



# ICW-CIF CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2023



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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN



CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES FEMMES

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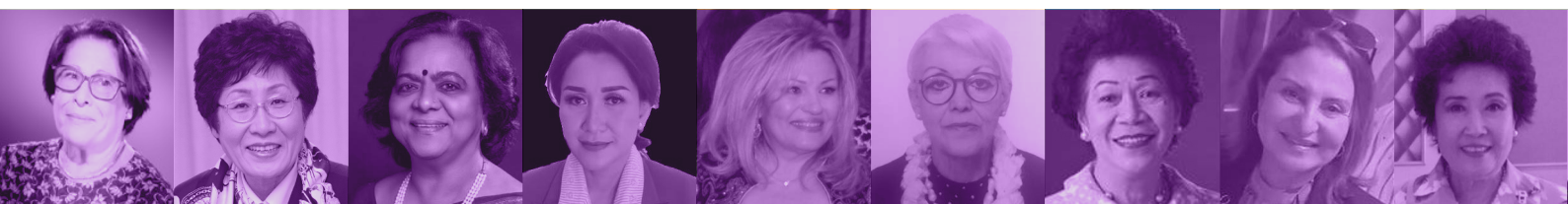
### Advocating for Women

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- National Council of Women of Tunisia /  
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### Famous Women who have made a significant contribution to women's rights

- National Council of African Women (NCAW)  
South Africa  
*Charlotte Mannya-Maweke*
- National Council of Women Malta (NCWM)  
*Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca*
- All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA)  
*Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan*
- National Council of Women's societies  
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*Biodun Christine Olujimi*
- National Council of Women of Madagascar  
/ Conseil National des Femmes de  
Madagascar (CNFM)  
*Mireille Rabenoro*
- National Council of Women Australia  
(NCWA)  
*Dr. Laurel McIntosh*





# INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

## (ICW-CIF)'S STATEMENT

**The International Council of Women – ICW-CIF**, an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, has been committed to advancing women's equal rights and empowerment since its inception in 1888. ICW-CIF firmly believes that the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are indispensable keys to facilitating progress toward sustainable global development.

The International Council of Women applauds UN Women for choosing the theme: **“DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality”**, to mark International Women's Day 2023 in order to highlight the importance of inclusive and transformative technology and digital education for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in the current Digital Age.

Over the years, different approaches have been implemented in both the public and private sectors to help improve the participation of women in innovation and technology.

According to UNESCO reports and to the UN Women's **“The Gender Snapshot 2022”** (refer to tables on following page on UN Women's *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals*), studies have shown that...“ women still account for just 26% of professionals working in artificial intelligence and 28% of engineering graduates; and when they found their own starts-ups, women receive less than 3% of total venture capital compared to men...” It is evident that as societies become more digital-oriented, the digital gender divide must be closed and women must be equipped with the necessary digital skills to participate fully in the digital economies on the same footing as men.

Therefore, working directly on the promotion of technology education for girls in primary and secondary schools, is one way to further ensure and increase the number of women studying innovation and technology in tertiary institutions, and entering the workforce in engineering and related sectors.

Women represent an important pool of talent, and foregoing their contribution means limiting the rate of innovation. We know that education and appropriate training are gateways to the empowerment of women and girls.

Indeed, **education is a fundamental human right**, a force for equity and equality, and is also a development multiplier, providing societies with the necessary tools to respond to change and to innovation in the digital era.

The International Council of Women and its affiliate members around the world, strongly believe that there are no immovable barriers to gender equality in innovation and technology.

Therefore, ICW-CIF calls for the following actions:

- Eliminating the digital gender gap by providing women and girls with critical digital skills;
- Countering gender-stereotypes related to women in scientific and technological fields and careers;
- Adapting technological knowledge and innovation to the realities and needs of women in order to further the eradication of poverty, and to promote economic and social development;





# INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (ICW-CIF)'S STATEMENT

PROGRESS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Snapshot of gender equality across the Sustainable Development Goals

**1 NO POVERTY**

Globally, over **380 million WOMEN AND GIRLS** are in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day. If current trends continue, in sub-Saharan Africa, **more women and girls** will live in extreme poverty by 2030 than do today.

**3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Unsafe abortion is a leading but preventable cause of maternal mortality and morbidity. Today, over **1.2 billion WOMEN AND GIRLS** of reproductive age live in countries and areas with some restrictions on access to safe abortion. **102 million** live in places where abortion is prohibited altogether.

**5 GENDER EQUALITY**

School and day-care closures in 2020 led to an estimated **512 billion** additional hours of unpaid childcare globally for women.

The glass ceiling remains intact. Close to **1 in every 3 MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS** is a woman. At the current pace of change, parity will not be achieved for another 140 years.

**7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**

Affordable and clean energy, key to lifesaving care and productivity, remains **2 in every 10** out of reach for millions of women and girls in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Rising energy prices are making matters worse.

**9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Women hold only **2 in every 10** science, engineering and information and communication technology jobs globally. They comprise only **16.5%** of inventors associated with a patent.

**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**

The majority of the world's women live in cities. **49% OF WOMEN** in urban areas report feeling less safe walking alone at night since COVID-19 began.

**16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**

Strong institutions that support just and peaceful societies are not possible without women. But women globally hold just **42%** of judicial positions and make up a tiny share of police forces - a mere **16%**.

**2 ZERO HUNGER**

Globally, nearly **1 in 3 WOMEN** experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2021. Rising food prices are likely to exacerbate hunger around the world.

**4 QUALITY EDUCATION**

Protracted conflicts, wars and renewed efforts to keep girls out of school perpetuate gender gaps in access to school and learning. **54%** of girls who are not in formal education worldwide live in crisis-affected countries.

**6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**

The lack of clean water claims the lives of more than **800,000 WOMEN AND GIRLS** every year.

**8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Women's labour force participation in 2022 is projected to remain below pre-pandemic levels in **169 countries and areas**.

**10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES**

By the end of 2021, some **44 million WOMEN AND GIRLS** had been forced to flee their homes due to climate change, war, conflict and human rights violations.

**13 OTHER TARGETS**

On average, one disaster resulting in **115 DEATHS AND LOSSES OF \$202 MILLION** was recorded daily during 1970-2019.

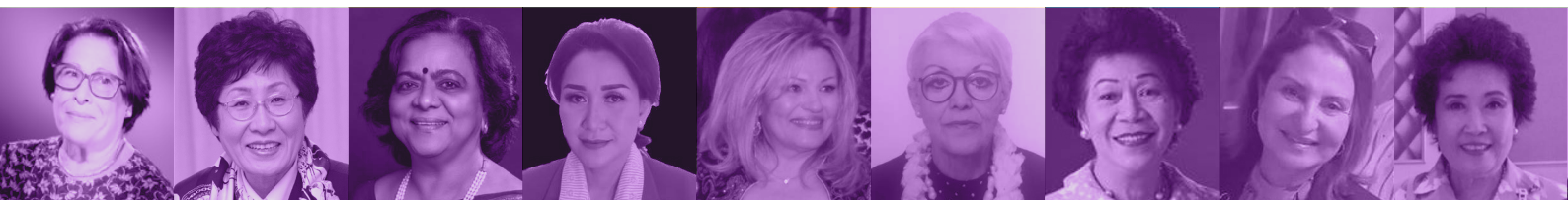
**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**

Funding for gender equality is not keeping pace with the increasing severity of global challenges and backlash against women's rights. Just **4.6%** of bilateral ODA goes to programmes where gender equality is the main objective.

THE GENDER SNAPSHOT 2022

- Integrating gender into the analysis of scientific research and technological innovation and development;
- Taking appropriate measures to support the recruitment, advancement and retention of women and girls in innovation and technology fields through transparent selection criteria leading to their inclusion in the marketplace.

By taking such actions, the International Council of Women stands alongside UN Women towards the achievement of its important goals. ICW joins the "Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality", which aims to double by 2026, the proportion of women working in these vital fields, thus reducing the current digital gender divide.





# OUR NATIONAL COUNCILS' INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENTS



# CONSEIL DES FEMMES FRANCOPHONES DE BELGIQUE (CFFB):

## BELGIUM



**et GROSSESSES MATERNITÉS**

Comment garantir l'autonomie de décision des femmes\* aujourd'hui en Belgique ?

**Jeudi 9 mars 2023**  
de 9h à 17h au Sénat (Bruxelles)

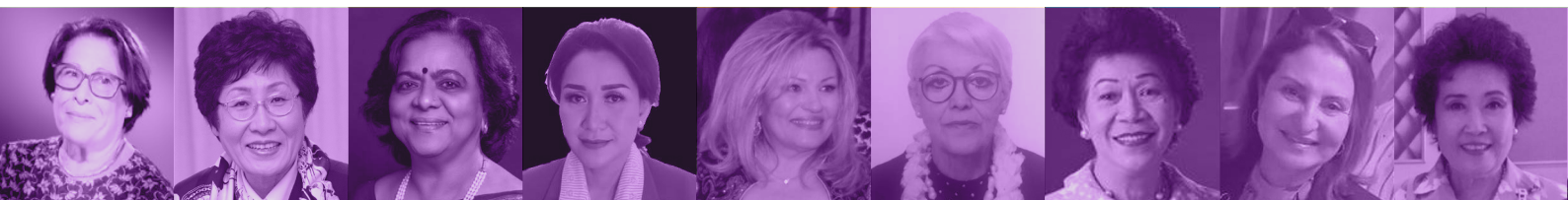
Logos: AAJ, CECIF, Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique, equal.brussels, Service Public Régional de Bruxelles

## GROSSESSES ET MATERNITÉS, COMMENT GARANTIR L'AUTONOMIE DE DÉCISION DES FEMMES AUJOURD'HUI EN BELGIQUE ? LE 9 MARS DE 9 À 17H AU SÉNAT

A l'occasion de la JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DES DROITS DES FEMMES, la commission éthique du Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique, en partenariat avec le Centre d'Action Laïque, le CECIF et avec le soutien

d'Equal.brussels, organise un colloque sur le thème : « Grossesses et maternités, comment garantir l'autonomie de décision des femmes aujourd'hui en Belgique ? »

La réalité des violences faites aux femmes touche tous les milieux et classes sociales et ce, indépendamment de l'âge, du statut économique, de la religion ou des convictions philosophiques, du niveau de scolarité ou encore de l'origine ethnique. Cette réalité sociale concerne une majorité de la population féminine. De plus, cette violence ne se limite pas à la violence physique ; elle comprend également et notamment la violence verbale, la violence psychologique, la violence sexuelle et la violence économique. Violence cachée, la coercition reproductive peut se trouver à l'intersection de toutes ces formes de violences



## CONSEIL DES FEMMES FRANCOPHONES DE BELGIQUE (CFFB):

### BELGIUM



et est étroitement liée à la violence familiale, à la violence entre partenaires intimes et à la violence sexuelle. Explorer et améliorer la compréhension de la coercition reproductive et les moyens de la combattre est un enjeu de santé publique qui permettrait également d'améliorer la lutte contre toutes les autres formes de violence.

L'objectif du colloque est d'éclairer les points aveugles des parcours vécus par les femmes en Belgique, qu'il s'agisse de grossesses désirées ou non désirées, de l'assignation à maternité et du refus de devenir mère, du sabotage contraceptif, des entraves à la stérilisation volontaire, la grossesse pour autrui (GPA), la législation encadrant ces questions ou encore des violences en période de grossesse, que ce soit au sein de la famille, au travail ou lors de prises en charge médicales non respectueuses.

Le sabotage contraceptif est une des violences reprise dans la notion de coercition reproductive, et est encore peu connue. Il désigne « l'ensemble des comportements d'un partenaire qui sabote la contraception dans le but de provoquer une grossesse à l'insu de la femme qui pense par conséquent être protégée ». Ses conséquences sont nombreuses, que ce soit sur la santé psychologique, physique, sur les relations ainsi que sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive. Dès lors, il est important de sensibiliser également les jeunes garçons et les hommes au respect de l'autonomie reproductive car les femmes ont droit à une vie sexuelle et reproductive sans risque ni contraintes.

Outre un état des lieux et la reconnaissance des bonnes pratiques, les discussions et présentations devraient permettre de rédiger une série de recommandations concrètes dans le but d'améliorer les cadres législatifs ainsi que la pratique de terrain.

Contributor:

**Viviane Teitelbaum**





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA (NCWC)

## CANADA



### BRINGING CSW HOME: A CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 01 – 02, 2023 11:00 – 1:00 EST

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated in the month of March, which is springtime in Canada. Our days are warmer, and with that change in the seasons, our hearts fill with joyful enthusiasm, inspiration, and optimism. Spring is our reminder of how empowering change can be. As International Women's Day coincides with the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, we embrace this opportunity to be the agents of positive change in a world where many women continue to face poverty, inequality, oppression, and violence.

