



# UNCSW-65 Report

**Submitted by Harmonie-Toscane St-Pierre Delaye,  
Olympes de la Parole Canada 2018 competition First Prize winner,  
Collège International Marie de France, April 2021**

---

From March 15 to March 25 of 2021, I had the opportunity to participate to the United Nations' 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. It was for me a great honor to explore the backstage of international exchange and negotiation upon a subject that deeply touches me. This year's priority theme was priority theme of 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. this subject touches every woman on different scales, and the ideas and proposals that were stated during this world summit. This commission discussed multiple intersecting globalized issues with women's empowerment and addressed very hot topics that need to be treated as soon as possible to ensure the respect human's rights.

## 1. Ministers of women leading the post COVID-19 economic reactivation

This conference in Spanish proposed by the OASICIM as well as the Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana gathering the Ministers of the Status of Women from Chile, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay ruled on the policies that need to be voted to assure women will not suffer excessively from the pandemic and its economic consequences. To do so, each and every one of the countries will need to establish strategies to get out of the crisis, among others, by developing partnerships between ministries. The pandemic has had lots of negative impacts and has reinforced socio-economic inequalities and poverty. To resolve such a problem, minister Jimenez from Dominican Republic has proposed to dedicate a whole part of the budget to better services for the population and more particularly to women – single mothers, women in position of vulnerability, women who suffer violence... -. Gender responsive and women targeted funds need to be destined to the rural sector, which was particularly affected by the health crisis. All these solutions belong to short- and long-term plans that must be in place as soon as possible. To fights against the feminization of poverty, the policies that have been mentioned previously need to be taken.

## 2. Violence against women in politics: experiences and ways forward for women leaders

This event hosted by UN women Europe & Central Asia Regional Office as well as the OSCE and ODIHR gathering women leaders and ministers treated the theme of violence in politics. Women leaders from all around the world testified on the pressure they suffered because they were women. This violence is characterized by beating, death threat, rape and sexual assault which all have lasting impacts on women but also on democracy. The OSCE estimates that attacks and

bullying on women is increasing: 85% of women engaged in politics suffer from psychological violence, 46% of them have experienced harassment and/or rape and 56% of them have experienced sexist attacks on social media. In sum, women who are engaged in public life are much more likely to get criticized and see their actions/work criticized. Nowadays, those engaged women often fear for their safety, which explains why most of them leave public life, or might not even engage in the political and public field. According to the OSCE, today, the number of women who engage in politics is increasing – which is encouraging - but has not yet reached parity in most countries around the world. To do so, policies need to be taken and ratified so as not to leave the violence against women in politics unpunished. Women need to be included in the solutions to end this type of violence. Women leaders who resisted to those violence wish to convey the following message: All women who decide to engage in politics need to persevere to be recognized at their fair value.

### 3. Digital gender gaps and opportunities

This conference given by the council and the German government was focalized on the gender gaps that exist in the digital and virtual world. Indeed, today it is now clear that half of the women on earth do not have access to internet. Besides lacking this opportunity of connection with the virtual world, the women who are deprived of internet access often live under authoritarian regimes and are more easily victims of violence. In addition to the unequal access of women to the digital world women who are indigenous or of color, women with disabilities, women who are activists and women who are part of the LGBTQ+ community will have way more risks of suffering from digital abuse. The digital world tends to mimic reality and its flaws – such as gender stereotypes are reproduced in the social world - gender bias does exist in the algorithm itself due to the sexist and racist attitude of coder themselves (according to Aysel Yolu)! Nowadays, we live in the digital age. Internet is now not only a media of education and knowledge, but also a media of communication. Therefore, it is primordial to build policies that guaranty women's access to internet, but also policies that punish virtual abuses against women. It is also necessary to incite tech companies to pay taxes to act and put the emphasis on stopping abuse and promoting safety. Long term solutions need to be considered and put in place quickly.

### 4. Soutenir les mouvements féministes dynamiques et le leadership : les clefs de l'Égalité des genres

This side event organized by the Canadian Women's Foundation was focused on feminist funding. Indeed, funding is necessary for NGOs to restore a better life quality and opportunities for everyone – especially women -. This funding is crucial especially during these pandemic times: resources which are invested in these important NGOs are reinvested where it matters the most, in other word, for the promotion of women's rights as well as the protection of women. However, only 1% of funds are in fact dedicated to women's NGOs. This data is alarming, and this conference provided solution to this global issue. Adding to this, it is primordial to save a place and to include everyone in those movements since they impact every human being. That's why the feminist movement needs to respect and recognize younger and older people, trans women disabled women... In Canada, progress is visible and underway, but has not reached its peak yet. Investments are the only immediate solution that can contribute to the progress of this project of equity and quality. This is the main reason why the Canadian government needs and will invest differently – by, among others, creating more than one million jobs dedicated to women and non-binary people to promote equality.

