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LAW AT CSW67

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IAW AT CSW REPORTS



Priscilla Todd
Editor

Member of IAW Affiliate Women's Electoral Lobby, hosting in Melbourne, Australia: Congress 1989; International/Board 2012; Secretary-General 1992-2002 alongside Presidents Alice Marangopoulos and Patricia Giles; Editor IWNews 2002-current. **Todd Secretariat:** 1963-current - minute writers, jobs for women, administrative support.



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Designed and Formatted

IAW board member, IAW media team, IAW assistant membership secretary, Member of IAW Affiliate Womens Electoral Lobby.

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Alison Brown

Alison is a feminist, researcher, women's historian and writer. She has been an integral member of IAW for over 30 years, her dedication to IAW has seen her take on many roles throughout the decades including the following:

Representative to the UN Conference on Human Rights, Vienna 1993 and to one session of the ILO, Secretary General 2002 – 2007, Co-organizer and Moderator for the Centennial Celebration in Berlin 2004, Delegate to the United Nations in Vienna – Head of Delegation 2004–2010, Web Content manager for womenalliance.org 2002–2013, Head of Election Committee 2010–2020, current IAW President 2022–2025



Dr. Sibylle von Heydebrand

Dr. Sibylle von Heydebrand is a Swiss lawyer. She studied in Geneva and Basel (Switzerland) and holds a PhD in law from the University of Basel. She is a proven expert on voting rights and has a long experience as a lecturer on law and economics. She is committed to improving the status of women and girls in society and advocates for the visibility of women's involvement in society. Her particular interest focuses on the political participation of women. Since 2021, she is the main representative of the International Alliance of Women at the United Nations in Geneva



Soon-Young Yoon

Soon-Young Yoon is a Korean-American advocate for women's human rights and author of "Citizen of the World -- Soon-Young and the UN". She currently serves as a United Nations representative of the International Alliance of Women. In 2020, she founded the Cities for CEDAW History and Futures Project of which she is currently co-director.



Miranda Tunica Ruzario

Miranda Tunica Ruzario holds a degree in social sciences and has over 10 years experience in administration and finance in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. She has also worked for several NGOs in Zimbabwe that deal with women's rights, gender based violence and gender equality at grassroots levels. **IAW appointments** 2018: Assistant Secretary General. 2022: Secretary General



Eveline Van Eerd

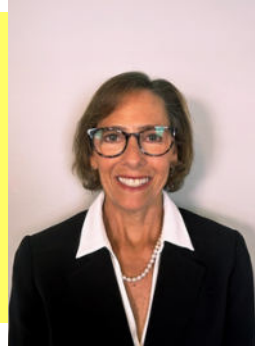
Eveline van Eerd holds a Master's degree in Governance and Leadership in European Public Health from Maastricht University, with a specialisation in Drug Policy and Health Care Management. During her undergraduate studies in Health Sciences at the Technical University in Munich, she gained experience as a Health Policy Advisor at the Bavarian Government. Currently, she is furthering her education with a second Master's degree in Behavioral Psychology while concurrently working as a first response triage specialist in emergency care.



CONTRIBUTORS

Andrea Carlise

Andrea is the Associate Corporate Counsel for the Western Title Division, focusing on corporate governance, legal counsel to management, and various business initiatives. She is a dedicated advocate for gender justice, holding leadership roles in organisations like the Queen's Bench Bar Association and the National Council of Jewish Women - San Francisco Section. With a rich legal background, Andrea has worked as an Executive Director, litigation attorney, Assistant County Counsel, and managing partner of a litigation boutique. She is also known for her community involvement as a past president of Girls Inc., an organisation empowering girls through education and community programs.



Yvonne Pokropek

Yvonne Pokropek is a passionate HR Consultant with over 20 years of experience, focusing on Leadership Programs, Mentoring, and Diversity. Yvonne has dedicated significant time to numerous initiatives centered around these topics. She particularly emphasizes mentoring programs aimed at promoting women into leadership roles. Additionally, she has developed a diversity game that has been embraced by multiple companies. The game's purpose is to broaden perspectives and challenge prejudices that hinder increased diversity. In 2021, she was elected to the local steering committee of the Fredrika Bremer Förbundet in Gothenburg. In 2022, she joined the board of Fredrika Bremer Förbundet, Sweden.



Derya A. Briand

Born in 1984, Derya A. Briand has lived in Switzerland since 2008. With a strong legal background, she holds a Bachelor's Degree in Law from Cyprus, an LLM from the University of Lausanne, and a Master's degree in Law from the University of Lausanne. She is currently in the process of completing her PhD at the University of Lausanne. Proficient in multiple languages, Derya has garnered valuable experience through previous roles at UNEP and ILO, where she gained insight into the workings of the UN system. Presently, she serves as an administrator and legal consultant. Derya is a passionate advocate for women's rights and believes in their universal defence across the globe.



Dr Goumaïwè Djamila Assama Sidi

Sociologist-Politologist-Diplomat, Djamila has devoted her career to understanding and addressing complex societal issues in particular promoting effective communication and education for youth and women. Djamila is a consultant for SIDICOM-SPWEP, the president of 'ADCF – Togo the Marraïne of "Une Sœur Une Collégienne" (USUC) and the CEO "Femmes Termitières".



Rev. Dr. Esther Suter

Rev. Dr. Suter is an ordained minister in the Swiss Reformed Church. She has served as a pastor, university hospital chaplain, and volunteer pastor in a disadvantaged area of Manhattan, New York. Her passion for ecumenism and peace led her to partner with South Korean Presbyterian Churches. She's worked on projects globally, including establishing a shelter for street children during a Chilean dictatorship. She's engaged in UN conferences, representing NGOs like the International Association of Liberal Religious Women. In 2018, she co-founded Swiss Interfaith Women, focusing on Interfaith Youth camps. Dr. Suter's interests include women's rights, theology, interreligious dialogue, peace advocacy, and multiple languages.