As we have learned, change doesn't come quickly or easily. It is a gradual process, one that requires patience, understanding, and nurturing. The sustainable development goals of the UN are just that – goals – and we must develop strategies if we are to succeed in attaining them. UN CSW is the vehicle; we are the drivers.

Knowledge is power, and as members of civil society, we need to know we can make a difference in the lives of women and girls. Therefore, it is vitally important that our women

and girls become more aware of, and familiar with, the CSW, its functions, and its potential impact on our policies, both at home and in the international arena. Meaningful and substantial engagement with our governments is an integral part of the United Nations processes.

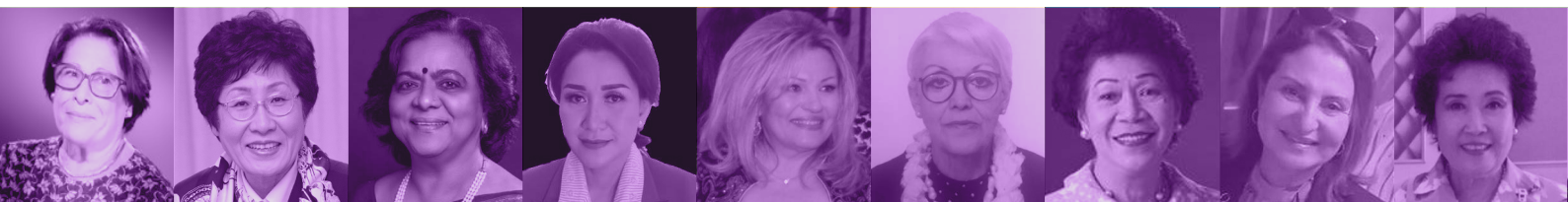
To this end, NCW Canada partnered with the Business and Professional Women of Montreal to 'bring CSW home'. We have set aside two hours on two days, March 01 and 02, to virtually bring together various levels of government, diplomats, academics, and women from national and international CSOs to address the challenges faced by women and girls focusing on the priority theme of "innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" and the review theme of "challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls" which was the agreed upon resolution of CSW62.

This event is being coordinated through the office of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal, Quebec. We are grateful for their assistance with the technical aspects of this virtual gathering and for providing translation services.

#### Day One: Welcome and Preamble to the Event

We are pleased to present virtual messages of welcome and support from:

- Canada's Federal Ministry of International Affairs;







# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA (NCWC)

## CANADA



- Canada's Department of National Defense; and
- Louise Cordeau, CQ, President Le Conseil du statut de la femme.

This will be followed by a discussion on the importance of CSW and the implications of the agreed conclusions for women and girls of Canada. It will include an overview of the history of CSW and how its interaction with civil society organizations, like NCW Canada, have ensured the concerns of women and girls at the grass roots level are not only identified and acknowledged but that strategies to ameliorate them are being put in place. This will be presented by:

- Daniela Chivu, NCW Canada Vice President Justice; Representative to Un CSW; Liaison with Women, Peace, and Security; Representative of Canada to the Regional Caucus of Women and Europe/North America CORE group.

There will be time for questions and comments following the presentation.

### Session One: On-line Hate and Violence Against Women

Online hate and cyberviolence have emerged as extensions of violence against women. These issues are rooted in gender inequality. While people of all genders experience cyberviolence, women in leadership positions are at greater risk of experiencing violence online, especially severe types of harassment and sexualized abuse.

Our presenters for this session are:

- Poh Tan - PhD 08 (Exp. Med), PhD ABD (Educ.), President, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology (SCWIST);
- Debra Christmas - Executive Consultation / strategist / business advisor / Coach / Diversity / Leader / Author.

### Session Two: Women in Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is one of the fastest growing fields in technology, with global spending increasing by 15%+ each year. The challenges of cybersecurity today require a diversity of skills, perspectives, and experiences, and we must encourage women everywhere to follow the path to leadership and success in this exciting and expanding field.

Presentations will be made by:

- Lauren Salim - Project Manager, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) which is Canada's leading think tank working at the intersection of human rights, conflict and emerging technologies, convening stakeholders with the goal of developing better policies to protect human rights.
- Christine St Pierre - former Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie of Quebec.

### Day Two: Welcome and Review of Day One

- The Honourable Bob Rae, Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations
- The Honourable Marci Ien, Federal Minister of Women and Gender Equality





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA (NCWC)

## CANADA



- Luiza Grecu, President of the Business and Professional Women of Montreal

### Overview of Day Two:

- Major General Lise Bourgon, Canadian Armed Forces, Champion of the Women, Peace and Security Portfolio

### Session Three: Women in Science

Science and gender equality are essential to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Great strides have been made in recent years to encourage women and girls to study and work in scientific fields. However, the United Nations reports that women continue to be underrepresented in these sectors.

Our presenters are:

- Marie-Ève Carignan, Ph. D., Professor in the Communications Department at the University of Sherbrooke. She is also the Co-Holder and Head, Media Division, UNESCO Chair for the Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Extremism. Her research focuses mainly on the impact of media in society, misinformation, risk and crisis communication strategies;
- Delphine Le Serre, PhD (Human Sciences), Eng. (Nanotech.), MIT Certificate Founder, President of Education for Tomorrow and Head of the Artificial Intelligence Institute of Learning, Forbes Top 20 Women in EdTech in Europe; and
- Kathy Baig, Eng. FIC, MBA, DHC, President of Engineers Canada, Vice President of

Positioning and Business Development with Stantec, Canada's Top 40 Under 40, a global leader in sustainable design and engineering.

### Session Four: Women in Education

This session will focus on the theme of digital education as we know this is one way of ensuring the achievement of gender equality and empowering women. Studies have shown that access to and the ability to understand and use technologies can unlock many career opportunities.

This discussion will be facilitated by:

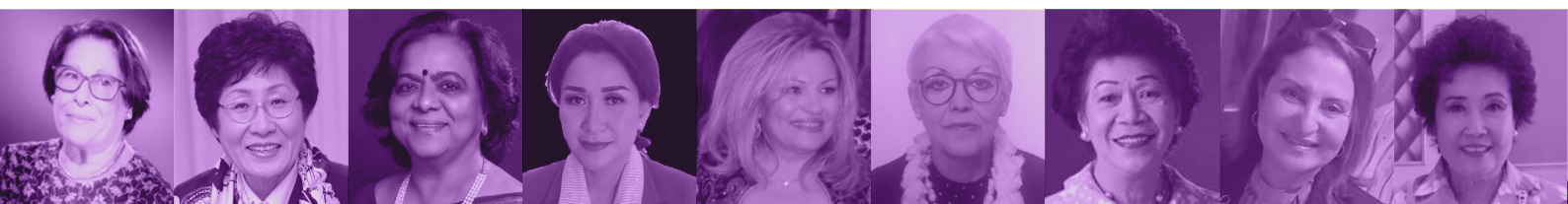
- Dr. Allesia M. Rodriguez y Buena Nuclear Security Division, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); and
- Martine Roy Regional Manager, LGBTQ2+ Business Development

TD Bank Group Quebec and Eastern Canada. Her mandate is to support women entrepreneurs.

### Session Five: Challenges and Risks for Women in Leadership Positions

While the world is evolving, women are still poorly represented in leadership roles, even though there is no shortage of qualified women to do so. We are keenly aware that women are faced with a range of unique challenges that often prevent them from achieving their true potential.

This discussion will be presented by a network of women diplomats:





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA (NCWC)

## CANADA



- Her Excellency Mrs. Konstantina Athanassiadou, Ambassador of Greece to Canada;
- Cristina Marinescu, Acting Consul of Romania in Montreal;
- Agadir Mustafa, Consul General of Iraq in Montreal;
- Silvia Costantini, Consul General of Italy in Montreal; and
- Solange Quintero, Consul General Panama, Head of Mission

and you can register for this virtual event [here](#)

We would be pleased to welcome you to our celebration!!

Contributor:

**Patricia Leson**

### Closing Comments

On International Women's Day 2023, NCW Canada's event, "Bringing CSW Home", will celebrate women and girls, examine the value of CSW, and stress the importance of the implementation of the agreed conclusions at national and international levels.

We are confident that continued meaningful engagement between governments and civil society at our national levels will lead to a positive impact in the lives of women and girls through increased safety online, improved access to education and digital technology, and the strong participation of women in STEM vocations.

For more information on the event, please contact me via email at [presncwc@gmail.com](mailto:presncwc@gmail.com)





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN GB (NCWGB) GREAT BRITAIN



## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NCW AND THE HISTORY OF FEMALE ACTIVISM! WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH 2023 VIA ZOOM

**Caitríona Beaumont is a Professor of Social History at London South Bank University, UK. Her research focuses on the history of female activism, women's social movements and protest in nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland and Britain. Her book *Housewives and Citizens: Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England, 1918-1964* was published in 2013 by Manchester University Press.**

Recent journal articles and chapters feature research relating to gender and the interwar peace movement, the print culture of housewives' associations, the Women's Institutes and Mothers' Union, and the application of social movement theory to the Irish suffrage and women's movement. Caitríona is currently working on a history of intergenerational female activism in Britain, 1960 -1980s.

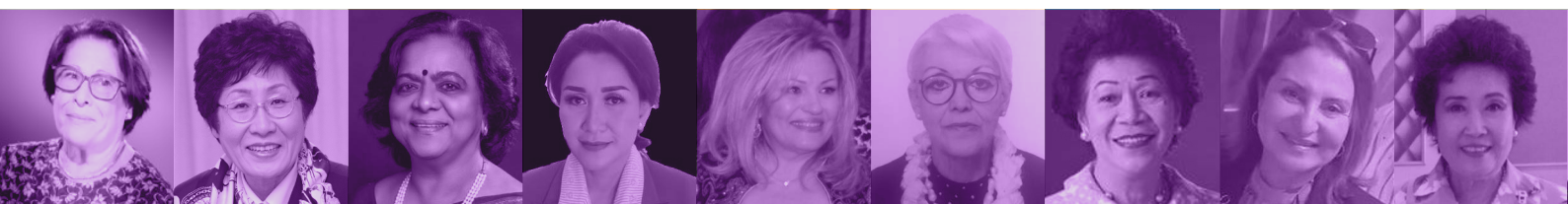
The reach of her work goes beyond academia and she regularly contributes blogs and articles to the websites of a range of organisations including the British Library and appears in the

media for example in the *Channel 4 News* short film [Did Violent Protest Get Women the Vote?](#)

Most recently Caitríona had a short article published in the online journal *The Conversation* – [How a photograph uncovered my grandmother's republican activism during the Irish Revolution.](#)

Prof Beaumont is an elected Trustee and council member of the Royal Historical Society and sits on the boards of a number of international journals. She is co-convenor of the Contemporary British History Seminar at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London.

If you wish to attend, please contact Sheila in the NCW Administrative Office on [info@ncwgb.org](mailto:info@ncwgb.org) or telephone **01325 367375**.



# CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES DE MADAGASCAR (CNFM)

## MADAGASCAR



### LA LISTE DES ACTIVITÉS ORGANISÉES PAR LE CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES DE MADAGASCAR DANS LE CADRE DE LA CÉLÉBRATION DU 8 MARS 2023.

Objectif : Faire connaître le Protocole de Maputo et les avantages de sa ratification aux autorités locales et activistes malgaches.

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protocole\\_de\\_Maputo](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protocole_de_Maputo)

#### **28 février : Atelier sur la participation des femmes à la vie publique et aux processus de décision à Madagascar.**

Objectif : analyser les causes profondes de la faiblesse de participation des femmes aux postes de décision à Madagascar, trouver les stratégies pour accroître cette participation.

Partage et discussion sur la loi sur la participation proportionnelle des femmes votée par l'Assemblée Nationale mais rejetée par le sénat et la HCC.

#### **Deuxième activité (8 mars) : Conférence et promotion des offres sur l'accès des femmes à la technologie ( internet, mobile banking, ..).**

Objectif : Digitalisation au profit de l'autonomisation économique des femmes.