## 5. Strengthening women's role front & center of atrocity prevention

This event allying the themes of women's empowerment and peace and security was intended to address the underlying connection between war atrocities and women. Indeed, women are the most touched and constitute most victims suffering from atrocities – physical and psychological impacts, forced marriage, rape- during periods of conflict. According to the panelists present to this conference, women, who are the least protected in society, especially during periods of violence need to be listened to and protected. This is the only way to ensure the well-being of women and peace. Regarding the current situation, it might seem more reasonable to adapt the resolutions of the 2030 agenda. Sustainable development cannot be completely achieved if there is no peace, no introduction of women in the decision-making sphere as well as no adequate care for women. Once again, to remedy the problem, women need to be in the center of discussion and policy elaboration. Moreover, it is necessary to elaborate policies with counterbalanced voices (i.e., minorities), with women's voices and with women's leadership. All the actions that ought to be taken need to have sustainable impacts on communities, to include everyone.

## 6. Conversation circle: feminist action for climate justice

This conversation circle proposed by the NGOCSW was dedicated to discussions upon two very hot topics. This gathering was an opportunity to exchange with other women from all around the world. As any other human beings, women need to have access to clean resources. In other words, we need to ensure they have access to clean air, water, and food. However, climate change does have a specific negative impact on women: it causes water scarcity, very important natural disasters, fuel shortage, the outbreak of more diseases, the creation of conflicts and forces displacements. To avoid the increase of those negative impacts on women, key conventions need to be respected and different solutions need to be elaborated – such as, for example, placing women as environmental defenders -. This conversation circle gave me the opportunity to propose short- and long-term solutions to this very contemporary problem. As a young and engage woman, I decided to fully participate in this conversation circle by writing in the final report my thoughts upon the actions that are already taken to sensitize the younger generation to gender and environmental issues. *“School programs are including much more information about climate change AND inequalities between genders. Nowadays, whole chapters are dedicated to the importance of protecting our environment as well as the importance of education to make sure women can exercise all their rights. Education is the key to sensitize the younger generation to important and worldwide issues. Education helps raise awareness and incites young people to take action. However, education is not enough yet: elaborating global policies and funding are necessary to take effective actions.”* This discussion circle led to a report addressing the major issues that women are experiencing due to climate change as well as the potential solutions that could be globalized to minimize climate change and its negative impacts on the ecosystem and individuals themselves.

## 7. What will it take to reach parity in political participation in post COVID-19 world?

This conference hosted by Interparliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women was dedicated to the major issue of parity in the political filed. Nowadays, the number of women who have committed to a public and political life is at its all-time high: globally, only 25,5% of parliamentarians are women. This statistic is like the other proportions of women occupying decision-making positions: 5,9% of the heads of states are women; 6,7% of the heads of government are women and finally... These very small percentages can still be considered as slow progresses. However, this progress is still too slow, as it is estimated that only 3 countries have completely reached parity in their

parliaments and 130 years are needed to reach parity in the political sphere. To ensure the increase of the number of women engaged in the political field, parliaments need to become more gender sensitive as well as a safe environment for women, to make sure they can exercise their full potential. To promote the integration of women in the political field different strategies have been elaborated and need to be tested by 2030. Among these strategies, we can find the idea of legislating gender quotas, reforming the legal framework to punish discrimination, creating laws to ban gender-based violence etc. such policies need to be put in place quickly to ensure that the UN 2030 agenda will be respected. Women's role, especially in politics, is primordial and needs to be promoted and put forward through policies that assure equal opportunities for both genders to engage themselves in politics and reach parity.

#### 8. Célébration de la participation canadienne à la CCFNU

This side event organized by Minister Monsef was focused on the role of Canada during the UNCSW65. Minister Monsef shared an optimistic message with everyone in the audience: "from now on, we can only progress". To assure this progress, Canada will be giving more funds to organizations to make sure they survive the pandemic. It is primordial that these NGOs remain, since they are a place of refuge - especially for women – but because they also have the mission of sensitizing each and every one to the importance of human rights. According to Chief St-Pierre, too many women were murdered, suffered from abuses, and went missing. It is time to take accountancy of these horrors and sensitize the population to them. Canada has precisely committed to the UNCSW65 to make sure these fundamental rights (i.e., equality between men and women) are respected. Canada makes the commitment to try and reduce the multiple and intersecting forms of violence against women and indigenous people – by, among others, including all indigenous women in the negotiations -. To respond to this situation, Canada committed to the Commission and will accentuate the promotion of women's rights.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, I would like to say that the UNCSW65 was a great opportunity for me to understand how women around the world live and what impacts them daily but mostly, how countries intend to remedy it. During this world summit, the topic of women's rights and empowerment were admittedly addressed, but crucial subjects such as climate change, COVID-19 and access to internet as well as their impacts on women were also treated. The UN itself, NGOs and countries will now need to take action to promote all the values and proposals that have been stated during the UNCSW65.

*Harmonie-Toscane St-Pierre-Delhaye, Baccalauréat student from Collège International Marie de France, <https://www.cimf.ca/>*

---