EDITORIAL

Priscilla Todd

IWNEWS EDITOR



My sincere apologies to all our readers for the huge delay in producing this first 2023 edition. It's all about CSW67 and I'm sure the comments, observations and suggestions from some of IAW's representatives in New York earlier this year are well worth waiting for. The IAW presence at CSW has always been strong and this year that strength has blossomed under our proactive President, supported by a global Executive and Board, all bringing forward looking ideas and plans to develop a 21st Century approach to the Alliance's ongoing support for women everywhere.

I'm personally excited to see the renewed build-up of enthusiasm, work and friendships across our longstanding members through to younger members who will take the Alliance on towards its 2nd century.

You will see that this edition of International Women's News has a new format. The Communications Group has been planning to do this in-house for some time. Holly Herbert demonstrated the use of new software, formats were agreed and Holly offered to work on layout to get this finally completed. Meanwhile, an Editor was sought and the group, interviews have been conducted and this will be an item at the coming Board meeting.

The way IWNews has been presented since 1906 has seen many changes and I'm proud to have been part of this publication for just over two decades. I would like to record special thanks on behalf of the Alliance and myself to Melita Krommyda, Graphic Designer, for her work since 2016. She has been so creative and is always a joy to work with.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Alison Brown

IAW President



The place of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Sessions in the work of International Alliance of Women (IAW)

At its conception in 1902 and founding in 1904, the activists of what would become IAW were convinced that getting women the right to vote would initiate the solution to all their social problems, because women would vote themselves into office and work on what needed to be corrected in patriarchal structures. However, as one member organisation after another achieved suffrage in their countries, it became obvious that voting alone would not effect the changes necessary and IAW turned its attention to genuine Equal Rights and, especially, Equal Responsibilities – taking women's share of the decision making. The see-saw fight against backlash from entrenched male power continues to this day and, at the moment, the resistance to more rights for women and girls and the finding of equitable solutions to gender disparities, is growing stronger.

With international rights in its name, it is natural that IAW would engage on the international level with international institutions. IAW was represented at the short-lived League of Nations and, after WWII (which that league was intended to avert), became accredited with the United Nations, accepted in General Status with ECOSOC almost as soon as the possibility arose. Since then, IAW has appointed representatives to all UN offices, sometimes more efficiently than others, to lobby for the issues in our Action Programmes for the benefit of women worldwide.

When the Commission on the Status of Women¹ was elevated from Sub-Commission to full Commission in 1946 and then held its first Session at the propitiously named Lake Success, New York, in 1947, IAW representatives took up the challenge of lobbying for optimal outcomes. We have been lobbying ever since and the International Women's News you hold in your hands gives the insights of the IAW representatives at the latest iteration of CSW – the 67th! From our various places of work, including volunteer work, we brought our knowledge to bear, as best we could, on the topics discussed and we learned a great deal from our sisters in the struggle for equal access to the technological advances of modern civilization even as we warned of the hazards that these same technologies would bring to women without full power in their societies.

We hope you will read this issue of the IWNews on CSW67 and be inspired to contribute to the preparation of CSW68 which has already commenced.

"THERE IS AN APP FOR THAT"

Alison Brown

IAW PRESIDENT




The 67th Session of the Council on the Status of Women was held under the topic “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” and in accordance with Commission practice, a topic from five years ago: “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls” was brought back for review – assuming rightly that all the good intentions of those agreed upon Conclusions would not yet have lifted rural women out of poverty and relative isolation.

As NGOs were kept far from most negotiations on this Session’s Agreed Conclusions, I opted to spend my time learning what various nations had to say in their side events on the subjects at hand. I contributed to the discussions by asking occasional pertinent questions and exchanged cards with activists in the field - following up every evening with an e-mail to each, including my thoughts on the events we had attended together.

The advent of internet and smart phone technology – in effect, a computer in one’s pocket – offers many opportunities for women at the lower end of the economic scale. To quote an old slogan from Apple Corporation, There’s an App for That, that being any assistance a woman might need, including in interpersonal relationships.

At the side event “Rural Women's Rights and Access to Technology in Tanzania” (cleverly combining current topic and review topic in one package) presented by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, two applications were presented. One connects women to a state supported network of paralegals who not only give legal aid far from urban areas, but also provide access to social services and counseling.

MAST – the Mobile Application to Secure Tenure – was presented by the organisation Landesa <https://www.landesa.org/>. It is used to determine, by a mobile group of surveyors, property boundaries and land rights and facilitate the issue of certificates of ownership. It has reduced the time required to get a title from months to a couple of weeks. During one campaign in the countryside, half of the 4000 parcels were shown to be owned by women! This has especially benefited widows. UN Women Tanzania has promoted this drive for land rights – increasing the overall percent from 14 to 41% in a total of 5000 cases. The app also provides advice to resource management based on survey results.



A need to accelerate funding to give women the digital skills (and presumably devices) to use such apps was expressed and that local NGOs should be included in these programs. An important question from the floor, which went unanswered: Once the government funding ends, how are these projects going to sustain themselves? Smartphones do not grow on trees; paralegals and surveyors have to pay for their food, shelter, education; finally, data in Africa is extremely expensive – 17 times as much as in India! This positive side event closed with the chair leading a song, whose lyrics I would have loved to understand since I had the feeling that they were relevant to the proceedings, and many in the room joined in the chorus.

The Landesa app should be used throughout the world because, for example, 50-80% of women in Pakistan are producing the food and 70% are caring for livestock, but nothing near that percentage own land. In Kenya, 80% or 62%, depending on who was talking, of women work in agriculture (they also make up 50% of the population) but less than 2% are landowners! One issue there is that, while there is a law that no property can be transferred without spousal consent, most rural couples have neglected to formalize their relationships, leaving an abandoned woman with nothing. Kenyan women have adopted smartphone apps to connect women to the market, but they use them when selling eggs to dealers who pick them up from their homes, not bananas and tomatoes – those they take to the market themselves because that is when they get out of the house and socialize. The Kenyan Side event Closing the Gender Gap, investing in Digitization of Land to Protect Women's Land Rights and Promote Food Security, was marked with much laughter and we were introduced to a series of impressive women governors who have promoted their areas' agricultural innovation, making it a thriving force for social welfare. If I launched into a description of all I learned from CARE, Uganda and Austria's side event "The power of mobile technology: Uganda's experience of making digitization work for women and markets", my report would fill the entire IWN!