#### **Troisième activité (9 mars) : Atelier de plaidoyer pour une adoption du Protocole de Maputo.**



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (NCWNZ)

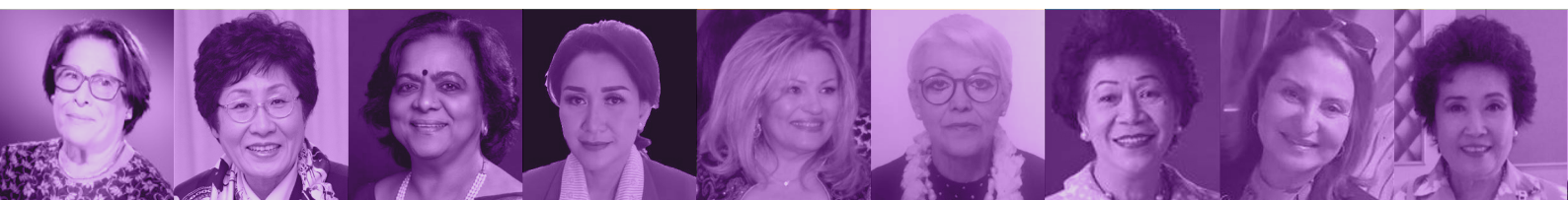
## NEW ZEALAND



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY NEWSLETTER 2023

For International Women's Day 2023, the National Council of Women New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wāhine o Aotearoa is celebrating the incredible progress that has been made in promoting gender equity in Aotearoa New Zealand, whilst simultaneously drawing attention to the ongoing challenges that New Zealand women face today.

130 years ago, Aotearoa New Zealand shaped the world as the first country to grant women the right to vote. New Zealand's world leadership in women's suffrage then became a central part of its image. New Zealand became influential trail-blazers to the rest of the world, bringing a strong, unified and collective voice to women on a global scale. The 130th anniversary alongside International Women's Day serves as an opportunity to honour those who made this happen, reflect on the progress that has been made and the work that still needs to be done.





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (NCWNZ)

## NEW ZEALAND



The NCWNZ was created three years after women won the right to vote. Last year, NCWNZ celebrated its 125th anniversary by hosting a special event in Parliament where the successes were highlighted along with a clear focus on the ongoing inequities that women face today. Descendants of suffragists were present during this exhilarating celebration. The connection between the past, present and future of all who serve and work within NCWNZ was celebrated during this event.

NCWNZ has a lengthy and extraordinary history of promoting improvements toward the quality of life for women, families and the community. Presently, the vision of NCWNZ is to create a gender equal Aotearoa New Zealand.

NCWNZ's actions have aided in the social, economic and cultural fabric of Aotearoa New Zealand. This advocacy floods into many fragments of our community, including advocating for gender equity, pay transparency and financial stability, accessibility for disabled women, domestic violence prevention, and more. Although the work that has been done deserves applause, many years after NCWNZ was founded, women in New Zealand are still fighting to achieve some of the changes that our founders campaigned for over 125 years ago.

**Our overarching theme for International Women's Day is #AccessEquality.** Accessing equality is not an isolated issue, rather it touches on a magnitude of issues in our society that must be addressed. This theme

relates directly to intersectionality, the idea that many women in society experience overlapping forms of oppression and require a higher level of access - such as disabled women, ethnic women, homeless women, women in poverty etc. With this in mind, we are calling attention to all forms of accessibility: access to financial stability, access to equal pay, access for disabled women, and access to safe Internet. We are trying to create an environment in which women, particularly indigenous and ethnic women can gain access to equality.

For International Women's Day, **the Wellington Pōneke Branch of NCWNZ** is hosting an event that is accessible in person and online. The event, 'Fourth-Wave' is named after the most recent feminist movement, with a highlight on the celebration and acceptance of intersectional women. The 'Fourth-Wave' festival aspires to celebrate and empower all women. This event will showcase the voices and talents of women and gender diverse people in Aotearoa New Zealand through kōrero (conversation) and performances of dance, comedy, poetry, music. There will be a live recording of a panel interview for the Get Woke Wellington radio show and podcast that the branch curates. The event will create a fun, celebratory and safe environment in which Wellingtonians can celebrate International Women's Day.

**The Christchurch Ōtautahi Branch of NCWNZ** is celebrating International Women's Day by hosting an event for high school students in the Greater Christchurch area. This event focuses on networking across





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (NCWNZ)

## NEW ZEALAND



high schools to encourage students to voice their experiences of sexual harm and to take action. The workshop is designed by students for students, organised by Students Against Sexual Harm (SASH) at Christchurch Girls' High School. NCWNZ is supporting SASH in organising this event. Its overarching focus is directed at responding to recent information about issues relating to sexual harm in schools. Attendees will discuss issues for students, explore strategies to support other students and options for consent education.

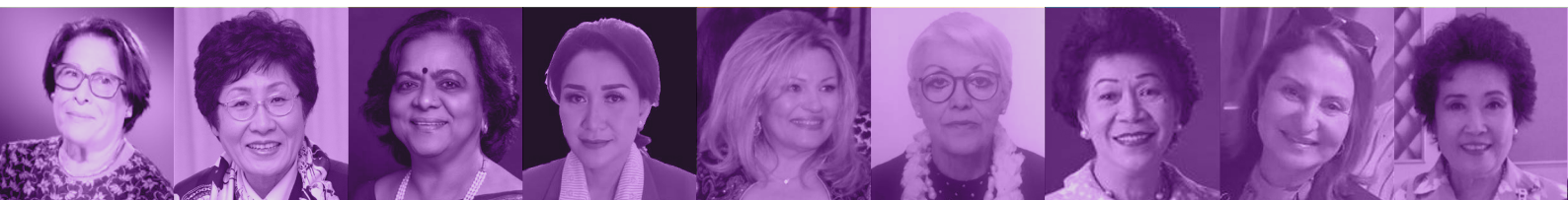
**The Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau Branch of NCWNZ** is hosting an International Women's Day panel event to learn about the importance of financial independence for women, which will be presented through a conversation between highly acclaimed women in Aotearoa New Zealand. Financial independence allows women to feel more secure and respected by society, and in turn granting benefits not only to women but to their families and communities, and the country at large.

International Women's Day serves as a foundation to celebrate all women. We look forward to celebrating the achievements our foremothers have made and the active advocacy that pertains on this monumental day for International Women's Day 2023.

Contributors:

**Rhianna Crawford & Kerri Du Pont**

<https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/iwd2023>







# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES (NCWP)

## PHILIPPINES



### ACTIVITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, MARCH 8, 2023

For March 8, 2023, at approximately 3:00 PM Philippine time, and beaming by zoom from the historic Manila hotel with our Philippine speakers, the ASEAN CONFEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS, the umbrella organization of all Women's Associations in ASEAN, and our very own NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES have jointly organized the hosting of an INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY AND FORUM that will address our theme for 2023:

#### EMBRACING EQUITY

However, being all women in our respective developing countries, except perhaps for developed Singapore, I chose to qualify the theme further into

#### EMBRACING EQUITY THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

because as has been our firsthand experience, equality in social, political, economic terms is largely achieved by being stable economically -- hence, the forum will navigate the viewers into the following:

1. Values of Asian Women,
2. Tools available to Asian women

#### DETAILED PROGRAM FLOW AND LINE UP OF DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS:

In view of the above main carrying theme,

the detailed program of the forum on virtual platform, or zoom, is as follows:

Below are our forum topics and speakers:

#### Opening and Welcome Remarks - Dr. Cecilia La Madrid Dy, Ph.D.

President, ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organizations

President, National Council of Women of the Philippines

#### Overview: How empowered women can enhance economic development - Dr. Nona Saldana-Ricafort, Ph.D.

Vice-President, International Council of Women

#### How empowered women can energize economies in the Asean Context - Ms. Junie Foo

President, Singapore Council of Women Organization

#### Empowering marginalized women in the urban areas - Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff

Deputy President, National Council of Women's Organizations Malaysia

#### Empowering marginalized women in the high density urban areas - Ms. Prescy Yulo

Charter President, RC Makati Ayala Triangle

#### Empowering women in the rural agricultural and fisheries sector - Dr. Bernadette Estrella Arellano



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES (NCWP) PHILIPPINES



Chairperson, Moringaling Philippines Foundation Inc.

**Online business strategies for economic empowerment**  
- Ms. Janette Toral

E-commerce Guru and Expert from the Philippines

**The role of education in embracing equity and economic empowerment**  
- Ms. Juanita A. Ferrido

President, YWCA FOUNDER'S FEDERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES INC.

**Credit extension and financing support mechanisms to empower women for entrepreneurship and livelihood programs**  
- Ms. Elizabeth Carlos Timbol

COO, GrBank

**Proper Waste Management for efficient domestic economics**  
- Ms. Michelle Tanada

Chief Marketing Officer, Media of ActivAsia Inc,

**Global peace as strategic pre-requisite to embracing equity and economic empowerment**  
- Ms. Hanako Ikeno,

President, Global Peace Women

**Summation of proceedings/Closing**  
- Dr. Giwo Rubianto Wiyogo, MPd,

President, NCW Indonesia (KOWANI)

After the main speakers tackle the various mechanisms to aid Empowered Women

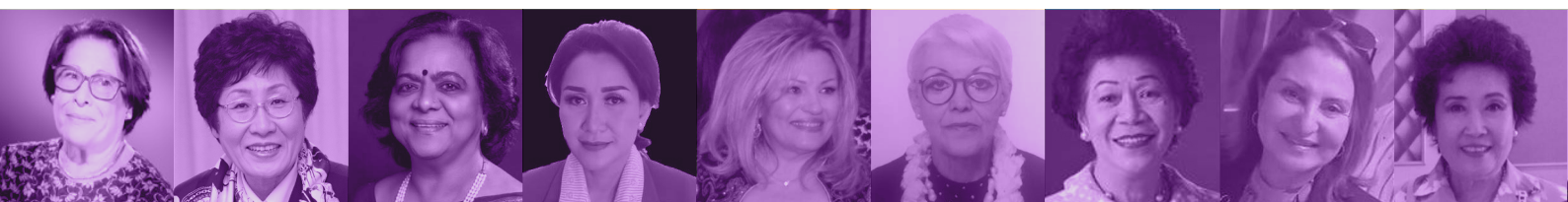
in enhancing and embracing equity through economic empowerment, each country of ACWO is also encouraged to present their BEST PRACTICES, TOOLS and MECHANISMS that they have developed and expanded to pursue the above objectives.

### III. OTHER ONGOING AND CONCURRENT ACTIVITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH:

The ASEAN Confederations of Women's Organizations and the National Council of Women of the Philippines are also busily conducting their various ongoing activities for the continuing empowerment of women and communities.

Among these activities are: President Cecile Dy assisted by IPP Helen Prado

District wide Project "Treat Para Kay Lolo at Lola" with IWCCO as the lead club.



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES (NCWP) PHILIPPINES



Sisterhood and Livelihood Project

Livelihood Project: Sustainability project, hydroponic backyard vegetable gardening in VAWC Center, the Center of Hope



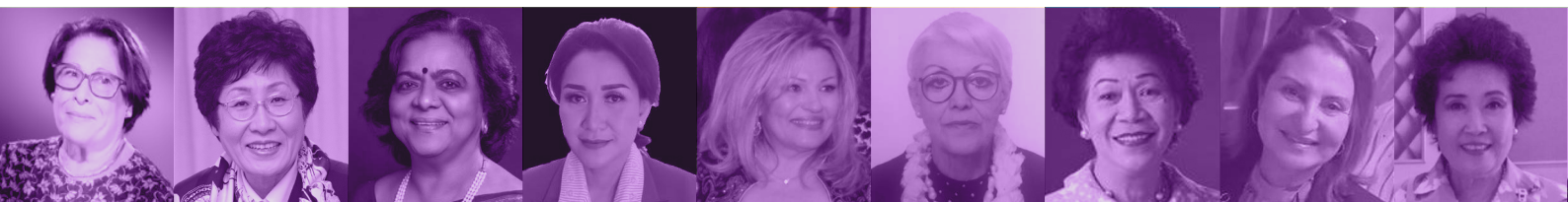
# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES (NCWP) PHILIPPINES



Operation Paglingap: relief operation to 500 families, typhoon Paeng victims of New Washington, Aklan



Indigenous People gift giving in Florida Blanca National Agricultural School and Seminar on Early Pregnancy, Teenage Marriage and Violence Against Women and Children with President Cecilia La Madrid-Dy assisted by IPP Helen Prado.



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES (NCWP) PHILIPPINES



## IV. IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion, empowered women in ASEAN, and particularly here in the Philippines do not stop pounding the pavement in helping their co-women, and the other marginalized sectors of society, such as the deprived children, the sick and the handicapped, the elderly, etc.

It is perhaps in this milieu and culture of concern and cooperation, that women in the Philippines have embraced the concept of Equity: not only between men and women in Philippine society, but more so, across socio-economic barriers by way of sharing their knowledge, material and socio-psychological resources, religious values and traditions, for the greater and equitable benefit of all.

