women rights on the labour market is main factor for increasing economic empowerment of women. In this market the processes are bilateral. From one side, the high economic growth leads to strong protection of women rights. From other side, more active participation of women in the economy supports to be used all human recourses and to be produced higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Main measurements for participation on labour market – primary condition on this market – education, degree of active participation on this market – rate of unemployment and the valuation of women activities on this market – income.

The Effects of Corruption on Women's Empowerment⁸

The findings of the Global Corruption Barometer survey show that economic development, corruption and public health are three most important problems that the governments should address in the countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Balkans.

The negative effects of corruption have a greater impact on women's lives. They can also escalate gender inequality that already exists within society, which creates additional obstacles for women's access to resources, services and opportunities. Gender and corruption according Jennifer Bradford may be defined in the public and in private sectors.

The public sector requires equal payment for equal work. However, in actual fact, audits of public projects financed with public resources there is not equal payment for women and men. According Prof. Lena Wangnerud, higher participation of women in local councils leads to lower level of corruption.

It is possible to identify several private sectors' areas in which corruption has gender differences:

- access to basic services, markets and loans;
- involvement in the political life;
- human rights violations;
- consequences of ineffective management.

Gender can also be a factor in business corruption, which affects business opportunities, the access of companies to markets and resources, and cooperation with the regulatory authorities. There are numerous indications that female entrepreneurs face barriers when looking for loans and that it can be more difficult for them to obtain permits and licenses to start their own businesses.

The region of CEE and Balkans needs more transparency in public and private sectors and more effective management of all resources.

Anti-corruption measures should include a number of transparent recommendations, which promise to bring about positive inter-sectorial results:

⁸ Women and Corruption

- using gender-disaggregated data in the planning of activities, determination of the system of basic indicators and target indicators of monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented activities ;
- conducting targeted studies to fill the existing information gaps on gender aspects of corruption ;
- using gender analysis in identifying problematic issues in anticorruption policy ;
- ensuring gender balance among members of anticorruption bodies to better take into account the interests and needs of both women and men.

Women and Finance⁹

Financial resources in Bulgaria and Balkans countries are limited and the fiscal policy is restrictive. It does not permit fully financing payments of unemployment of women and social protection mechanisms. We need more effective management of public finance.

The participation of women in decision-making supports achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It will more important during recovery of economy from the COVID-19 pandemic. The participation of women by allocation of financial recourses and distribution of the budget would make these activities more effective. As of 1 January 2021, only 11% of countries in the world had financial ministers who are women.

What is needed for gender equity in public finance:

- Public management for gender equity;
- Support of institutions;
- Women leadership;
- Gender oriented budget.

Barriers to overcome for more active participations of women in decision making process in Public finance include: effective management of public resources; women's participation in distribution of national and local budgets.

The budget procedure has several stages:

- identification of needs
- preparation of programs
- funding of the programs
- getting results

The participation of women leaders to present the female point of view will make this process effective and will overcome gender stereotypes.

Equal Rights in Japan¹⁰ (Historical note)

⁹ Advancing Women Leadership in Public Finance – side event

¹⁰ Women's Rights and Japanese Constitution: Beate Sirota Gordon's Legacy and Implications Worldwide

On Christmas Eve, 1945, Beate Sirota Gordon was the first civilian woman to arrive in post-war Japan. Assigned to the Political Affairs staff, she worked for Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Douglas MacArthur's occupation army as a translator. In addition to Japanese, she was fluent in English, German, French, and Russian.

When the U.S. began drafting a new constitution for Japan in February 1946. Sirota was enlisted to help and was assigned to the subcommittee dedicated to writing the section of the constitution devoted to civil rights. She was one of only two women in the larger group, the other being economist Eleanor Hadley. Sirota played an integral role, drafting the language regarding legal equality between men and women in Japan, including Articles 14 and 24 on Equal Rights and Women's Civil Rights.

Article 14 states, in part: "All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin".

Article 24 includes:

- 1) Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis.
- 2) With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes.

These additions to the constitution were vital to women's rights in Japan. "Japanese women were historically treated like chattel; they were property to be bought and sold on a whim," Gordon said in 1999.

Equal rights should be written in every constitution of countries in the world and NFAs can use these articles to push for them in their own countries.

Women in Minority Populations

Unjust laws, practices, social norms and institutional models continue to inhibit women's ability to participate in decision-making, policymaking and lawmaking. This reality, combined with attacks on civic space at all levels, are making it harder for structurally silenced women and gender non-conforming people to freely and safely advocate for their rights. Speakers from different countries in the global South discuss challenges to democracy and civic space — online space, policy space and physical public space — in their contexts, and barriers to the participation of structurally silenced women in determining their futures. Sex-workers in Kenya, transgender, minorities like Dalit women in India, and poor non- educated women in Mexico are not heard.