In the Parallel Event "Using Technology to Fight Human Trafficking of Women and Girls" organized by IAW Treasurer Antonia Lavine in her position as Director of the San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (SFCaHT) and co-sponsored by IAW among others, an application for victims of trafficking was introduced.. At the time it was being called ResourceFULL, but the name has been changed to The ReferAll App: Connecting Survivors to Providers – presented by Annie Cannons's ReferAll App Product Manager, Jakki Bedsole, MSW, and UX Research and Partnership Coordinator, Iram Shaikh. The app itself, developed in cooperation with survivors themselves and social service organisations, offers a guide through the maze of service options to find the right fit for the woman in need. Organizations list their specialties, any requirements for becoming a client. For example, are children requiring help: some organizations are devoted to helping children, others have no capacity for them.

The app also aids in filling out forms required to access services and provides a short cut by making one form for all the participating institutions, cutting down red tape and stressful repetition of the reasons for seeking help. The app is currently only available in the San Francisco area. But it appears to be scale-able, and, because it allows organisational data sets to be entered and deleted, it should be geographically transferable – perhaps first across the USA and then around the world. But building it out would require major funding in new municipalities and for new languages.

While apps can be helpful, a great deal of attention at CSW67 was devoted to the harms women face on-line. Indeed, while survivors of trafficking find help using an app, traffickers are developing their own apps to lure more victims into their snares. There was general agreement that trolling, doxing, sexting and revenge porn are horrible things, but very little about how to stop them worldwide. In fact, some governments blocked use of the term cyberpornography in the Conclusions even as other delegates discussed the fact that the majority of pornography now found on-line is no longer scripted, staged and performed by actors, but rather real rapes, etc. Filmed as they happened and uploaded for profit! It takes one's breath away. Therefore, it was encouraging to hear from Australia during the Philippines Side Event "Cybersafe against Fake News" that a law has gone into effect in 2021, the first in the world, through which the E-Safety Commission can force such pictures to be scrubbed from the internet – how permanent the deletion is remains to be seen.

Particularly women in the public eye, journalists and politicians are subjected to relentless harassment. Trolls seek to drive female journalists and politicians off the air, out of the media and from office, to be replaced by men – restoring unrelieved patriarchy. Perhaps a reason that some delegations are not eager to take up the issue lies in the fact that Feminist Foreign Policy initiatives have been losing ground. Whereas before the pandemic 45 of the 193 delegations in New York were headed by women, now there are only 30.

In the Side Event by the Department of Global Communications and International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) "Women Leaders in Media: Making Innovative Technology Work for Women and Girls" we met Michelle Ferrer, whose Troll-Busters.com, offers a just-in-time rescue service for women writers and journalists experiencing online harassment. She also puts out "Toxic Avenger Magazine" which looks at harms and threats against journalists:

<https://yoursosteam.wordpress.com/toxic-avenger-magazine-archives/>

Patrice Johnson's "Black Girls Code" is raising up a generation of programmers to fill the AI space with individuals whose presence heretofore has called up hordes of trolls. Her motto: "The work is not simply tech, but social justice.". Three of her current class were present, all with impressive resumes, although they are still under 18! If the future of the internet and AI is in their hands, I am relieved. <https://wearebgc.org/>

CSW67: USING INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

REPORT BY SIBYLLE VON HEYDEBRAND

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN DELEGATE
HEAD OF IAW DELEGATION UNITED NATIONS GENEVA



The priority theme of the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) addresses technological change to achieve equality. I will focus below on two aspects: safety on the internet and visibility of women in the media through technology.



On March 7, 2023, [Pascale Baeriswyl](#), Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN in New York, opened the policy forum on "Using Innovation and Technology to Advance Gender Equality", a side event of CSW67 held at the International Peace Institute (IPI).

Pascale Baeriswyl © IPI

More visibility of women in the media through technology

[Dr. Annabella Bassler](#) presented [Ringier AG's Equal Voice Initiative](#). According to their research, 72% of all media reports in Switzerland are about men. The Global Media Monitoring Project 2021 found that the global figure is as high as 82%. The goal of the EqualVoice initiative is to increase the visibility of women in the media, create more female role models, and ensure equal representation of women and men.



Dr. Annabella Bassler © IPI

Instead of promoting quotas, Ringier is using its journalistic and technological influence to advocate for gender equality. They have developed an in-house semantic algorithm that measures the visibility of women in articles published by Ringier and Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland. This algorithm, called the EqualVoice factor, consists of two objective indicators: the "Teaser Score," which evaluates the visibility of women in images, headlines, and titles, and the "Body Score," which measures the frequency of women and men mentioned in an article's text.

Safety on the internet: Stop Hate Speech

A study of women in 51 countries revealed that 38 percent of the surveyed women had personally experienced online violence, including hate speech. Ensuring the safe and meaningful participation of women in online spaces is an essential step toward achieving gender equality. Hate speech on the internet has become a global phenomenon of alarming proportions during the Covid pandemic.



[Sophie Achermann](#), Project Leader of the [Stop Hate Speech](#) project, introduced the campaign initiated by [Alliance F](#) and provided insights on how to detect and curb hate speech on the internet.

Sophie Achermann © IPI

She also introduced Bot Dog, an algorithm trained by an online community and researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich. Bot Dog has been trained to recognize German and French language hate speech on Swiss media platforms and Twitter by evaluating over 420,000 online comments.