Contributors:

**Dr. Cecilia La Madrid - Dy, Ph.d.**

President

Asean Confederation of Women's  
Organizations

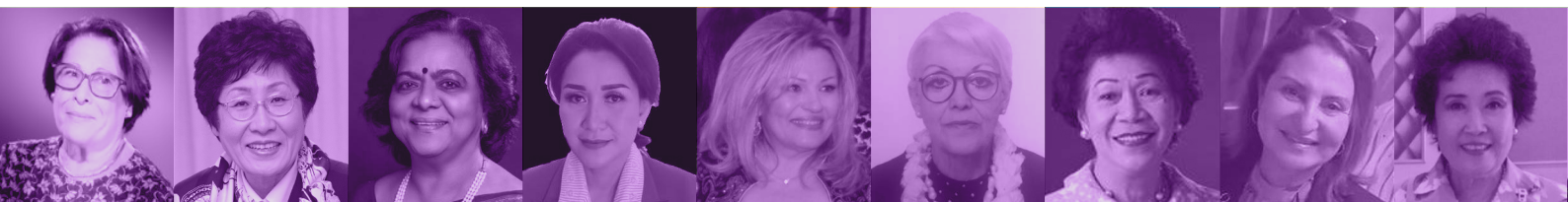
President

National Council of Women of The Philippines





# ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN



# CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES FRANÇAISES (CNFF)

## FRANCE



## ACCESS TO FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

The UN Women's Day, also known as International Women's Rights Day in some countries such as France or Quebec, is an opportunity to reinforce the call for Universal Fundamental Rights for all women of the world.

We salute the extreme courage of our sisters who suffer the horrors of war, natural disasters and dictatorships. These women risk their lives by demonstrating and fighting for their basic rights to freedom of choice, freedom to learn and work.

We want to tell them that we are on their side and express our unwavering support.

### WOMEN AND PRECARIETY

Because women's rights and equal opportunities between women and men are for all women, including those in the most precarious situations, the National Council of French Women - CNFF - is organizing a



workshop on 'Women and Precarity: causes, consequences, recommendations.'

In this workshop, we address the following 4 dimensions of precariousness for women and their children in relation to :

- access to work,
- access to health,
- access to education,
- access to sports and cultural activities

Furthermore, we consider these situations in the following settings :

- rural areas,
- projects,
- single parents,
- part-time workers,
- victims of violence.

The aim of this work is to shed light on all aspects of precariousness, its causes and consequences for women and children: especially its effects on health, employment and learning. We go on to examine school completion rates and access to sports and culture.

This piece of work thus makes it possible for CNFF to draw up recommendations for reducing gender inequalities.

The goal is that everyone should be able to access all their fundamental rights, regardless of the fragility of their situations.



# CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES FRANÇAISES (CNFF)

## FRANCE



### EDUCATION AND DIGITAL ACCESS FOR ALL

“INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND DIGITAL ERA EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS” CSW67

Attention must also be given to digital illiteracy and the social disruption that this has caused for families who do not have access to digital technology.

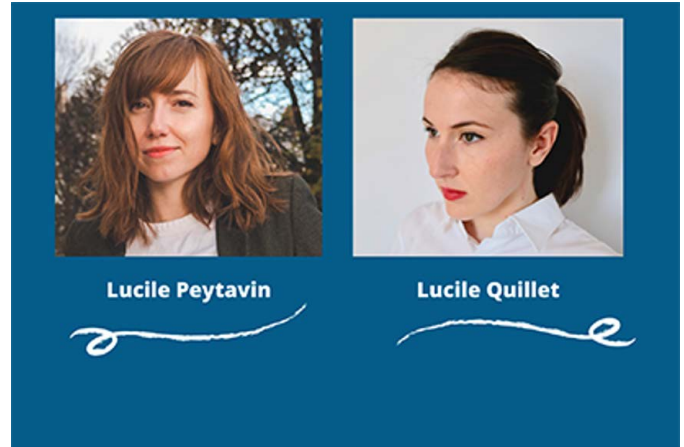
The inclusive education of girls and young women in the digital world is essential, as is investment in the technical professions to combat gender stereotypes and avoid setbacks in equality between women and men.

For this reason, the CNFF co-organizes in partnership with the French section of the European Union of Women - CNFF and UN Women France March 15, 2023 17 H Paris time CSW67 PARALLEL EVENT “INNOVATION BY WOMEN”. During this event, the president Marie-Claude BERTRAND will speak on “Digital Education for Women and Girls” via video.

### EVENTS OF KNOWN CNFF MEMBERS

In honor of International Women’s Rights Day, CNFF member associations will be organizing numerous events

- March 2nd, REGARDS DE FEMMES is holding a conference at the Lyon City Hall “Education on digital tools and the dangers inherent in their use”
- March 8th, SOROPTOMIST INTERNATIONAL FRANCE is encouraging everyone to wear a different shoe on each foot to raise awareness and to demonstrate



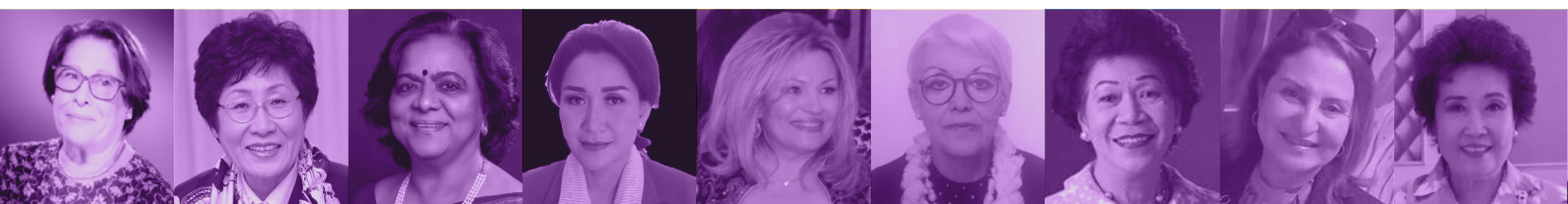
Lucile Peytavin

Lucile Quillet



commitment to gender stereotypes. SI France has also been holding Salons Talents de Femmes exhibitions annually to showcase innovation, women’s creation and handiwork by craftswomen.

- March 20th 6pm, the Femmes Monde association, in partnership with the French National Commission for UNESCO, is holding a conference. Topic : ‘What society costs women,’ Speakers : Lucile Peytavin and Lucile Quillet.
  - Venue : Ministry of Overseas France
- Series of 4 conferences of REFH Réussir l’Egalité Femmes Hommes to make women visible in history





# CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES FRANÇAISES (CNFF)

## FRANCE



## L'ACCES AUX DROITS FONDAMENTAUX POUR TOUTES

La journée onusienne de la femme, nommée aussi **Journée Internationale des Droits des Femmes** dans certains pays comme le France ou le Québec, est l'occasion de renforcer l'appel à l'**Universalité des Droits Fondamentaux pour toutes les Femmes du Monde**.

Nous saluons l'extrême courage de nos sœurs qui subissent les horreurs de la guerre des catastrophes naturelles, des dictatures et qui manifestent et se battent pour leurs droits élémentaires d'être libres, d'apprendre, de travailler, de circuler librement, au péril de leur vie.

Nous tenons à leur dire que nous sommes à leur côté et leur exprimons notre soutien indéfectible.



Opening Tribune of the Palais du Luxembourg with FEMMES VIE LIBERTE

### FEMMES ET PRECARITE

Parce que les droits des femmes et l'égalité des chances entre les femmes et les hommes, sont pour toutes les femmes y compris celles en situation les plus précaires, le Conseil National des Femmes Françaises - CNFF - organise des travaux **Femmes et Précarité** : causes, conséquences, préconisations.

Lors de ce colloque, 4 dimensions de la précarité sont abordées :

- l'accès au travail,
- l'accès à la santé,
- l'accès à l'éducation,
- l'accès à la pratique du sport et aux activités culturelles.

Nous considérons ces situations pour les femmes et leurs enfants :

- en milieu rural,
- dans les quartiers,
- les parentes seules,
- les travailleuses à temps partiels,
- les victimes de violence.

Ces travaux ont pour objectif d'apporter un éclairage sur tous les aspects de la précarité, les causes, les conséquences sur les femmes et les enfants : la santé, l'emploi, les apprentissages et décrochages scolaires, l'accès au sport et à la culture.

Cela permet de dégager des préconisations pour faire reculer les inégalités.

Le but est que chacune puisse accéder à l'ensemble de ses droits fondamentaux nonobstant la fragilité de sa situation.



# CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES FRANÇAISES (CNFF)

## FRANCE



### EDUCATION ET ACCES AU NUMERIQUE POUR TOUTES

« Innovation, changement technologique et éducation à l'ère numérique pour parvenir à l'égalité des sexes et à l'autonomisation de toutes les femmes et les filles. » CSW67

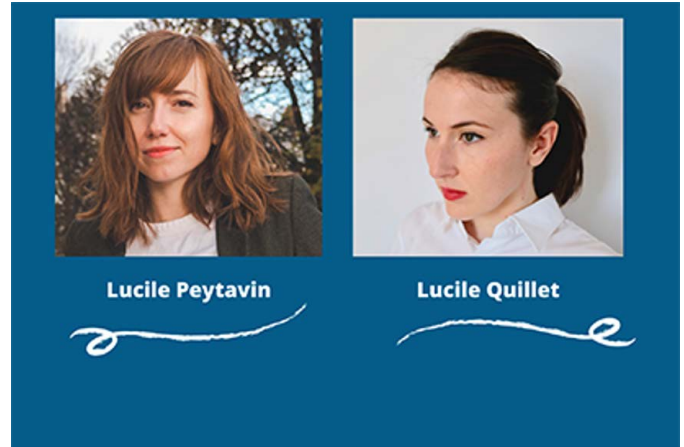
L'attention doit être aussi portée sur l'illettrisme numérique ou illectronisme et la rupture sociale que cela engendre pour les familles qui n'ont pas accès au numérique.

L'éducation inclusive des filles et des jeunes femmes au numérique est indispensable ainsi que leur investissement dans les métiers de la tech pour lutter contre les stéréotypes de genre et éviter les reculs de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes.

C'est pour cette raison que le CNFF co-organise en partenariat avec l'UNION EUROPEENNE DES FEMMES section Française - et ONU FEMMES France le 15 mars 2023 18 h (heure de Paris), un événement parallèle pour la CSW67 « l'innovation par et pour les femmes ». Cet événement est en ligne. Au cours de cet événement, la présidente Marie-Claude BERTRAND interviendra sur « l'Education au numérique pour toutes les Femmes et les filles ».

### EVENEMENTS DES MEMBRES DU CNFF CONNUS

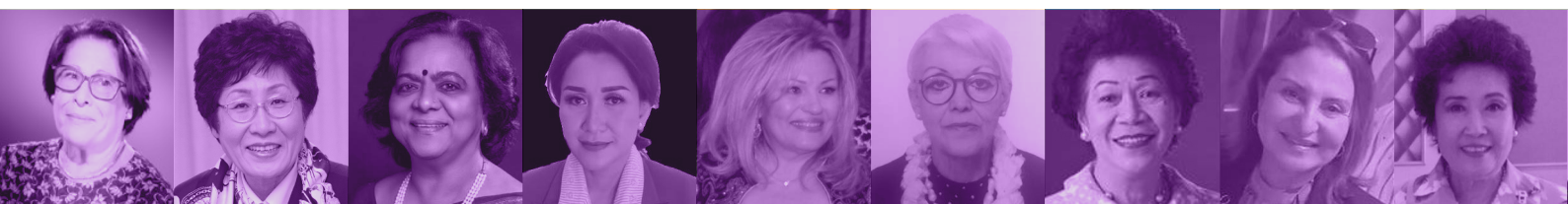
En l'honneur de la journée internationale des droits de la femme, les associations membres du CNFF organisent de nombreuses manifestations mettant en valeur l'innovation, la création féminine, les artisanes, comme :



- les salons TALENTS DE FEMMES des clubs SOROPTIMIST I. France, le communiqué de Presse et le 8 mars, port d'une chaussure différente dans chaque pied pour sensibiliser et témoigner de l'engagement aux stéréotypes de genre,
- la conférence de REGARDS DE FEMMES à la Mairie de LYON « Education aux outils numériques et aux dangers inhérents à leur utilisation » le 2 mars 2023,
- Série de conférences de REFH Réussir l'Egalité Femmes Hommes pour rendre visible les femmes dans l'histoire.