Quote from an Indian transgender : "Structural silenced doesn't mean the speakers aren't able to speak. It's that they aren't heard or prevented from speaking".

GWI Engagement

Awareness, how much are members of NFAs aware about the certain women/minorities face challenges in their own countries?

Push for a national action plan such as in The Netherlands put into place on 1 January 2021. The Dutch Government has made a 4th action plan on SCR 1325: The Fourth National Plan of Action 1325. This action plan was drawn up by the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science, Defense, Justice and Security and Foreign Affairs, in close collaboration with civil society. The whole agenda is pervaded by the equal role that women and girls must be able to play in all decision-making processes regarding peace and security; the eradication of (sexual) violence against women, girls, men, boys and LGBTI + persons; and access to health and justice. This plan is for 5 years and signed by the government and civil society.

Digital Inclusion and Connectivity (ITU)¹¹

ITU aims at:

- Achieving digital inclusion of women and girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, and people living in remote areas.
- Ensuring that technology is people centered with no one is left behind due to lack of connectivity or due to lack of accessibility of digital information, products and services.

by expressing the need for:

- developing appropriate policies, strategies and actions that address the specific needs for digital inclusion.

and promoting

- the building of inclusive digital societies because connectivity will help accelerate the global socio-economic recovery after the current pandemic incorporating the "6 enablers" which are "Partnerships, Inclusion, Financing, Leadership, Innovation and Youth".

¹²Participants concluded that "Connectivity and Inclusion" should be regarded as the 18th SDG and digitalization is the only means to do so.

ITU Conference: "Road to Addis" - "World Telecommunication Development Conference" (WTDC-2021), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 8-19 November 2021

Thoughts about ICT Literacy and Accessibility for GWI members

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, ICT tools have been the main source for pandemic-related

¹¹ ITU is linked to the United Nations through a special agreement The agreement recognizes ITU as a UN specialized agency and formally came into force on **1 January 1949**. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs. ITU forges partnerships with the private sector (the only UN agency to do so) to finance activities related to disaster mitigation with the aim of saving lives.

¹² Side Event: [Connect2Include.Include2Connect](#)

information and health-related advice. Digital platforms were the only available educational resources. Online small businesses have been the main source of women's economic independence. Women and girls' education has been negatively affected in areas where there is no appropriate digital infrastructure. Girls' school drop-outs and child marriage have increased. Women's economic independence has suffered because of lockdown and downsizing. VAW has increased, unreported and unnoticed, because of social distancing.

1. GWI members recognize the importance of ICT literacy and accessibility and that 100% inclusion in the digital world for women and girls is a necessity.
2. The importance of connectivity and digital inclusion of women and girls as a powerful enabler and empowering tool coincides with GWI's Marketplace Initiative and, in turn, with FUWA's ICT Literacy Course targeting 100% literacy of FUWA members.

GWI Engagement

- collaboration between GWI and ITU to ensure 100% inclusion of GWI members.
- NFAs could also participate by providing case studies of factors affecting this process of inclusion in the different fields of education, economic empowerment, decreasing GBV, aiding disabilities and empowering youth.

[CSW67 \(2023\)](#) priority theme is “innovation and technological change and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”.

Equal Pay¹³

United States

Women have lost four times as many jobs as men during COVID, many of which were low paying and lacking benefits. Many of these women were primary breadwinners in their families.

Steps to Get Women into Good Paying Jobs / Training / Fighting discrimination in the Workplace

1. The Need for Nationalized Day Care

To get women back into the workforce, the U.S. needs a national childcare structure where no family would pay more than 7% of their income for childcare.

When Leah Rambo, President of a Local Sheet Metal Workers Union was asked why women should enter the trades she responded, "Why wouldn't they? The pay and benefits are excellent. They provide women a path out of poverty. It allows them the financial freedom to move out of toxic relationships. No training required before they begin their apprenticeship. "

¹³ [2021 Equal Pay Day Forum](#)

However, there are obstacles (cultural, patriarchal). One major one is that you need to be at the job by 6:30 am or 7:00 am – how do you find day care when you have to leave home at 5:30 a.m?

If Biden's Infrastructure plan goes through, there will be non-traditional jobs for women.

2. Prohibition of Pay Discrimination based on gender / Pay Transparency Laws

In the U.S. the Title VII Act prohibits pay discrimination based on gender if doing "substantially similar work".

However the Law is insufficient – employers have justifications for unequal pay not related to gender. In addition women afraid of retaliation if they speak out and many women can't find out what the men make in income there there is a need for pay transparency laws, especially in the private sector that would:

- a. require employers to disclose salary, benefits, bonuses to existing workers
- b. require employers to report pay equity data by gender and race
- c. prohibit retaliation and
- d. allow for lawsuits if women are harmed.