Hate speech can be curbed by counter speech. However, counter speech must be as effective as possible. A research team at the ETH Zurich has now investigated which messages are most likely to persuade the authors of hate speech to refrain from hate messages in the future. Various strategies for counter-speech were tested experimentally. The results are clear: Only responses that appeal to empathy with those affected by the hate speech - such as "Your post is very painful for Jews..." - may persuade the hate speakers to change their behaviour.

Conclusion

The CSW67 side event, "Using Innovation and Technology to Advance Gender Equality", presented two successful best practices in cybersecurity and women's visibility in the media through technology. These strategies can be applied more broadly to promote gender equality work.

CSW67

BY SOON-YOUNG YOON

HEAD OF IAW DELEGATION UNITED
NATIONS NEW YORK



Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative for the IAW in New York, joined Krishanti Dhamaraj, founder of the Dignity Index, to moderate a virtual side event during CSW67 on "Innovations for Equity-Cities for CEDAW". The purpose was to showcase innovations that ensure women's human rights in cities. Speakers from Bogota, Reykjavik, and Santa Clara County (USA) addressed issues of care, personal safety, equal pay, and political commitments using the principles of CEDAW in cities. Young professional IAW member Samuyktha Seth and Anchita Dasgupta presented the Cities for CEDAW History and Futures project along with Jessica Pierson, IAW representative for North America. The panelists concluded that future generations should continue to use CEDAW as a roadmap for women's equality, sustainable development, and peace at home as well as in their cities.

For the YouTube recording, see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rogbRjLDWSs&t=4s>

The IAW co-sponsored an event with C4UN, co-sponsored by the Coalition for the UN We Need, Global Women in Leadership, International Alliance of Women, with Baha'i International and Global Governance Innovation Network at CSW67 entitled "Feminist Framework for 'Our Common Agenda' on March 8. This virtual panel presented papers on critical issues related to a feminist framework for climate change, health, violence against women/peace and security, digital technology, as well as feminist foreign policy and women and youth leaders in global governance. The co-facilitators were Maria Fernanda Espinosa, President of the 73rd UN General Assembly, and Nudhara Yusuf, Global Governance Innovation Network Facilitator, Stimson Center. Dubravka Simonovic, former chair of CSW, former CEDAW expert, and former Special Rapporteur on violence against women, called for immediate reform of the CSW. She stated that the CSW must be given stronger accountability mechanisms to implement an Emergency Plan to end GBV/VAW. Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative for the IAW in New York, agreed that the CSW must be revitalised and regain its status as a strong force for UN reform.

For the YouTube recording, see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PoIbdwVC9o&t=4s>

BY MIRANDA RUZARIO

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN DELEGATES
IAW SECRETARY GENERALE



The Role of Parliaments in Advancing Gender Equality Through Technology

**By the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women
7th March 2023**

The joint IPU-UN Women Parliamentary Meeting, "The role of parliaments in advancing gender equality through technology", aimed to showcase and strengthen parliamentary engagement in harnessing technology for gender equality in society and within institutions. It provided an opportunity for legislators worldwide to contribute a parliamentary perspective to the CSW67 discussions.

Members of Parliament from around the world shared good practices for empowering women and girls through technology, removing structural obstacles to their access and use of technology, and addressing risks such as technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.

More policies need to be implemented to empower women in technology, emphasising diversity by ensuring women have a seat at the table and participate in decision-making in education. It is crucial to create more employment opportunities for women in the sector and to have women at the core of technology legislation, particularly at the intersection with AI.

The Role of Technology in Immigration **8th March 2023**

Challenges faced by migrant women and girls include:

1. Gender-Based Violence, which should be recognised as a violation of human rights.
2. Access to adequate medical treatment, as migrant women are more likely to face underpaying jobs without health care benefits.
3. Human trafficking, with approximately 140 million displaced migrant women and girls being vulnerable to exploitation.

Government efforts to make migration safer for women and girls including Germany implementation policies to address the digital gender gap that primarily affects migrant women and girls. Bridging this gap can help reduce risks of human rights violations. Technology can also assist in tracking women and girls from their country of origin to the destination country, providing a way to ensure their safety.

By fighting against violence, Civil Society plays a crucial role in empowering migrant women and girls, particularly by addressing the alarming rate of human trafficking, where 94% of the victims are women and girls.

Digitalisation For Gender Equality and Rural Women's Empowerment

By FAO Kenya and Uganda

9th March 2023

Benefits of digital solutions for women in rural areas include:

- Digitally-enabled Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) for knowledge sharing.
- Digital Financial Services (including mobile money) for financial inclusion.
- E-commerce and E-Digital Platforms for market linkages.
- Digitally-enabled Social Protection Interventions for resilience building.

The governments of Kenya and Uganda are assisting rural women through:

- Enhancing access to ICTs through policy measures and targeted programs for digital literacy.
- Provision of universal low-cost internet.
- Digital infrastructure development in remote and rural areas.
- Overcoming social barriers by offering tailored digital financial products.

Policies that have been implemented to support rural women:

- Equal distribution of land to women after divorce or death of a spouse.
- Security of land tenure.
- Support in accessing Wi-Fi.

However, women are 19% less likely to use technology than men. This gender gap must be recognised and closed.

Conclusion

It was nice to meet in person after such a long time. However, we should be better prepared for future CSW events, including our parallel events. It would be beneficial for the next delegation to the CSW to have something that identifies them as an IAW delegation, such as IAW scarves.



On the 10th of March we met up at the UN Vienna Café at the UN to exchange our experiences of the CSW67 and to say our goodbyes to members who were leaving that week.

From left around table: Tunica Miranda Ruzario, Artemis Westenberg, Alison Brown standing, Munira Jauad Ribeiro, Beverly Thompson, Sibylle von Heyderbrand and Derya Akinci Briand

CSW67

BY EVELINE VAN EERD

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN DELEGATE



At the beginning of March, I had the amazing opportunity to join CSW67 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York as part of the [International Alliance of Women \(Alliance Internationale des Femmes\)](#) delegation. This year's focus was on gender equality in the digital age and the integration of digitalisation in education.