Conférence de L'association Femmes Monde, en partenariat avec la Commission Nationale Française pour l'UNESCO, Rencontre avec les historiennes et essayistes Lucile PEYTAVIN et Lucile QUILLET sur

**“Ce que la société coûte aux femmes”**  
le lundi 20 mars à 18h.



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF INDONESIA (KOWANI) INDONESIA



## THE “IBU BANGSA” MOVEMENT TO ACCELERATE STUNTING REDUCTION IN INDONESIA

Kowani is the oldest and largest women’s federation in Indonesia and currently consists of 102 women organizations and 90 million members from various backgrounds from all over Indonesia. Founded on December 22nd, 1928, Kowani’s vision and mission are to improve the dignity of women and strive for women’s empowerment and development in all aspects of life. Kowani has been a member of the International Council of Women (ICW) since 1973, a founding member of the ASEAN Confederation of Women’s organizations (ACWO) and hold UN recognition and special consultative status at UN ECOSOC.

Since 1935 Kowani has carried out the mandate of the “Ibu Bangsa” whereby the main obligation of Indonesian women is to prepare the next generation to be creative, innovative, physically and spiritually healthy and nationalistic. In preparing a great nation’s generation to keep up with world developments, Kowani is responsible for ensuring that Indonesian women are able to improve their health in a sustainable manner from in their life course as children to adults.

Kowani’s accelerated reduction in stunting is certainly in line with the goals of improving health within a health paradigm resulting in

healthy families. This was based on the results of the Kowani Congress which was held from December 3-5 2014 resulting in two important decisions in the health sector. First, increase participation (active participation) in seeking to achieve public health status through Clean and Healthy Behaviour (PHBS) such as personal and environmental hygiene, nutrition and exercise. Second, improve health in a sustainable manner from the foetus, toddler, teenager, adult to the elderly.

Since 2018, based on the results of the Congress, Kowani has synergized in implementing the Community Movement for Healthy Living and preventing Stunting. In addition, Kowani is committed to welcoming “Indonesia Emas” in 2045 and to give birth to a generation with stunting-free quality human resources. The “Ibu Bangsa” movement to accelerate stunting reduction has mobilized field lines by actively participating in strengthening family welfare with target groups including teenagers, prospective brides, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and mothers with children aged 0-59 months. This has been achieved through communication, information and education (KIE) on family-based health and childcare to all 102 members of the Kowani, BKOW and GOW organizations in Indonesia.

Kowani collaborates with Pita Putih Indonesia (PPI), which is a community organization concerned with improving the health of pregnant women, childbirth, postpartum and the health of babies and children. PPI also is an organization that is an Alliance of the

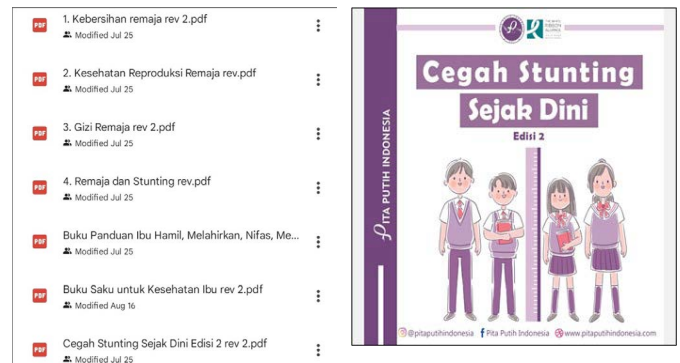


# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF INDONESIA (KOWANI) INDONESIA



Global White Ribbon Alliance (GWRA) based in Washington D.C., as well as a community organization that also supports and assists the Government, partners with the private sector, and NGOs.

(IPSM), the Indonesian Veterinary Medicine Association (ASOHI), with several businesses including PT Oganon Pharma Indonesia and PT. Paragon Technology and Innovation.

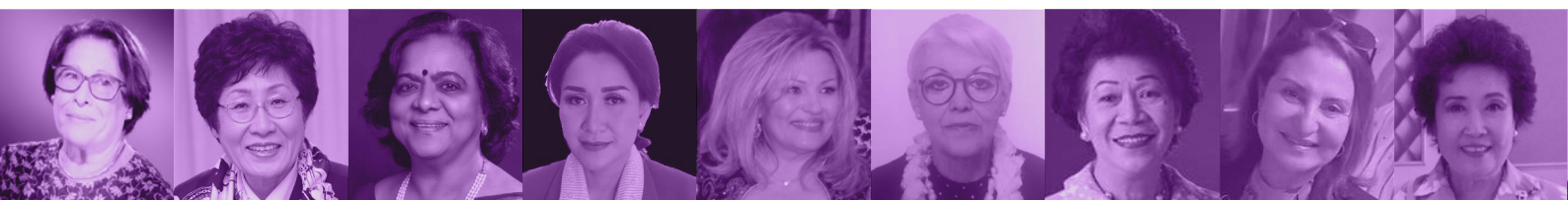


Kowani, Pita Putih Indonesia and all of our partners in Indonesia are concerned about the high rate of stunting in Indonesia, based on the results of the 2022 Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) conducted by the Ministry of Health, the prevalence rate of stunting is still sitting at 21.6%, which is still above the standard set by WHO. This is a public health problem that if left unchecked, will result in Indonesia losing one productive generation.

As a result of the collaborative work undertaken by Kowani, we have developed an e-book for socializing and educating the community. This e-book can be downloaded at <http://tiny.cc/ebookPPI22>, and it provides advice regarding adolescent hygiene, adolescent nutrition, guidebooks for pregnant women, childbirth and postpartum, pocket books for maternal health in order to prevent stunting from an early age. It also talks about the role of fathers and families in improving children's health and preventing stunting.

The President of Indonesia has set a target to reduce stunting to 14% for 2024. Kowani has commenced several pieces of work to reduce the stunting rate according to the President's target. Kowani has conducted a rapid assessment to accelerate stunting reduction for 62 of the 99 members of the Kowani organization. Apart from working with PPI, Kowani also synergizes and collaborates with the Community Social Workers Association

Kowani also collaborates with the Directorate of Health Promotion and Community Empowerment in accelerating the reduction of stunting to increase access to nutritious food and encourage food security, increase public awareness and change people's behaviour to prevent stunting, strengthen convergence through coordination and consolidation of



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF INDONESIA (KOWANI) INDONESIA



central, regional and village programs and activities, improve monitoring and evaluation as a basis for ensuring quality service delivery, increased accountability and acceleration.

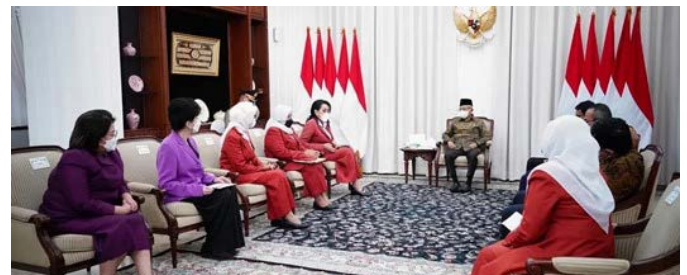


The Indonesian government has set 12 priority provinces specifically to accelerate stunting reduction, and Kowani has intervened in 3 priority provinces, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), North Sumatra and Banten.



With some of Kowani's contributions, on December 6, 2022, Kowani received an award from the head of the BKKBN representing the government, for Kowani's contribution as a

women's organization that provides support for specific nutrition services as well as being a guide to accelerating the reduction of stunting in Indonesia.



On January 3, 2023, the Vice President of Indonesia received an audience from Kowani and Pita Putih Indonesia with the intention of inviting the vice president to attend the declaration of the "Ibu Bangsa" Movement in accelerating the reduction of stunting in Indonesia (This video can be watched on <https://youtu.be/8QoSoKiS-qo>). The purpose of this declaration is to support and assist efforts to save children in the first 1000 days of life from the threat of stunting, as well as monitor and handle cases of malnutrition.

One of the keys to the progress of a nation is the handling of generations from the start. If the stunting rate is low, productive and competent human resources can be produced. Therefore, the problem of stunting is important and needs to be resolved immediately.

Jakarta, 24 February 2023

**Dr. Ir. Giwo Rubianto, M.Pd**  
President of Kowani / NCW of Indonesia



# NATIONAL UNION OF TUNISIAN WOMEN (UNFT)

## TUNISIA



### UNDER THE THEME “FOR AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL WORLD: INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY”, THE UN CELEBRATES THIS YEAR’S INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY.

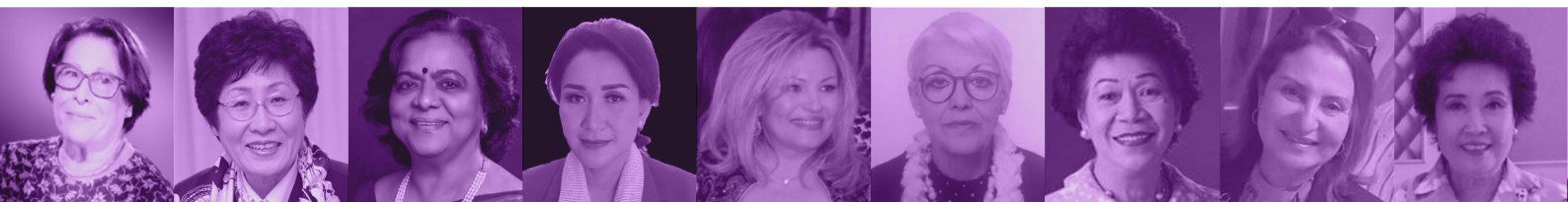
Aligning with the international theme, the UNFT member to ECOSOC chose to emphasize Objectives 5, 6 and 10 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN Resolution 1325. We choose to a)reinforce the legislative assets of the Tunisian women, b) to work for the economic empowerment of the craftswomen by taking advantage of the digitalization and c)to put the technological and environmental innovation at the service of the women farmers towards the preservation of the nature and the environment .

#### 1. Meeting with the Women elected to the new parliament

Members of UNFT met with the women recently elected to the new Tunisian parliament (January 2023) following a massive abstention of women and girls in the last legislative elections resulting in a very small number of the elected women, compared to the number of elected men.

This meeting is essential to support this small number of women to take up their cause in the new parliament, after the unanimous conviction of all political classes, and all components of civil society, that the new electoral law of June 2022 has not lived up to women’s expectations. This new electoral law ignores women’s very high educational level, our massive participation in the change that our country has experienced since 2011, and our political commitment. Indeed, this law is judged as a clear regression on women’s gains and especially on the principle of parity.

Without a legal framework supporting women’s rights, women will not have the chance to progress in their private and public life. It will hinder women’s quest for an egalitarian, equitable and just world, that is why we believe that this meeting will help strengthen our efforts to achieve gender equality and equal opportunities between the different genders in our society.

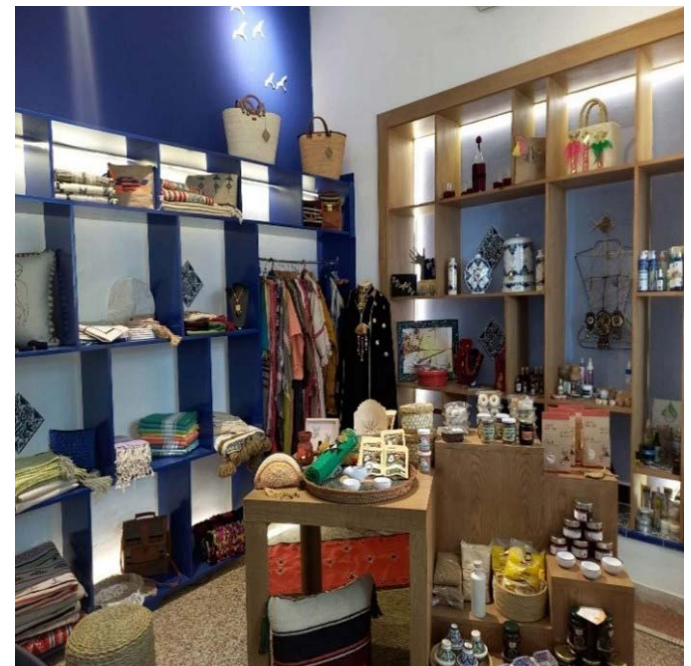


# NATIONAL UNION OF TUNISIAN WOMEN (UNFT)

## TUNISIA



by technological advancement, and to create other marketing channels.



### 2. The digitalization as a mean to fight against the economic violence

Helping the artisans to market their products and achieve economic security is one of the ways to reduce social isolation, precariousness and poverty. Economic insecurity is the cause of much misery suffered by women living in disadvantaged environments that monopolize and maintain them in their situation of economic dependence on others, whether it is the spouse or parents; To this end, the UNFT has set up a digital platform to enable online sales for the benefit of craftswomen and small traders to sell their farm products or crafts, This platform will help fight against economic violence or even physical violence against them imposed or trivialized by their environment and their families.

