



Graduate Women International (GWI)

# 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women GWI Discussion Network

## COMMISSION *on the* STATUS OF WOMEN



11-22 March 2024

68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

### 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.



# 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

## GWI Discussion Network



Graduate Women International (GWI)

Given that the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) offered many informational virtual parallel and side events, Graduate Women International (GWI) gathered GWI members' thoughts on the 2024 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”.**

### **For context:**

“Current conflicts and rising prices may lead 75% of countries to cut public spending by 2025, negatively impacting women and their essential services” (Source: [United Nations](#)). The absence of gender-disaggregated data hampers our ability to identify areas where women are disproportionately affected, potentially overlooking their needs and contributions. With this data, we can advocate for targeted interventions and financing to address women's unique challenges

### **For discussion:**

- How can we advocate, as an NGO, for the collection of gender disaggregated data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the areas requiring urgent attention to accelerate progress in gender equality? Who are stakeholders in your NFA countries that could be mobilized to contribute to advancing gender disaggregated data collection?

As GWI, we are uniquely suited to identify and champion solutions for accelerating investment into measures for gender-equality. It is imperative that we place ourselves at the forefront of this discussion. We, therefore, kindly request your thoughts on:

- How can our collective voice, as an international NGO and as united graduate women, be strategically utilized to ensure the acknowledgement and prioritization of gender-specific needs in financial policies?

Education is also crucial in fostering an empowered female population that can become a catalyst for societal advancement, by advocating for their needs and pressing for essential financing for their wellbeing and equality. An educated female population is more adept at articulating areas where their interests are being overlooked and pushing for investments into their welfare.

- How can GWI influence policy changes in the realm of education to ensure comprehensive and gender responsive curricula, in a way that empowers women to pursue their education further?

Thank you all in advance for your invaluable contributions and continued support.

In Canada, the government has an agency called Statistics Canada which collects data on its population. I am not sure if all countries have such an agency but it seems to me that if such national agencies work together to share their methodologies with a view to improving their collection of disaggregated data it would be mutually beneficial. To solve a problem, you first need to be able to articulate it. Without accurate data, that is impossible.

—Marianna Waraich, Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)

“ While a regular attendee at UN conferences and events, several times I heard presentations by a Bureau that was promoting governmental statistics collection. I can not recall whether that included gender-disaggregated statistics. If we could locate the name of that UN office. We could direct recommendations to, and secure information from, them.

—Muriel Smith, CFUW ”

## In response to Smith:

The relevant parts of the UN are: The UN Statistical Division and the UN Statistical Commission. Here is a link: <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/> I follow the meetings and find their reports through UN Web TV and the relevant websites. Stefan Schweinfest is the Director of the Statistics Division (UNSD/DESA). Here is a link to his credentials <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/about/directorbiography/#>

—Dalma Jacobs, Australian Graduate Women (AGW)

The UN Institute for statistics is the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is the official and trusted source of internationally-comparable indicators, methodologies and standards for the Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG 4) and key targets related to science (SDG 9), culture (SDG 11) and communication.

Disaggregated gender data for specific groups of women would make it possible to inform and develop policies and programs that respond to their realities. Unfortunately, such data is not always available. As of June 2022, they only have 42% of the data on gender-specific SDG indicators.

—Kati Lyon-Villiger, CFUW

In between 2007 and 2010 during my presidency we visited, with an IFUW delegation, the gender office of UNICEF in NEW York. We asked for gender-disaggregated data to show in the Annual Report on children of the world the situation of girls which many countries did not include clearly. Literacy of girls and women as well as the training of country representative about gender issues.

I recall the latter resulted in an online course from a Texas University for UN diplomats but have no idea if that did much to change the situation of many governments and their collection of statistics for gender issues. > One of the delegation included Mary Purcell a previous IFUW President, Catherine Moore out UN representative lead in New York and Kathleen Laurila. I do not recall the name of the gender group head now but we felt “heard” at the time.

I agree we need to keep promoting this need for gender disaggregated data to assess progress in each country of the UN.

—Louise Croot, Graduate Women New Zealand (GWNZ)

This is the link to the Texas Univeristy Program Louise refers to.

- Kathleen Laurila, Women Graduates -USA (WG - USA)



**TEXAS** Global

The University of Texas at Austin

I think such data collection by the UN starts with the data provided by each country... it comes back to advocating at our national, provincial/state and even local levels. In the U.S. for instance, the national government is unable to gather data in regard to the achievements of the SDGs, they need to rely on the (50) states, which likely relies on their local municipalities. Thus, the admonishment for achieving the SDGs is to work locally to pass policies, monitor local government entities, etc.