Throughout the week, I attended many inspiring events organised not only by UN member states but also by small-scale NGOs from around the world. I learned about the [HeForShe](#) campaign in the MENA region and how, despite initial resistance, it has now become a huge campaign with thousands of male and female volunteers throughout the region.

I also learned about the plight of Indonesian girls who become victims of "fixed-term marriages", where they are married off to men (usually tourists) for a significant sum of money for a fixed period of 7-30 days. These marriages are often arranged by the parents. During this period, the man has the right to engage in sexual activities with the girl as she is considered his wife. Many young girls are unaware of their rights and believe they must obey their parents and the man they are married to. The organisation that organised this event actively visits cities and rural areas, educates these girls about their rights, and demonstrates that the police and city officials will support them if they ever find themselves in need of help.

However, the most important lesson I learned was that real change does not happen in the big conference rooms where country officials hold meetings to discuss gender-based equality. Real change happens in the small rooms with NGOs. They are the ones doing the fieldwork, talking to the victims, and implementing change.

So, if you truly want to contribute to the fight for [#genderequality](#), I encourage you to support your local NGOs. They are the ones making a tangible difference.



Participants were encouraged to write down what FEMALE EMPOWERMENT means to them, in front of the UN building.



Eveline with Natalie Fischer, Economic Psychologist

CSW67

BY ANDREA CARLISE

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN DELEGATE
IAW ASSISTANT TREASURER



I attended CSW67 virtually as the expense of the trip to New York made attending in person impossible for me this year (unfortunately!). I viewed approximately six parallel events via Zoom, four of which were sponsored or co-sponsored by the IAW. I also attended "Consultation Day" virtually and was truly impressed by the insights shared by many of the speakers. While I was disappointed that I couldn't meet the other IAW representatives in person, being able to attend events from home made me feel that I was able to play a small role in this yearly event to advance gender equality globally.

One of the most interesting events I attended was entitled "Smartphones and Survivors: Using tech to help disrupt domestic violence". The event focused on the Safe Connections program in Australia. This program, run by a partnership between an NGO, a telecommunications provider, and the Australian government, provides new smartphones to domestic violence victims. The program trains shelter workers about how perpetrators misuse smartphones and empowers survivors to set up and use their new devices safely. Survivors use the smartphones for a wide range of purposes, including connecting to support and thwarting abusers' controlling and monitoring tactics.

My key takeaways from the event were:

- Gender inequality drives gender-based violence, including domestic and family violence. This program recognises the intersection between violence against women and technology. Tech is both a tool needed to escape the violence and one used to control the survivors.
- Exerting power and control: tech is making it easier to coerce and control others through stalking and other activities. The perception of abuse often becomes omnipresent for the victims of intimate partner violence, prompting fear of interacting with support networks.
- Telling women to give up technology is like telling a rape survivor to dress less provocatively - connection to technology is a necessity, not a luxury. Telling victim survivors that they can't use a smartphone is akin to blaming the survivor. Tech isn't the problem - abusers are!
- This program in Australia helps individuals access help and services by providing new, safe smartphones to survivors with added account security along with safety planning support to prevent abuse by the perpetrators of intimate partner violence.
- The program has been replicated in other countries. Though there are similar programs in the United States, in my opinion, the lack of government and telecommunications company support appears to make them less effective. We could certainly learn from the amazing work being done in Australia.

I also learned quite a bit from the NCJW-SF/Human Rights Special Interest Group parallel event titled "Storytelling: Women Influencers Take Stage in Securing Human Rights". This event featured "The CEDAW Trilogy", three short films about the lives of women who pushed back against ingrained societal norms, misinformation, and deflection, so that we can enjoy fundamental human rights today. The films were followed by a Q&A session led by a panel of experts. I enjoyed learning about the history of CEDAW and how it can be implemented in local governments in the U.S., even though it has shamefully never been ratified by our government. I was especially impressed by the fact that for the first time, a CEDAW bill has been introduced in the California legislature. The speakers made me hopeful that we can still make progress towards CEDAW implementation despite the backlash against women's human rights that is currently sweeping through our country.

Overall, my key takeaways from attending CSW67 events include the following impressions:

- The digital revolution is not gender-neutral. Women and girls count on access to digital technology. To truly reach the goal of gender equality worldwide, access to digital technology must be universal and gender-responsible - i.e., the digital gender gap must be addressed.
- Technology-facilitated gender-based violence must end once and for all.

While I was quite interested in the agreed conclusions and the process for reaching an agreement, I found the process quite confusing. The documents are long and difficult to read for a "lay person" unfamiliar with the inner workings of the UN CSW. While I attended the Zoom prep session for IAW delegates and tried to read the various drafts, I felt ill-equipped to weigh in on the language this year. I appreciate the fact that IAW made an exceptional effort to allow input from all its delegates and remain hopeful that I can contribute more to the analysis and advocacy for agreed conclusions language in the coming years.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as a virtual delegate this year.



General Assembly Hall CSW67

FROM KALVSUND, A SMALL FISHERMAN ISLAND TO THE BIG APPLE

BY YVONNE POKROPEK

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN DELEGATE
REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT



My experiences and my conclusions about the Commission:

It was fantastic to be a part of the opening in the General Assembly Hall and listen to the Secretary-General; even more fantastic was seeing this hall full of women from all over the world—that was a statement in itself. Unfortunately, I did not get tickets for the celebration of International Women's Day. However, I watched it on big screens in another large room, together with many other influential women.

I managed to participate in several side events such as "Pushing back the push-back: Nordic solutions to online gender-based violence" and "High level launch of Ukraine's updated national action plan for women, peace & security". In both events, Sweden was part of the panel. The last one impressed me the most, especially seeing all the young Ukrainian women in important positions—how courageous they are and how convinced they are that they will win the war. The war in Ukraine is a fight they undertake for all of us, for the peace we all desire.