These laws could have a transformative effect on all workers.

3. Minimum Salaries and equal Pay

- Need to collect data
- Need for laws to close pay gaps and ensure gender parity.
- Need grassroots involvement.
- Use governments structures that are already on the books

Europe

The women in the European region are so well educated and the rate of women with upper secondary school in Central and Eastern Europe are 74,23%. The main challenge for women is gender bias and taking part on an equal basis in the economy. It necessary to reduce the pay gap for equal work.

The measures to increase economic empowerment of women;

- Changes in law;
- Women in leadership positions;
- Equal access to education;
- Equal payment in unemployment;
- Equal payment for equal work

SDG16 – Peace and Justice Strong Institutions

Women and Peace (Afghanistan), Women's Rights

There is grave concern that the admirable gains made by women in Afghanistan in the last 20 years could be bargaining chips in the current peace negotiations. The betrayal of Afghan women must stop and the international community must stand with them.¹⁴

Afghanistan currently has a strong constitution that respects Islamic law and that includes gender, ethnic, and minority rights. In addition to their constitution, laws are in place to protect women ie anti-harrassment. There is real fear the constitution will be removed or the Taliban will abolish other laws that protect women. Or they could add laws to restrict them eg a woman cannot be President or cannot be a judge.

Afghans feel they would not have these laws without the support of the international community and have concern for the protection of such after any peace agreement. Afghan women ask that the international community not ignore them, that it continues to support them and raise its voice.

A peace agreement will only be possible if it can be implemented. For this it must have the consensus of women and youth, over half the population. Peace extends beyond boundaries. Neighbours will be affected by what happens in Afghanistan. They can be inspired or copy the negative forces. Conservative agendas are on the rise and with there a narrowing down of civil society spaces. It is against this backdrop that what happens in Afghanistan is so important for the world.

There is a huge security situation in the country. Many religious minorities are constantly attacked. The Taliban are a worry but are only one reality. There are 21 terrorist groups active in Afghanistan. There needs to be an end to war that has taken so much from so many. Today some girls are not able to attend school because of the danger. Some women are not able to work in media because of the danger.

Any peace settlement must be internationally negotiated with international observers (will be small but need to be linked to larger civil society groups) international guarantees, and technical teams. In Turkey at least 30% of the participants in the main meetings must be women, not just attendees at side events. They can raise their voices for victims and minorities.

How can our countries support? The more voices the better. The women in Afghanistan feel strengthened by our voices and the women negotiators will feel our support. The world must know the rights of women in Afghanistan women cannot be ignored.

¹⁴ [Taliban Return: Implications for Women's Rights and Global Security](#)

GWI Engagement

What is taking place in Afghanistan confirms our need to continue our advocacy work locally, nationally and internationally as we can.

University Women Helping Afghan Women, CFUW-Ottawa, works to learn of issues facing Afghan Women, raises awareness of such, and does what it can to support. Recently it has been very much involved in advocacy concerning the peace negotiations and their significance for women. Several CFUW Members across the country are interested as well. Also CFUW and GWI-NL have an NFA2NFA joint project on the perilous significance of the negotiations for women in Afghanistan.

Covid-19

Rapid Response Policy (Egypt)¹⁵

The Egyptian National Council for Women (NCW); in collaboration with China, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Zambia; presented a "Ministerial Interactive Dialogue" demonstrating national and regional efforts to respond to women and girls needs during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. They shared Egypt's Policy Paper titled " Strengthening national and international rapid response to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on women and girls". This policy was adopted unanimously as a resolution by the UN General Assembly (<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/156>). The aim of the policy is to provide a gender-sensitive approach to women and girls during the time of the pandemic. The end result is to have an inclusive healthy society for women and girls. This is the first policy ever to address women and girls needs in the time of the pandemic and the necessity of a rapid response. The response measures are comprehensive and can be adopted and modified to fit different local communities. These measures are peaceful, practical and doable.

Target Sectors where women are the most vulnerable:

- women and girls' physical and mental health,
- their social and economic protection,
- the needed intervention measures for elderly and disabled women,
- the necessity of digitalizing education and providing the needed infrastructure,
- protecting the girl child and preventing all forms of VAW, and
- ensuring women's equal chances in leadership and decision making.

GWI Engagement

GWI can partner with NCW Egypt to exchange successful experiences in empowering women and girls. NFAs can benefit from NCW by outsourcing training for their members in topics such as preventing VAW, ending FGM, promoting women's political participation and entrepreneurship. Members can adopt NCW's successful campaigns in a variety of gender related issues and modify them to fit their local and national needs.

¹⁵ CSW65 Side Event: The Rapid Response to Women and Girls needs during the COVID-19 Pandemic