Our project named "LELLA EL HADHEKA" which means clever or clever lady, is an online sales space created to meet a need created

### 3. Opening of multidisciplinary centers in rural areas

The UNFT has chosen to continue this initiative by opening more multidisciplinary centers intended for girls living in rural areas so that they may acquire a technical skill to enable them to be autonomous, independent and equal to the man.

These centers play a considerable role in combating illiteracy, ignorance and unemployment. It also gives a second chance to young people to return to school after dropping out at an early age (110,000 school dropouts per year according to the Ministry of Education).



# NATIONAL UNION OF TUNISIAN WOMEN (UNFT)

## TUNISIA



Unft Cité El Khadra

24 juin 2022 • 🌐

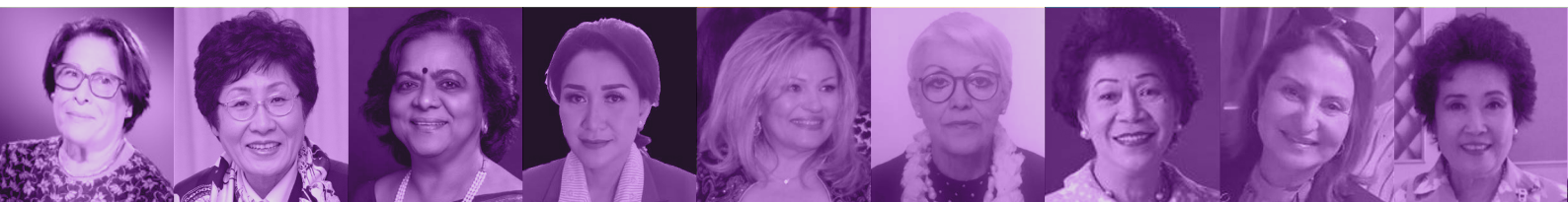


انطلاق امتحان الحلويات  
بمركز التكوين بحي الخضراء



### 4. Innovation and technological and scientific development in the service of women

On the occasion of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on the 10th February 2023, the alliance of Women Researchers under the UNFT organized a scientific seminar on the role of Tunisian women researchers in the achievement of sustainable development goals. At this seminar, we showcased several scientific innovations. These innovations include the preservation of soil, the encouragement of organic farming, the recycling of some waste to preserve nature, extraction of natural remedies from forest plants. These scientific advances contribute to the benefit of women farmers to improve their crops and their living conditions. In fact, the UN in its latest publications has ranked the Tunisian woman second internationally in the scientific field.





## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SOCIETIES (NCWS)

### NIGERIA



## BRIDGING DIGITAL GENDER INEQUALITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC MAINSTREAMING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA.

The digital technology industry is reshaping the Nigerian economy. According to the Bureau for Statistics of the Ministry of Information, Digital Technology contributed 18.44% to Nigeria's GDP in the second quarter of 2022, and additional growth is expected for the sector in the next few years. It is therefore important for women and girls to take advantage of technology for the economic empowerment and advancement of women in Nigeria.

The Digital technology environment is predominantly male; very few women have the opportunity to engage, despite the sector expanding rapidly. According to the 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, Nigeria ranks 139 out of 153 nations, these numbers only highlight the unequal distribution of power in Nigeria's technological environment, where males are actively influencing its development while women are primarily passive consumers.

Digital gender inequality refers to the disparity between how men and women use digital technology. It is also referred to as the digital divide or the gender gap in technology. It is

the unequal ease of access to technology and the internet between boys and girls, as well as between men and women. Despite the clamour for diversity and inclusion in the sector, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Women and girls in developing nations struggle to access technology and have relatively limited skill sets. Apart from the generally poor digital infrastructure and inability of service providers to meet the growing need of users, there is a biased perception that technology is only for boys and men. Women and girls live in comparatively poorer circumstances and are naturally more concerned with meeting the immediate needs of families challenged by food insecurity and worsening economic conditions.

The gender gap in digital skills, though present in both rural and urban locations and across all income levels, is more pronounced for women who are older, less educated, poor, or living in rural areas. Access to education and the digital skills gap are interconnected problems. Women and girls are continuously falling behind in digital skills education, despite the fact that digital skills are in very high demand and opens doors to better economic opportunities.

Women in a patriarchal society as Nigeria are likely to experience bias in terms of access to technology, resources, and education. This is linked to the fact that key institutions that control power like marriage, politics and governance, religion, and other public and private organisations, all represent male supremacy. Consequently, poverty, socio



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SOCIETIES (NCWS)

## NIGERIA



cultural bias, limited funding opportunities for female entrepreneurs, and shortage of mentors, increase the economic inequality. National Council for Women's Societies (NCWS), the umbrella organisation for women in Nigeria, supports the drive to close digital gender gap.

### Why Bridge the digital gender gap

Several reasons make it imperative to increase the presence of women in technology. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offers variety of novel opportunities. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) jobs are in high demand and well-paid; therefore, increasing female participation in the technology sector is one of the feasible ways of lifting women and girls from economic hardship and balancing out income inequality.

The contribution of every member of society, particularly women, men, and youths are essential for sustainable national development in the twenty-first century. Men and women both have important social duties to play in any community to enable it to thrive. Every member of society needs to have the information, skills, and habits necessary to contribute meaningfully to the growth of society's abilities, particularly its digital skills.

Women must pursue inclusion in digital technology, especially in today's world where everything has been digitalized, from simple communication, to sales and marketing, banking, agriculture, travel, education, health, government processes to every known

mundane activity. Women cannot afford to be left behind.

### Bridging the gap

Bridging the digital technology gap, to establish and promote digital inclusion requires intentional actions aimed at dismantling cultural assumptions about gender roles. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, women on average account for just 22% of the total number of STEM university graduates in Nigeria each year. Women must be encouraged to get involved and not to see technology as a masculine career.

Government gender policy must prioritize girl child education at all levels and work towards ending violence against women and girls. Government budget must be gender sensitive and create more opportunities for investment in capacity building for women of all ages especially adult literacy.

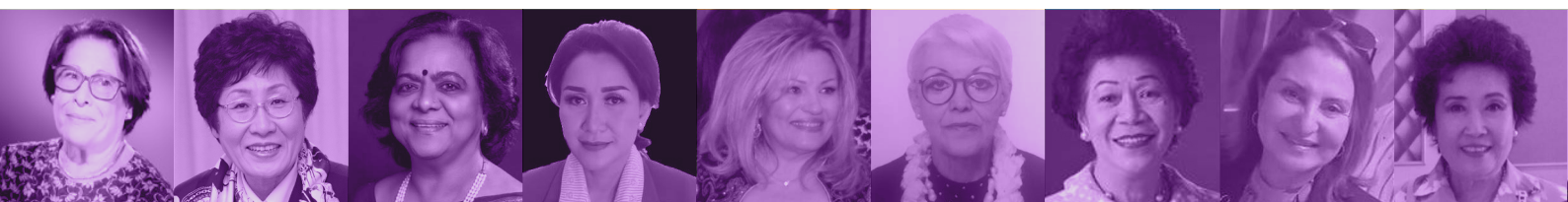
Other strategic actions involve collaboration with organised civil society groups to advocate for;

### Technology scholarship opportunities for women:

Organised women societies like ours should seek partnerships with digital technology firms and service providers for empowerment of women through creating discounted or free learning platforms.

### Special Investment funds for female

**Tech-preneurs:** Advocacy for investment opportunities in Technology, targeting female start-ups, will increase the number of female-led technology businesses.



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**Mentor-ship platforms:** Creating role models for girls who want to venture into Technology. Hand-holding programmes, trans-generational dialogue between young women in technology and female technology leaders is critical to enabling choice of career growth and entrepreneurship development. The girl child needs to be given equal support and access to the tools she needs to succeed in technology as her male peers.

**Early, varied and sustained exposure to digital technologies:** Advancing partnerships for creating interventions in digital skills programmes that will enable women and girls gain digital skills, throughout their lifetimes. The gender gap in technology affects people of all ages, therefore any solutions must emphasise lifelong learning.

**ICT integration in formal education:** By having more access to computers and the Internet, more women/girls will be able to do information searches and pick up new skills that go beyond what they can learn from their teachers and textbooks. ICT will also give students fresh opportunities to put their knowledge into practise; by teaching them how to programme computers or manage a personal website or online publication.

**Encouraging collaborative and peer learning:** Peer learning, in which students learn from and teach each other can be very effective including: group problem-solving tasks; team writing assignments, so that a group can submit a cooperatively authored document reciprocal teaching, in which

students act as teachers to lead discussion, summarize material, ask questions, and clarify material.

**Digital safety:** one way to ensure that women and girls feel free to explore the digital technology world is to ensure a virtual safe space for girls and women; to enable adolescent girls and women access to information and services in a way that is safe, culturally acceptable, and accessible. Implementation of regulations and laws that ensure the on-line safety of users is key.

**Safe spaces for networking and cross learning:** A safe space is a formal or informal place where women and girls feel physically and emotionally safe. The term 'safe,' in the context, refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence), or abuse, feel comfortable and enjoy the freedom to express themselves without the fear of judgement or harm. The key objectives of a safe space are to provide an area where women and girls can:

- Socialize and re-build their social networks;
- Receive social support;
- Acquire contextually relevant skills;
- Access safe and non-stigmatizing; multi-sectorial GBV response services (psychosocial, legal, medical);
- Receive information on issues relating to women's rights, health, and services;
- Recruiting and training gender-sensitive teachers: Involve Gender sensitive teachers





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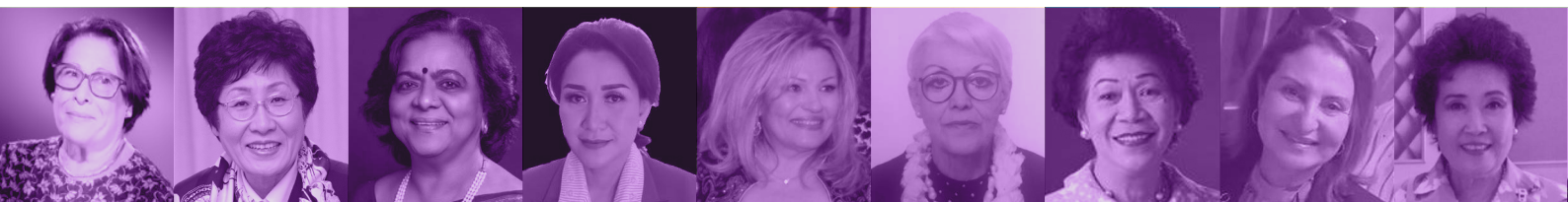
who understand and respond to the needs of their students. They realize that girls and boys have different sexual maturation issues. They encourage equal involvement in class activities and ensure equal access to learning materials.

The 2023 International Women's Day, offers us an opportunity to open conversation around the digital gender gap, and how women can be fully integrated to accelerate gender equality. The theme "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", addresses a major concern for African women. Women and girls must embrace "Innovation and technological change, education in a digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. We believe that women's empowerment must transcend the traditional notion of skills of low economic value, to creating opportunities for equipping African women with 21st-century relevant and in-demand digital technology skills.

National Council for Women's Societies (NCWS), as the foremost advocacy organisation for women, has the capacity to drive this change. Our five strategic action plans; broken down into actionable activities and programs are targeted to advance equality and the rights of women and girls. We engage with government for the design and implementation of gender responsive policies. We also partner with national and international organisations/agencies to support our wide range of empowerment programs for women.

We are indeed proud to celebrate Nigerian women's modest achievements in the field of digital technology and ICT. We are optimistic that our membership of International Council for Women (ICW) will create opportunity to strengthen ties and networks with sister organisations for sustainable actions towards advancing digital equality within the African subregion.