On Tuesday, I left the UN building and went to the Swedish Church in Midtown, Manhattan. The Swedish NGOs had organised three events, all very important and relevant: one on surrogate mothers, where the representative from Ukraine made a huge impact; one on prostitution; and the last one about pornography. All three were conducted with passion, and they also allowed time for questions and interaction with the audience, something I often missed in the events organised by governmental groups or departments in the UN where communication was more often only a one-way communication. On Tuesday evening, our IAW group had a small and short gathering close to the statue of Nelson Mandela.



Yvonne Pokropek, together with Camilla Wagner, chairperson at Fredrika Bremer, Margot Wallström, former Swedish Foreign minister and Olga Persson, chairperson of Unizon

On Wednesday—International Women's Day—I went to room 4 in the UN and watched the ceremony on two big screens, along with hundreds of women and a couple of men. An odd thing happened when Sada Baderinwa, the host of the ceremony, asked the few men in the hall to rise so that we could celebrate them! Instead of taking the opportunity to celebrate all the women on their day! To be honest, that was appalling!

In the afternoon, I tried to attend another event partly organised by Sweden: "Swipe left for dating violence among adolescents and young adults", but it was fully booked. Another event I was interested in (about the situation in Afghanistan) was cancelled, so I took the opportunity to look at all the messages written outside the UN building. Before I left for the day, I passed by and stayed for the "Manifestation against prostitution", arranged outside of CAP. Soon-Young Yoon was kind enough to arrange a dinner for us in the evening—it was great to meet everyone and start building relationships.

Thursday was my last day; I left in the afternoon, but I managed to participate in "Online safety and digital empowerment of women journalists: combating online threats and harassment"—a very important topic. Unfortunately, there was too much talk from the "officials" on the panel and too little time for the journalists who had the experience. Then, I visited Vienna Café and met mostly Swedish NGO women.

All in all, my conclusion is that NGO events are more interesting and "spot on". CSW is an important way to make women's situations visible, but more can be done, and sometimes I feel that the UN is a huge organisation with a lot of money but little power. If you're part of a governmental delegation, as Camilla was this year, you have a greater possibility to influence and bring about change than just being one of the NGOs.

The work continues in Sweden. Through our organisation, the Fredrika Bremerförbundet, where I'm a board member, and Camilla Wagner is the chairperson, we continuously push for gender equality as much as we can.

Conclusions for myself:

This was my first time ever, and I learned a lot. I'm not sure if I contributed much this first time, but I will be able to do more next year. I also realise that I need to ensure I have a lot of free time before I leave, so I can participate in all preparations in a better way. Next time, I will arrive on Sunday so that I can pick up my pass in advance. I also hope to be able to stay from Monday to Friday and leave no earlier than Saturday, after the first week.

Yvonne queuing for her ground pass



Flags outside the UN

My Conclusions for IAW:

We need to organise ourselves better next time. And, very importantly, we need to prepare our participation more effectively. My proposals are as follows:

- As soon as we know who will participate in person, this group needs to have preparation meetings beforehand, focusing on the side events we think are important, what to focus on, etc.
- I assume we can prepare an IAW statement that we can use when we get there.
- We need a coordinator, and that person needs to be present at the UN, at least during the first week.
- Having a WhatsApp group for those present is a very good idea, but we can't overload it with information. Let's ensure that the information we share hasn't already been communicated.
- We need to have a daily meeting where we decide on the side events. We should focus on the next day if we haven't already booked. Discuss our experiences and gather in general.
- This board was elected at the end of last year, so it's no wonder we couldn't plan so much this year. But for the upcoming CSW68, we will be ready.



IAW delegation at dinner, generously hosted by Soon-Young Yoon, IAW main representative at UN New York. Soon-Young appears in front row on the front cover but this time she was the photographer.

Front: Alison Brown, Uzma Gul

Main row: Derya Akinci Briand, Artemis Westenberg, Beverly

Thompson, Esther R. Suter, Barbara DuMoulin, Joy Hurst, Yvonne Pokropek, Sibylle von Heydebrand, Natalie Fischer

Back: Eveline van Eerd, Jessica Pierson



CSW67

BY DERYA A. BRIAND

IAW REPRESENTATIVE OF IAW TO UN GENEVA

CSW67 was an enriching experience for me as it was the first time I attended it. I met a lot of people, and it was a wonderful and intense week. I had the opportunity to have fruitful conversations with everybody as an IAW delegate. Additionally, IAW colleagues had the opportunity to meet regularly at Vienna Café in the UN. We exchanged our experiences during the meetings and had the chance to participate together in some side events.

In order to report on a specific subject, I decided to choose the topic: "Digitalisation, technology and its effects on gender and women". On the first week of CSW67, I attended parallel and side events starting from 6th of March up to the 10th of March.

My conclusions are:

- Digital platforms must empower women and girls. Specific platforms need to be created. We need to create positive channels.
- Bridging the generational gap is important. We must build trust, which is the glue for relationships. We need to bridge this by building relations.
- Anti-trafficking, human rights, and gender violence are crucial subjects. Online abuse and homophobic abuse are particularly important. There is a lack of female representation in global politics.
- Online consent is a hot topic. Other important topics are age-appropriate education, sex education, sexually explicit consent. Gender issues continue to influence young people. Social media spaces must be created to provide women with empowerment. There is an increase in violence on online platforms and improvement in the social status is needed. Compliance with the Istanbul Convention is the key. Cyberbullying and revenge porn are problematic. Escaping violent relationships is not easy. Local training material must be present, and advocacy must be persistent.
- Shifting gender norms and other social norms are crucial. Because of social norms, it is important to bridge the gender inequality gap.
- The digital space has been a central part of learning information and a channel for it. However, many platforms have been abused with fake news, and that danger of fake news can encompass all genders. Digital literacy, comes along with the boundaries of girls and women. women's empowerment and gender equality are always the key.
- This is setting us back in progress. Relevant and accurate information is needed. In the generations to come, we must be extremely careful with digitalisation.