- Kathleen Laurila, WG - USA

Like Stats Canada and Stats New Zealand, Australia has a National Statistical Agency where I worked for 43 years before I retired. It is the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

- Dalma Jacobs, AWG

I can assure you that ABS certainly has worked very closely with Stats Canada and Stats NZ for decades and these 3 agencies share their methodologies and at times exchange senior technological staff. Also, ABS works very closely with the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in the UK, although ONS has a more decentralised statistical system, somewhat like the one in the USA.

- Dalma Jacobs, AWG



For many years the CSW Agreed Conclusions have always contained at least one paragraph covering the 'wish list' about the collection, disaggregation and dissemination of Statistics. Despite this CSW 'advocacy' nothing much has progressed in a world wide sense. Much of this is due to the **complexity** of what is being requested and the **decreasing budgets of National Statistical Systems**.

- Dalma Jacobs, AWG

The 2021 Australian Census of Population and Housing cost \$A 565 million to collect and process! There are no votes to support spending more money on official statistics in our increasingly political focussed environments!!

- Dalma Jacobs, AWG

“ I might add that CSW Agreed Conclusions really have had little influence over the decades, even in member countries with strong economies, because of what I call **'the let off paragraph'!! I quote the one from CSW67:**

- Dalma Jacobs, AWG ”

86. The Commission urges governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites civil society, inter alia, women's organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, faith-based organizations, the private sector and national human rights institutions, where they exist, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions:

“ The CSW 67 Agreed Conclusions actually had three paragraphs about statistics due to the 'technology' focus of the Topic. I quote:

- Dalma Jacobs, AWG ”

## **Enhancing data science to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls**

Strengthen the capacity and coordination of national statistics and data production offices, government institutions and other research organizations to collect, analyze, disseminate, and use gender statistics and data disaggregated on the basis of income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, marital status, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, while safeguarding privacy rights and data protection, to inform the conception, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of technology and digital policies and programs that are evidence-based

Foster collaboration among stakeholders, including national statistics offices, civil society and digital technology companies, to assess data needs and address gaps while applying ethical research principles, and systematically collect data disaggregated by sex across countries and regions using similar definitions and methodologies in order to capture the gender dimensions of technological change adequately, including by scaling digital data systems to fill knowledge gaps and financing quantitative and qualitative research on all barriers that limit women's access to information and communication technologies, as well as the prevalence of violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology;



Apply standards for data collection, processing, use, storage, sharing, retention, archiving and deletion, and aligned with technological advancement on an ongoing and evolving basis, especially to ensure the protection of women's and girls' personal data, in full compliance with relevant obligations under international human rights law, and that safety and security risks are prevented, addressed and eliminated, and to strengthen the capacity of women and girls to create, manage, control and have ownership of their personal data;

“ I could write much more, but have been down this track with GWI and IFUW before eg 2016. My very best wishes to you all in your deliberations. ”  
- Dalma Jacobs, AWG



Hello all, my perspective is that the greatest potential of CSW is not the agreed conclusions of member states but the **impact civil society** could have on priority and review themes **if we had effective mechanisms** for coordinated and integrated long-term action.

**What are thoughts about the data presented in Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, Gender Snapshot publications?**

- Joy Hurst, CFUW

One of the GWI Parallel sessions examined financial institutions and practices. Participants from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund spoke about their increased collection of gender-based data and including it in discussions with Ministers of Finance to demonstrate how gender-based budgeting has big returns. For both Institutions, education of females is a significant cross-cutting issues. Partnering with these institutions may lead to increased "guidance" to countries to collect this data and use the information in their national budgeting processing.

- Pat Reavy CFUW Stratford

Here is the link of [the CSW68 Parallel Event on Financial institutions and Infrastructure Perpetuating Poverty and Gender Bias.](#)

In response to Pat Reavy:  
Yes, Pat,  
Using the guidance of the World Bank and IMF would be quite helpful as we conduct our individual national and local advocacy for reach gender disaggregated data gathering.

-Kathleen Laurila, WG-USA

In Response to Kathleen Laurila

Staying with the USA example Kathleen, you and your members will know the 2020 Census of Population will have cost roughly \$13.7 billion by the time its activity ends in 2024. This falls below the Census Bureau's October 2017 estimate of \$15.6 billion. The Bureau allocated more than 80 percent of its 2020 Census spending to enumeration operations, infrastructure, and information technology. The USA Census is only collected once every 10 years.