**#EmbraceEquity**





# FAMOUS WOMEN WHO HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AFRICAN WOMEN (NCAW)

## SOUTH AFRICA



## COMMEMORATION OF THE BENEFACTOR CHARLOTTE MANNYA-MAXEKE

**We have chosen the third option and based our choice on the Geneva's 50th Anniversary theme - "Advancement of human rights and the empowerment of women and girls. The choice of the theme and the option are based on the fact that many South African women in our Country have made significant contributions to the empowerment of women but remain undocumented. We therefore took the opportunity to start documenting.**



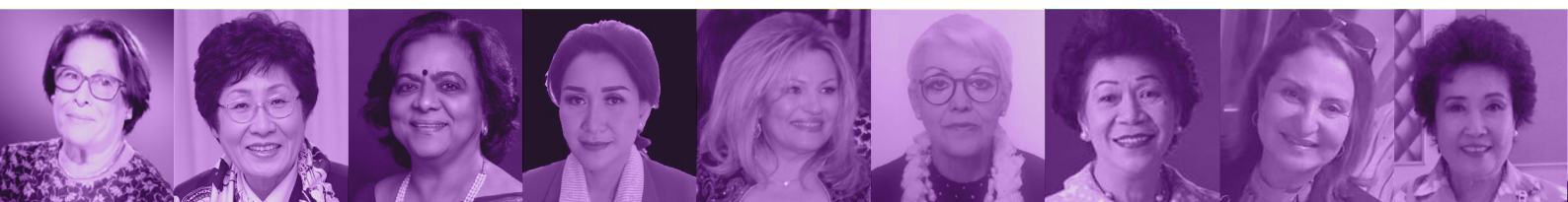
Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke

On the 7 April 1871 a child was born in the Mannya family. She was given the name of Charlotte. She started her primary education in the Eastern Cape at the age of eight in the town of Uitenhage and later proceeded to Port Elizabeth. She completed her high school education at the Edward Memorial School. Later she moved to Kimberly and joined a church choir. This choir performed at various local places, Later the choir was invited to perform in London to perform for Queen Victoria. The choir left Kimberley in 1896. Fortune turned out when Charlotte received a scholarship to study at University of Wilberforce in the USA, where she obtained BSc degree. She came back home as the first Black woman to graduate with a University degree in South Africa. Charlotte met her husband Dr Marshall Maxeke while still in USA.

Her primary objective in life was to emancipate African women. She believed and practiced the principles of unity, service and care to the struggling people, with the aim of ultimately making them to be liberated and independent. She was involved with many activities and programmes of the women's organizations, providing services to those who were in need.

There was a general meeting of all organizations on 18 December 1937 in Bloemfontein. Several women who had attended the meeting decided to form a women's organization and named it NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AFRICAN WOMEN.

Charlotte was unanimously elected the first President of this Organization. The reasons



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AFRICAN WOMEN (NCAW)

## SOUTH AFRICA



were obvious: she was educated and knowledgeable. She was the first Black South African woman to obtain a science degree in USA. She was not selfish. She availed her knowledge skill, capacity and resources to the service of women. That is how she became the first President of this robust Organization, the NCAW.

The first conference of the NCAW was held the following year on 18 December 1938, in Bloemfontein. She rose to the occasion as she gave her first Presidential Address. One of the strongest of the messages in that conference among others is "If you can rise up, bring someone with you".

Throughout her life in South Africa, Charlotte was concerned with issues that affected women during the apartheid regime. She participated in various organizations, advocating for the rights and equality for women in South Africa. The "pass system" which was designed to regulate Black women

by restricting their freedom of movement was under discussion. Charlotte and other women rejected the idea of women carrying pass documents. She headed the delegation to Prime Minister Louis Botha to discuss the issue of pass system. In 1913, agreement was not reached. Charlotte led the first anti pass campaign against the then Government. 700 women marched to Bloemfontein City Council offices and burned their pass documents. In 1918 she founded Bantu Women's League to empower women about their rights.

Charlotte was a leader in her own right. She advocated for any issue which undermined the African women. It was common knowledge that African women were historically facing discrimination and injustice because of their gender.

One of the issues closest to Charlotte's heart was the plight of the domestic workers. She was involved in several protests about the wages of domestic workers. Eventually Charlotte set up an Employment Agency for Women around Johannesburg and an Industrial and Commercial Women's Union.

It was Charlotte's personal mission to share her knowledge with others. She encouraged and motivated children to study. Together with her husband, and AME Church, founded a Primary and Secondary school called Wilberforce Institute south of Johannesburg in 1908. She wanted all children to have an opportunity to gain education and to become leaders. A Nursery school in Tanzania (Charlotte Maxeke Child Care Center) bears her name.



The Wilberforce College in Evaton, South Africa, established by the AME Church with Charlotte Makgomo Manny-Maxeke and her husband, Dr Marshall Maxeke at the forefront



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Charlotte excelled in the field of education. In 1920 she was called by the ministry of education to testify in certain education related issues. Eventually in 1923, she was employed as Probation Officer and also as Court Welfare Officer, working with juvenile magistrate as the first parole Officer for juvenile delinquents.

In one of the NCAW conferences a resolution was adopted that demanded the Government supply the schools going children with fresh milk daily – the most important nutritious food for growing children.

This became the forerunner to the schools feeding scheme. Charlotte died on 16 October 1939 at the age of 68. May her soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

We in the NCAW will forever be grateful to have had women like Charlotte in our midst. She has written a page in the history of South Africa. Her extensive experience fortifies us as an Organisation. We are continuously striving to support and encourage her mission, vision and values that she stood for.

She has written a page in the history of South Africa. Her extensive experience fortifies us as an Organization. We are continuously striving to support and encourage her mission, vision and values that she stood for:

- We encourage and mobilize women to volunteer to join hands in supporting and serving on the programmes that are involved with her legacy.
- To initiate capacity to encourage, train and develop women to be skilled so as to

fight and deal with the socio-economic challenges that continue to face them (Women empowerment).

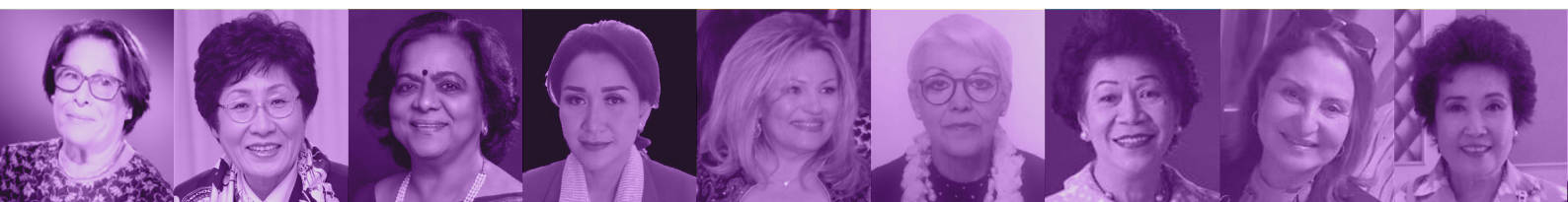
- To have programmes dedicated to advocate and support the vulnerable women in different communities.

In recognition of her contribution, the Johannesburg General Hospital was renamed Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital in 2008. The hospital is the main teaching hospital for the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Faculty of Health Sciences. It also forms part of the Country's heritage.

2021 was declared by the South African Government as the year of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke. This declaration was made because she is one of the women in South Africa, who during her life time, made great impact on the lives of ordinary Black South African people, particularly women and children. We need to appreciate who she was, and how her work influenced the people of South Africa.

The Mannya-Maxeke families founded the CHARLOTTE MANNYA-MAXEKE INSTITUTE in 2019 and have been active since. The goal of the Institute is to produce proud, extraordinary and miraculous African Women in celebration of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke's rich history. She was a remarkable woman who inspired other women. Rest in everlasting peace.

**Mannethe Margaret Mphahlele**  
(President NCAW South Africa)





## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA (NCWM)

### MALTA



## HER EXCELLENCY MARIE-LOUISE COLEIRO PRECA PRESIDENT EMERITUS – NCW MALTA HONORARY LIFE-MEMBER



Former President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca dedicated her life to the well-being of the most vulnerable in society and is deeply passionate and vociferous in this regard. Her passion for all the social aspects are reflected throughout her life and in all the diverse roles she occupied.

From a very young age, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca realised that, in order to bring about change, she had to position herself strategically and she did this by entering politics. Even at a young age, her sense of purpose was to help others. In her own words, Marie-Louise affirms:

‘I cannot tolerate injustice, inequalities and poverty. I bear this badly and need to do something about it. This is an attribute that is highly influenced by my upbringing.’

Marie-Louise is the eldest of six children. Her father Anthony was a teacher and supported children who struggled because they came from vulnerable backgrounds. Marie-Louise was influenced by her father’s belief in social justice, as well as his affirmation that his daughters could achieve their hopes and dreams just as much as his son.

Marie-Louise entered politics at a time when the Government was building the welfare state to address poverty and social exclusion. Marie-Louise identified herself with this and started volunteering in the Labour Party until she became the very first elected female General Secretary of the party. Ms Coleiro Preca was and still is, the first-ever, and only woman who, to date, occupied this elected position at the highest echelon of a Maltese political party.

From then on, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca served in politics for 45 years and was a Member of Parliament for 16 years.

Ms Coleiro Preca was also President of the Labour Women’s Organisation, and a member of the National Bureau of Socialist



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN MALTA (NCWM)

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Youths, founder member of Ġuże Ellul Mercer Foundation, and editor of the newspaper, il-*Ħelsien*. She served as a member of the following Parliamentary Committees: Social Affairs, the Family, and the Foreign Affairs. Ms Coleiro Preca served as Shadow Minister for Social Policy, Tourism, the National Airline, and Health. Coleiro Preca also served at the Council of Europe, as a member of the national parliamentary delegation.

In 2013, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was appointed Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, where she initiated numerous social reforms. It was a role she had aspired to for several years, as there, she knew she could bring about the changes she wanted, to address inequalities, disadvantage, discrimination, vulnerability and poverty.

However, her dreams ended abruptly when the Maltese Parliament unanimously elected Ms Coleiro Preca as President of Malta in 2014.

As President of Malta, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca remained close to the people she served, going beyond her official responsibilities. She met with people from all walks of life and social circumstances, delving deeply into their needs and identifying gaps that prevented them from attaining their well-being.

For these reasons, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca founded a number of entities that addressed the existing lacunae in the social fabric of Maltese society.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca established and still Chairs, the Malta Foundation for the

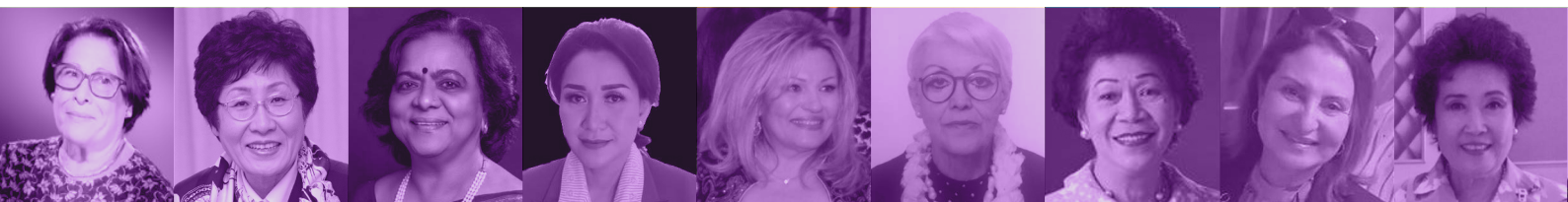
Wellbeing of Society. The Foundation believes in an aspirational, inclusive, just, equitable and eco-friendly society where all people may grow, enjoy a quality of life which is sustainable, and engage in productive and meaningful relationships. The Foundation advocates for active citizenship and social responsibility to one another as human beings, at community level, nationally as well as internationally. It creates and provides safe spaces for human interaction and dialogue.

The Foundation, in collaboration with the University of Malta and other relevant research entities, conducts empirical research related to children's rights, children within the family and community, and works in developing the proper mechanisms to measure wellbeing on a national level. Children's Rights and meaningful child participation constitutes an integral part of the work of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society.

Throughout the years the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society has been recognised by international agencies such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission as an expert when it comes to child participation in Malta.

Marie-Louise founded EmPOWer, a network of women's organisations which come together under one umbrella to secure a stronger voice in the debate for equality, to empower women and girls in whatever they want to achieve, and to inspire them to take on leadership roles.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca also founded and still chairs The Malta Trust Foundation with



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## MALTA



the specific aim to develop initiatives that support young people and communities that are facing particular challenges and who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The Malta Trust Foundation brings together academics, psychosocial professionals, the business community and civil society organisations with the aim of delivering a tangible impact in gaps within existing services.