Image sourced from unwomen.org

- Governments must also intervene in online spaces to protect women and young girls.
- From my perspective, the strongest part of CSW67 was that there was enormous participation, with women from all over the world able to raise their voices. I believe people the opportunity to switch between parallel and side events during CSW67. I would say that the weakest part of CSW67 was the fact that some communities, such as the LGBTIQ+ community, were neither sufficiently represented nor included in the discussions. I have the joy of having obtained further knowledge in many subjects, especially online and digital issues related to gender inequality.
- I believe that there must be continuous effort. To improve IAW's participation in CSW68 next year, I would suggest that we identify some areas of importance and create a regular plan for discussions between our dear IAW colleagues leading up to CSW. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this conference, virtually or physically.

List of Parallel and side events attended:

6th March:

- Harnessing technology and innovation to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Side event: Ireland and Irish Consortium: Gender-based violence and technology: risks, opportunities, challenges.
- Side event: Canada: Exploring the impacts and influences of digital technologies and gender-based violence work.
- UNESCO event: The Gender Digital Revolution: Addressing ethics of artificial intelligence, access to information and gendered online violence.

7th March:

- Education and innovations as solution to the empowerment of rural women and girls in digital age. Event in CCUN.
- Side event: Open, safe and equal: Shaping a feminist digital future.
- Feminist Intervention in Digital spaces. Perspectives from Asia.
- Evening Odds in Digital education for marginalised women and girls.

8th March:

- The 2023 United Nations Observance of International Women's Day.
- Girl's reach to equality through technology education.
- Combatting online violence against women in politics.
- Digital inclusion for all: key to achieving gender equality

9th March:

- Empowering women's voices and choices to inform battering intervention and policies.
- Side event: Digitalisation for gender equality and rural women's empowerment
- Feminist foreign policy index: government accountability in a digital era.

10th March:

- Innovation and technological change for gender equality and inclusion in education in the global south
- Side event: Cybersafe against fake news: being smart, being safe and staying ahead. Ensuring women and girls' safe online experience.
- Gender, technology and the future of work: Canadian Union perspectives.

INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE, AND EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

BY DR GOUMAÏWÈ DJAMILA ASSAMA SID

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN DELEGATE

IAW ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL



In CSW67 in New York, from March 13 to 17, 2023, the annual gathering on the status of women. Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital era to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. For an inclusive digital world: innovation and technology for gender equality.

CSW67, held in New York from March 6 to 17, 2023, brought together thousands of women from around the world to discuss, exchange, and assess the situation of women amidst global changes. The AIF (International Women's Association) upheld its tradition of active participation in various online and in-person activities and discussions. A significant delegation led by the President and the Secretary-General engaged in diverse panel discussions. The Deputy Secretary-General, who had been attending the LDC5 conference in DOHA, joined the group in New York from the 13th to the 17th, marked by:

1. Participation in the plenary session on March 13, co-chaired by the UN Women's Secretary-General and the UN Secretary-General, at the United Nations conference room.
2. In-person and online side events and conferences.
3. Informal meetings.
4. Invitations from sister organisations.
5. Tourism.

Regarding the plenary session, several topics, from technology access to the safety of women and girls in the digital age, along with the enduring issue of violence against women, and global crises, were discussed. The commitment to gender equality was reaffirmed. A pleasant encounter with AIF President Alison Brown capped off the first day at CSW67 in New York, with exchanges and souvenir photos.



Munira Ribeiro from Guinea Bissau and Dr. Djamila G. Assama Sidi from Togo in New York. - March 14, 2023

CSW67 side event on legal assistance and the empowerment of women in communities in the era of technological and digital innovation, March 17, 2023, CCUN, New York



Key NGO FORUM/CSW67 side events attended both in person and online included:

- The conference by MALA (Muslim American Leadership Alliance), on the theme "Muslim Women in Media: Perspectives on Empowerment & Inclusions" at the Church Center of the United Nations. This highlighted the scarcity, challenges, and capabilities of Muslim women in media and technology, emphasising opportunities and the necessity of including Muslim women in the digital age for gender equality.
- The conference on "Perspectives on Empowering Women Through Effective Collaboration in Challenging Contexts," organised by The Gender Working Group of the Multi-faith Advisory Council to the UN inter-agency TaskForce.
- Parallel Event on March 14 at CCUN organised by Dr. Ugochi Ohajuruka, Executive Director of Health Aid for All Initiative, on the theme "Implications of Covid-19 pandemic on young girls' education, menstrual health and anti-FGM advocacy", in collaboration with NGOs Vaccine Network and Right to Rise.
- The conference by Chaya Pamula, founder of SheTek Women in technology supporting diverse Tech success, on the theme: Lets Grow Together - Become a Partner of our Shetek Community.
- Guest speaker from the NGO 'Law Explorer Development and Assistance Initiative (LEDAI)' on "Legal assistance and empowerment of women for innovation, technological and digital divide in communities" presented on March 17, 2023, at CCUN.

The most significant invitation was the launch of the network of the Federation of Cuban Women and Cuban Delegation to the UN CSW67, at the Manhattan Neighborhood Network Community Media Center. This working dinner was organised by Montana National Organization for Women (NOW) in collaboration with the Cuban representatives to the United Nations, introducing different women's organisations from Latin America and the national delegations of various countries.

Informal and enriching meetings took place with members of the Guinean-Bissau delegation, Nigerian women, Iranian women in Canada, Indian women, Congolese women, women from Montana, USA, South Africa, Chile, and representatives from various UN organisations and NGOs.

Regarding tourism, visits to Washington and Virginia, as well as exploring New York and the Statue of Liberty, added to the 120-hour stay during CSW67.

For a first-time participation in CSW, it was a beautiful and enlightening experience of meeting, exchanging, and discovering the multifaceted aspects of women, their conditions, and resilience worldwide, as well as interpretations of gender and feminism. This dispelled doubts and strengthened feminist commitment in general and within the AIF. A conference project for sharing with women and girls from our national organisations is already in development.