What is this expensive source of mainly demographic data used for? "The USA Constitution mandates that a census be taken every 10 years to count all people—both citizens and noncitizens—living in the United States. An accurate count of the population is required by law and serves as the basis for fair political representation." Data Quality and Data Security are key objectives. The Census Bureau Demographic Analysis from the USA Census includes a low, middle and high range of national population estimates by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin, household type, family type, relationship to householder, group quarters population, housing occupancy, housing tenure and geographic location. etc etc However the CSW68 Zero Draft Agreed Conclusions requests data disaggregated by: income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics. So lots of data gaps to cover from other statistical sources.

-Dalma Jacobs. AGW



## GWI Delegate Report Summary

Under the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women priority theme, three action items can be identified:

- 1) gender equality
- 2) addressing poverty
- 3) strengthening through funding

Below are delegate reports from the CSW68 parallel event sessions relating to education. Delegates gave insights into how their NFAs will work with local governments to promote gender equality and empower women.



### Gender Equality



#### **Educating Outside the Classroom: Women's Museums Empowering Girls and Women - GWI Parallel Event**

*Shifting Narratives: Empowering Women through Diverse Histories for  
Gender Equality*

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action highlight the need to learn more about all peoples' histories and ways of knowing. Today's session on Women's Museums advanced a different narrative from the global colonial male-dominated point of view. It is a hopeful change for women and girls.

**- Karen Skarpnes, Canadian Federation of University Women,  
12 March, 2024**





## **Educating Outside the Classroom: Women's Museums Empowering Girls and Women - GWI Parallel Event**

*Advancing Gender and Racial Equality in Local Museums*

We plan to take the messages from this session to local museums in a series of museum visits. We plan to assess the gender and racial equality messages of at least seven local museums. Where we find room for improvement, we will meet with the museum staff to encourage them to remove outdated language and focus on messages of gender empowerment.

**- Barbara Winter, Canadian Federation of University Women,  
12 March, 2024**



## **Effects of Menopause on Women's access to Work and Social Protection**

*Advocating for Menopause Education as a Fundamental Right*

The session addressed the importance of having access to information about menopause and how this should be a human right for all women: knowing the symptoms is essential for having the right diagnosis for this situation. The next steps are access to information and the right of all women to a good health system.

**- Tzazil Valencia, Federación Mexicana de Universitarias,  
12 March, 2024**



## **Disability justice, youth leadership, and systemic gender-based violence: Counternarratives from the Global South**

*Empowering Women with Disabilities through Intersectional Advocacy*

It is very important to talk about disabilities and how they can arise from intersectional feminism. What is needed is to hear their voices so that governmental plans can be made from their perspectives.

**- Tzazil Valencia, Federación Mexicana de Universitarias,  
12 March, 2024**



## **Paving the Way for a Gender-equal Economy**

*Addressing Challenges in Labor Markets and Childcare Accessibility to Achieve Gender Equality*

Women's labor market participation and economic independence are cornerstones in any gender-equal society. We need affordable child care irrespective of income. Gender pay caps are getting smaller, however, challenges remain in the Nordic countries. A big issue is how to evaluate the different types of jobs on a gender-neutral basis.

**-Terry Oudraad, GWI Netherlands,  
13 March, 2024**

## **Financial Provision for Older Women**

*Equity in Widow Pensions and Financial Security*

Pensions for widows are often aimed at older women rather than young widows from conflict. Many men who are lost in combat are not declared dead, which leads to delays in pension or other payments. In addition to the gap created by maternity leave, many women give up work earlier than their male counterparts to take on more unpaid caring duties. Educating young women about accessibility and the necessity of pension contributions is a core aim.

**-Catriona Sutherland, GWI Scotland,  
13 March, 2024**

## **Reducing Poverty**

### **Addressing Gendered Poverty: Best Practices and Lessons Learned**

*Collaborative Efforts in Education and Poverty Alleviation*

This session is very related to my NFA since it addressed education and poverty, which is one of the NFA's pillars. GWI and Soroptimist could collaborate on some projects since we all have projects addressing education.

**-Tzazil Valencia, Federación Mexicana de Universitarias,  
12 March, 2024**



## **Women rising from poverty: strategies, transformative educational projects & empowering initiatives**

*Using Development Cooperation Work to Improve Access, Retention, and Educational Opportunities*

Simameni means 'Stand Up' in Swahili and is the name of the Canadian Teachers' Federation's project aimed at improving access, retention, and educational opportunities for secondary school-aged girls in schools in Uganda. The project addresses two key drivers of poverty: lack of access to education and gender inequality.

