



UNCSW-65 Report

Submitted by Claire Dadoun, Olympes de la Parole team of IAW UN delegates at UNCSW-65, The Study 11A, April 2021

CSW- 65 Summary of my Experience

First of all, I would like to thank Dre. Savary from Olympes de la Parole Canada, and Ms. Cheryl Hayles along with all the International Alliance of Women team, who gave me the privilege to attend this amazing conference.

As a student delegate, I learned so much about the status of women around the world. I felt lucky to be included in these important discussions with the other IAW delegates, and all the other delegates who participated in the CSW-65.

The 65th edition of the Commission on the Status of Women, or the CSW-65, was a two-week long event, held from March 15th to 26th 2021, which brought together NGO delegates, UN representatives, and government representatives from all over the world, to discuss the following: women's participation in public life, the elimination of gender - based violence, achieving gender equality, and the empowerment of women in general. Every year, this commission discusses progress that has been made regarding the gender equality issue so far and opens up discussions to determine what steps should be taken next. These discussions lead to the drafting of an "Agreed Conclusions" document which discuss what actions are to be made by different parties and governments to ameliorate the status of women all around the world, and multiple amendments are made to pre-existing policies in order to make them as effective as possible. Over the course of those two

weeks, there are also dozens of parallel events, organized by either the UN itself or various NGOs, which open the floor to further discussion and feature panelists in various fields of the gender issue.

This year, I had the privilege to be youth representative from Olympe de la Parole Canada, among the International Alliance of Women delegates team. This delegate status allowed me to attend many sessions, parallel events, and caucuses with other delegates and representatives from different countries.

Since I do not have previous experience discussing the status of women on a political and governmental levels, I found I learned the most while attending parallel events, because the official sessions were more technical.

I attended a total of sixteen parallel events, thirteen of which were organized by NGOs, and three of which were organized by the UN. They spoke about a variety of topics related to gender equality such as: sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHRs), the role of women in the workplace and in politics, intimate partner violence, equality within communities and families, etc. They were all memorable and had amazing guest speakers, but the two event which I found the most interesting, and eye opening were the conference I attended on the status of SRHR after the Beijing summit, and the discussion about intimate partner violence in the workplace.

“Achieving Beijing’s Promise on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)” was a conference organized by the International Women’s Health Coalition. This conference featured a panel of 4 amazing guests; Patricia Orawo, Bubulina Moreno, Sabrina Sanchez and Noelene Nabulivou. Each panelist spoke about their personal experiences fighting for different SHRHs in their country, and explained why progress had been stalled in certain sectors due to strict legislations, old fashioned mentalities, and cultural beliefs. Patricia Orawo spoke about her experience working for the Kisumu Medical and Education trust in Kenya. Bubulina Moreno spoke about the status of disabled women in Colombia. Sabrina Sanchez discussed both the status of transgender women and of women in the sex industry in Spain. Noelene Nabulivou spoke about the difficulties women face when trying to fight old fashioned principles in Fiji.

“Intimate Partner Violence and COVID-19: What Can Employers do?” This event organized by the Society of Gender Professionals discussed the different ways in which Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) can be brought to the workplace; the repercussions which this can have on the victims, and on the coworkers of those involved, as well as the measures to be taken by employers. We discussed the importance of creating an open, and safe environment to ensure employees are comfortable speaking out about these issues; the importance of showing the employers that these employees are valuable, and that they are worth keeping even if extra security measure need to be implemented. We also discussed about general guidelines that would ideally be implemented on a national scale to protect victims, and their coworkers.

These two conferences were the ones which struck me the most, because I learned a lot about the different factors that can make achieving gender equality even more difficult. These were: public opinion, traditional values, official legislations, as well as the different groups of women who have to fight twice as hard just to get included in those conversations, and who are sometimes even excluded by other feminist groups and organizations.

The CSW-65 taught me a lot about the different ways in which gender inequality can affect our day to day lives, and about the difficulties people are facing when trying to achieve gender parity. Women have been fighting for gender equality for decades, and even though some progress has been made, there are still so many women whose voices have not been heard; there are still so much progress to be made, and this conference has really opened my eyes to that. I am coming out of this experience with a deeper knowledge of what remains to be done, and I will do my best to get more involved in whatever way I can, and inform others on what they can do.

I loved interacting with the other IAW delegates through the WhatsApp group, and I loved being able to exchange ideas, and thoughts with them throughout the CSW. These interactions allowed me to learn about the different events everyone was attending, and all the interesting discussions that took place in their breakout sessions. I believe these contributions and exchanges allowed me to gain a lot more out of my experience as a

delegate, and I am very grateful to all the IAW members who were so helpful, and welcoming towards me and the other youth delegates.

If I had to give advice to next year's CSW delegates, I would simply tell them to make sure to read thoroughly the official reports, and documents given to them before the event. I would encourage them to sign up to conferences that discuss a variety of topics in order to gain the most from their experience as it is impossible to attend all of the conferences! I would also encourage them to sign up for caucuses and discussions so that they can interact with other delegates, and reflect on what they have learned and what the next steps are.

This was truly an amazing event. Once again, I am so grateful to have had the privilege to attend the CSW-65 with the other IAW delegates, and listen to all the wonderful speakers and panelists. It is an experience that will stay with me forever.

Best Regards,

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