However, major shortcomings and difficulties include linguistic barriers, absence of a focal point for information, organisation, and guidance for better participation. Inaccessibility to the UN/CSW forum, high travel and stay costs, cold weather with improvisation for some activities, are noted. The group's management appears to indicate internal unpreparedness and inclusiveness within the AIF. For example, the issue of badges and selective access to the NGO forum was only addressed after travel confirmations. Similar to the LDC5 in Qatar, the AIF is unknown to several NGOs who are also members of ECOSOC.





RESIST THE PUSHBACK

BY REV. DR. ESTHER R. SUTER
INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN DELEGATE

In New York, the UN concluded its 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (March 6-16, 2023), on the theme "Innovation, Technological Change and Education in the Digital Age for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all Women and Girls" with a final document. The session took place against a backdrop of repeated global setbacks with women's rights, increasing violence against women in the public sphere, gender impacts caused by earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, and the daily horrors faced by women and girls in emergency and crisis situations (including Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Iran).

This first session, back in full physical presence after three years with the Covid-19 pandemic, attracted over 7,000 participants including four heads of state and governments, and 116 ministers, to attend 205 side events on the UN premises, and some 700 parallel events registered by NGOs. The Review Theme (of the 62nd CSW) was: "Challenges and Opportunities for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls".

The CSW is one of the few UN commissions that does not limit participation to member countries only. The active influence of civil society is demanded and encouraged, recently increasingly with young people. Even after the pandemic, hybrid and virtual events remain. The parallel program can only be viewed digitally, and one's mobile phone has replaced the handbook. Noticeably more African women participated. Previously, many of their applications for entry failed because of the visa requirements of the host country, the USA.

During General Secretary Guterres' term, "Town Hall Meetings" have been held during CSW sessions. In his address on March 13, he named the increasing regression after years of achievements: Many of today's challenges are the result of a male-dominated world. Of a world and culture dominated by men, who are also in decision-making positions. Not only do they rule over women in the technical industry, in medicine, but also Artificial Intelligence will shape the future with a male world view. Instead of pointing out facts and tackling bias, digitised technology based on incomplete databases and poorly designed algorithms spreads and reinforces sexism with sometimes deadly consequences. Digital spaces, Guterres said, are not safe for women and girls and they are attacked, targeted and humiliated on the internet.

The concentration of power in the hands of men must change, he said. Patriarchal structures would have to be overcome, especially in the technical sector. Internet communication is only the first step, which must be followed by models of economic and social policy. "Together we must resist the pushback in women's rights", said Guterres. More and more polarisations are emerging, democracies are being called into question, and there is a lack of confidence-building. The time has come for a serious dialogue between institutions and government in each country. "We need a younger UN". "A youth office is in the making", he said, "but it lacks the structure to systematically monitor how young people are given a voice".

The Ecumenical Women, a coalition of 17 Christian international women's organisations and churches, noted in their statement prepared for CSW-67, that the problem of systemic poverty as well as structural racism was worsening. In a parallel event about Girl Force, they presented short video portraits of 9-14-year-old girls, such as eleven-year-old Sarah from the Middle East. She said that technology has made life easier. Everyone should have the opportunity to learn how technology works. More cybersecurity is needed, she said. Technology is one of the most important tools to survive in our modern society. For the first time, the CSW included an interactive youth session with young people who engaged in dialogue by suggesting ways to ensure that women and girls are part of the digital transformations.

The Commission on the Status of Women affirms the critical role of technology and innovation in achieving gender equality. The agreed conclusions by member countries provide a blueprint as a template for all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, and youth, to ensure the full and equal participation and leadership of women and girls in the execution, transformation, and integration of digital technologies and innovation processes that address the Human Rights and needs of women and girls moving forward.

At the conclusion of the negotiations, UN-Women Executive Director Sima Bahous said, "the decisions agreed upon this year are game-changing and bring forward our vision of greater equality and connection for women and girls in all their diversity in the world. It is our task as we leave here, to turn this into reality. The ultimate success of these agreements lies beyond their conclusion today, viz, how far we take them forward together. They show us a vision of a fully equalised world. Let's make a reality for all women and girls into reality".

The CSW67 reaffirmed the importance of full equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls in science, technology, and innovation. It simultaneously expressed concern about the limited progress in eliminating gender inequality in access to and use of technologies, in connectivity, in digital knowledge, and in education. CSW-67 also expressed great concern about the continuation and interconnectedness of violence, harassment and oppression that occurs offline and online against women and girls, and they condemned the increase in these acts and offenses.

The commission called for a significant increase in investment in the public and private sectors to address the Gender Digital Divide - economic, social, and cultural barriers that limit the accessibility, utility, and benefits of ICT - Internet Technology - and to promote safer and gender-responsive technology and innovation. CSW-67 also called for inclusive and equitable equity in education, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), information and communication technology and digital knowledge to ensure that all women and girls can thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The increase in these acts and offences was condemned and an appeal was made to consider the following:

- The commission called for a significant increase in investment in the public and private sectors to address the Gender Digital Divide
- Economic, social and cultural barriers that limit the accessibility, utility and benefits of ICT
- Internet Technology - and to promote safer and gender-responsive technology and innovation.

CSW-67 also called for inclusive and equitable equity in education, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), information and communication technology, and digital knowledge to ensure that all women and girls can thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The increase in these limiting acts and offences was condemned and an appeal was made to consider the following:

- Develop digital tools and services to address the needs of all women and girls.
- Guide gender equity in digital policies to overcome barriers to equal access for all women and girls.
- Promote a policy of zero tolerance for violence based on gender, caused by or exacerbated by the use of technology.
- Gender perspective of gender equity in the design and execution of future technologies.
- Advance policies and programs to achieve gender equity in future science and technology fields.
- Develop gender-responsive innovation that challenges gender stereotypes and negative norms.



International Women's News

Nouvelles féministes Internationales

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NEWS is an open Forum for information and opinion on matters of importance to women. It is published by the International Alliance of Women. Items for publication in English should be sent to the Editor:

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