**-Terry Oudraad, GWI Netherlands,**

**12 March, 2024**



## **Sharing to eradicate Poverty, strengthening institutions, World Education for Reconciliation-Peace**

*Sharing Prosperity: Promoting Peace, Health, and Gender Equality through Wealth Redistribution*

The idea is that if everybody who has enough shares his wealth with those who need help, there will be peace and health on earth, as extreme poverty and hunger will be eradicated then, and with that essential need for gender equality, empowerment of all women and girls, reconciliation and Health are ensured.

**- Tzazil Valencia, Federación Mexicana de Universitarias,**

**13 March, 2024**



## **Unique Collaboration for Women in the Earthquake Region in Türkiye**

*Kagider's Response to Disaster and Poverty Empowering Women Through Entrepreneurship Project*

"Kagider" is a Turkish women's NGO supporting women's entrepreneurship. During the session, they discussed how they supported women after the devastating earthquake in Turkey. Women lost their homes and property and were left in poverty. They supported small women's initiatives, collaborated with a digital platform, and tried to sell products produced by women.

**- Basak Ovacik, Turkish Association of University Women,**

**13 March, 2024**





## Financial Institutions and Infrastructure Perpetuating Poverty – Gender Bias in Economic

*Empowering Women Through Economic Policy: Perspectives from UN Women, GWI, World Bank, and IMF*

Ms. Ishikawa from UN Women, with the suggestion of establishing gender-responsive budgets to build stronger, more equal, and resilient societies; such budgets would, by their very nature, include investment in care policies and infrastructure. Shaila Rao Mistry, the vice president for financials serving for GWI, identifies what women are asking and need for better financial infrastructures to combat poverty. Miss Hana Brixi from the World Bank listed challenges and gave recommendations for each; to summarize, a broad-based effort is needed to address the feminization of poverty at multiple levels: policy, law, institutional, and normative. Ministries of Finance must make gender an integral part of national budgets and financial policy if their countries are to prosper. Lastly, Dr. Monique Newaik from the International Monetary Fund presents the IMF's mandate and develops solutions through a macroeconomic lens. Focusing on integrating gender into macroeconomics so that countries and women prosper.

**- Maureen Byrne, GWI-New York United Nations Representative,  
18 March, 2024**



## Strengthening Through Funding



### Institutional relationships for a just Humanity

*Education of and retention of women within education, specifically STEM, through funding*

Education of and retention of women within education, specifically STEM. Four inputs by different women: Girls do code—Sezen Sairal, CEO of REEDER; Gender Inclusive policy in Institutions; Rationalising city and state-wide policies to ensure that the Survivor Narrative is used to inform progress; and Creating spaces for women and girls with passion and vision.

**-Catriona Sutherland, GWI Scotland,  
12 March, 2024**





## **Empowerment through the Tree of Life**

*A call for Mental Health funding for Women Affected by Violence*

What needs to be done is to be open to another kind of healing for women who have been exposed to very aggressive conditions of violence. Mental health is key to having a balanced life, and improving new methods to have a better life, like meditation, could help with anxiety or, in this case, working with women and kids refugees.

**- Tzazil Valencia, Federación Mexicana de Universitarias,  
13 March, 2024**



## **ECOSOC – Secretary-General’s Report for the Commission on the Status of Women 68 to take place in New York**

Some key takeaways on accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing institutions and financing with a gender perspective.

The Secretary-General called for the institution of a progressive tax system, ending corporate tax evasions (36% of multinational profits are shifted to tax havens), strengthening developmental and regional banks, increasing representation of women in financial institutions, and increasing affordable and long-term lending to low-income countries at a borrowing cost set below market value.

**-Maureen Byrne, GWI-NY United Nations Representative,  
11-22 March, 2024**



Thank you to all the esteemed delegates for your invaluable participation and contributions to CSW68 side events. Your summary and expertise have greatly enriched GWI’s discussions and will undoubtedly pave the way for meaningful progress. The reports have been incredibly valuable and provided profound insights into the issue, and GWI is deeply grateful for your dedication to advancing gender-responsive policies and building more equitable societies.

I extend heartfelt gratitude to each GWI member who dedicated their time and expertise to contribute to our enlightening discussion and parallel events on the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Your active involvement in this GWI Discussion Network discussion represents the strength of our global network.

Your thoughtful and valuable contributions enriched our discussion and parallel events, providing insights that resonate with the core value of empowering women by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective

We sincerely thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to the safe access of education for all women and girls.

-Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director



**Stacy Dry Lara**



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