The Malta Trust Foundation seeks to support vulnerable communities through initiatives that are both educational and empowering in aiding individuals reach their full potential, with an emphasis on projects of a psychosocial nature.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca established the Emanuele Cancer Research Foundation Malta with the purpose of reducing the impact and burden of cancer on the people of Malta, the Mediterranean Region and globally through supporting and promoting world class cancer research and development and education. The Foundation facilitates excellence in cancer research and collaboration among scientific, clinical, and psychosocial disciplines. The Emanuele Cancer Research Foundation endeavours to promote the health and wellbeing of every person, especially those individuals and families touched by cancer. The primary purpose of the Foundation is to reduce the impact and burden of cancer in Malta, the Mediterranean Region and globally, through promoting excellent cancer research, in close collaboration with other internationally renowned cancer research centres.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was elected President of Eurochild in April 2019 and re-elected for a second term in 2022. Eurochild is a pan-European network of organisations and individuals working with and for children in 35 European countries. Being at the helm of Eurochild, Marie-Louise works incessantly to bring an end to child poverty and social exclusion in Europe, an end to institutional care for all children, and to ensure that children's rights are safeguarded. Eurochild aims to put children at the heart of European Policy.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca is an active Member of the Council of World Women Leaders, which is an independent, self-governing network of 90 current and former women Presidents and prime ministers. The Council of Women World Leaders Secretariat is hosted at the United Nations Foundation in Washington, D.C and is an affiliate of the UN Foundation. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca mentors young women from Columbia University in the United States, aspiring to be leaders themselves.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca is a Member of the Women Political Leader Global Forum Advisory Board based in Brussels. In this role, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca initiated research into the maternal health of women throughout the European Union, as well as research into mental health of women and girls following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also, within her role on the Women Political Leader Global Forum Advisory Board, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca initiated the Girl2Leader



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campaign, which seeks to get more girls involved in politics.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca collaborates closely with Business and Professional Women International, a worldwide organisation committed to networking among and empowering women worldwide. In Malta, Marie-Louise was instrumental in initiating career mentoring fora for girls, and which has grown immensely. The aim of the for a is to develop the professional, leadership and business potential of women on all levels through advocacy, mentoring and skill building.

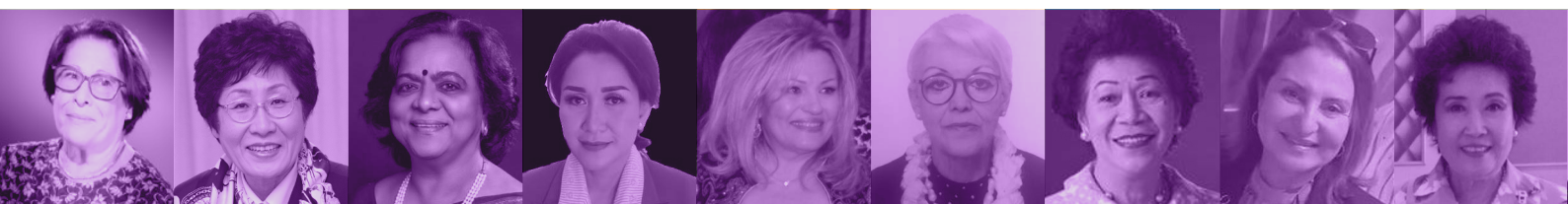
Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca advocated passionately for the recognition of Femicide as a crime against women, both in Malta and at European Union. She advocated as well for the setting up of a European-wide Observatory on Femicide, which would effectively organise and collate relevant information from across the European Union, for the benefit of all women.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca is deeply passionate and vociferous about improving the lives of the most vulnerable in society, continuing to be so throughout Her Presidency, and beyond. She is a strong advocate and avid speaker on a number of social issues including social justice, equality and equity, children's rights and gender equality.

Ms Coleiro is often invited as a keynote speaker in international conferences focusing on women, among an array of other themes, but always focusing on inequalities.

Marie Louise Coleiro Preca graduated with a Bachelor in Legal and Humanistic Studies, and a Notary Public from the University of Malta. Ms Coleiro Preca is also Honorary Professor of the University of Warwick, Honorary Doctor of Laws from University of Leicester (UK), and Honorary Doctor of Literature from the University of Malta.

Marie Louise Coleiro Preca was also acknowledged internationally through numerous State Honours and awards bestowed on her.



## ALL PAKISTAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (APWA)

### PAKISTAN



## BEGUM RAANA LIAQUAT

### ALI KHAN



I am inspired by the founder of All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) and would like to share her hard work for the All Pakistan Women's Association.

Begum Raana Liaquat Ali Khan was one of the leading women and prominent figures in the Pakistan movement along with her husband who not only witness the creation of Pakistan but also give her services to newborn Pakistan. She was the radical lady with new thoughts and ideas who is always ready to give her 100% whatever the situation was.

Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan was born on February the 13th, 1905, in Almora in the United Provinces (UP) of India. She belonged to the Pant family, who were high caste Brahmins. Her grandfather chose to become a Christian, much to the chagrin of the other PANTS.

Since her childhood, she had been very active and possessed the quality of good leadership. She was the third child in a family of four sisters and five brothers. After completing her school education at Wellesley Girl's High School, Nainatal, in the UP, she attended the Isabella Thoburn High School and College in Lucknow. In 1927, she received her Bachelor

degree in Arts and went on to complete her Master's degree in Economics and Sociology a thesis on the topic "Women Labor in Agriculture in the United Provinces". In her research work, her hypothesis was to explore the role of the Indian rural women to its highest extent in the years to come. Her thesis was acknowledged as the best thesis of the year, and she was awarded high Honors grades. She was greatly praised by the examiners and professors.

Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan played an important role in the creation and consolidation of Pakistan, She Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, a great leader was desisted to be a well-known Pakistani women's rights activist, educationalist, economist and diplomat.

She was an extraordinarily intelligent lady, a good administrator, and a woman of vision and substance. During the Pakistan Movement, she successfully mobilized the Muslim women to emerge from their houses to work for a Muslim nation. As a women rights activist, in her entire life, she worked for the betterment of health, education and training of the women. After Partition, she spearheaded the women's movement in Pakistan by organizing several institutions and organizations. In fact, she opened the doors of development for women to come forward and contribute in the progress of the country with their talent and capability.

After the tragic assassination of her husband, she was determined to face bravely the problems that confronted her, especially, the upbringing of her children and their education.



## ALL PAKISTAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (APWA)

### PAKISTAN



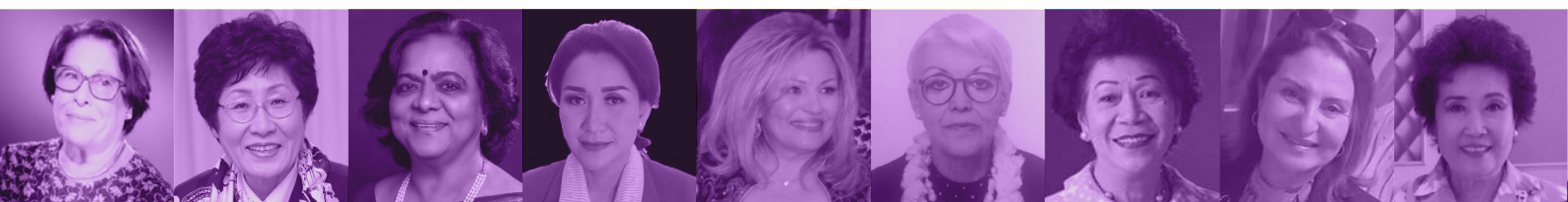
Then she accepted a diplomatic posting as an ambassador to the Netherlands and became the world's first Muslim woman ambassador. She served the country as an ambassador till 1966. Later, during the 1970s, she became the Governor of Sindh, and this again was the first time that a woman became the governor of a province. During her long life, she visited a few countries as the wife of a Prime Minister, as an Ambassador and on foreign invitations. As Human Rights activist, she received many national and international awards.

Shortly after the birth of Pakistan, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan formed the Pakistan Women's Voluntary Service to organize and co-ordinate the women's activities. At that time Muslim women, who had never left their homes, came by the hundreds to help in the hospitals, transit camps and on roadsides. Under the regulation of Begum Ra'ana, various kinds of offices were opened. An Employment Bureau, a Lost and Found Bureau, a Marriage Bureau, a Widow's Home and an Abducted Women's Home, were formed and run by women volunteers.<sup>30</sup> Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, along with the others, took her turn in tending to the sick, visiting camps, organizing transport and supplies, and driving out in the trucks, which toured the streets and outlying areas of the cities. She distributed blankets, clothing and food to those who were unable, by any reason, to reach the main camps.

In January 1948, the Pakistan Women's National Guard was set up and proper training was imparted and Begum Ra'ana was given the rank of Brigadier.

On 22 nd February 1949, Begum Ra'ana convened an All Pakistan Women's Conference at the Prime Minister's residence in Karachi. This was attended by over a hundred well-known and established women workers, who were invited from all spheres of the national life. Thus, the All Pakistan Women's Association, popularly known as APWA came into being. This proved to be such a strong organization that it is still active to date. It is an entirely non-party organization, whose aims and objects were the social, educational, political and cultural hoist of women. APWA has provincial and district branches throughout Pakistan and a membership of several thousands. Nationally, APWA has two main branches and more than sixty-eight smaller branches throughout the country. Internationally, it has Category B Consultative status with The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), affiliation status with all the major International Women's groups like, General Federation Women's Club, the International Alliance of Women, the Associated Country Women of the World, the International Council of Women, the World Assembly of Youth and it is active in attending international meetings, conferences, seminars and so forth through delegation, representative and advisory work.

Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan has given her hard and painstaking work for the cause of Pakistan till to her last breath and become inspirational personality for the woman's as well as for males. She never gives up in her life, gave her all support to her husband shoulder



# ALL PAKISTAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (APWA)

## PAKISTAN



to shoulder, her life which was full of valor, gallant and dare is a big example for women of Pakistan. She will always remain in our hearts.

organization with the same devotion, hard work and love as Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali did.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the All Pakistan Women's Association are briefly stated as follows:

1. "The informed and intelligent participation of the women of Pakistan in the growth and development of their country.
2. The advancement of the welfare of Pakistani Women through the Improvement of their Legal, Political, Social and Economic status.
3. The promotion of educational and cultural programmes and policies all over the country.
4. The Health and Wellbeing of the people of Pakistan in the home and in the community.
5. The promotion of international goodwill and the brotherhood of mankind."

Even today All Pakistan Women's Association is working on the same lines and whole of Even today All Pakistan Women's Association is working on the same lines and whole of Pakistani women are benefiting from the origination especially the rural women.

Began Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan had created a great organization for the betterment of women. I would like to encourage every woman in Pakistan to join it and look up to our founder and continue to work for the



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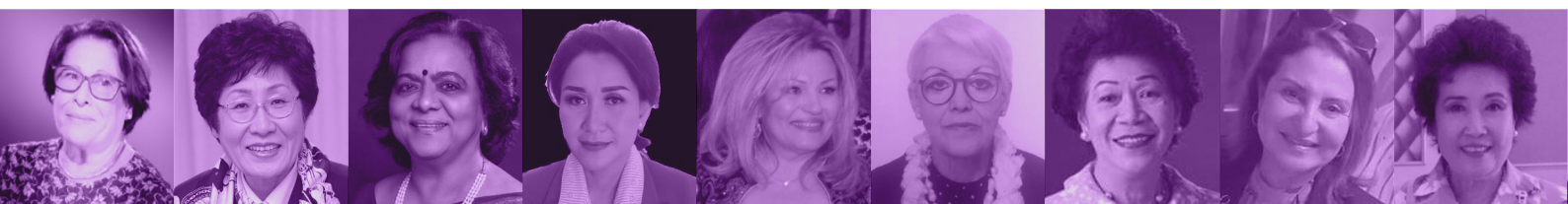
## ADVANCING AND SECURING GENDER EQUALITY IN NIGERIA AND AFRICA: THE DETERMINATION AND DEDICATION OF SENATOR BIODUN CHRISTINE OLUJIMI

One of the women in Nigeria who have made significant contributions to the advancement of women's rights is Senator Biodun Christine Olujimi. For almost a decade, she has been a key contributor to highlighting the importance of constitutional, legal, and regulatory reforms/mechanisms as positive steps towards promoting a more inclusive society. She has also championed the participation of women in electoral politics and elective representation, as well as being at the forefront of advocating for the social and economic rights of girls and women.

Since she won a seat in the Senate in 2015, she has sponsored several gender-based legislations to empower lives. Through her legislative work, she influenced the rise of a women's grassroots movement, by working alongside civil society organisations, networks and groups across Nigeria. Although the journey to pass women-centred legislation in the Senate where she is serving her second

term has been filled with several challenges, she has remained on course to fulfil the vision for the rights and freedoms of Nigerian girls and women.

Her signature Bill is the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill. The purpose of the Bill which is still in the legislative pipeline is to give effect to several Chapters on the Fundamental Rights in Nigeria's Constitution. This journey commenced eight years ago when she sponsored the Women's Empowerment Bill and the Gender Equality Bill.





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SOCIETIES (NCWS)

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Neither of these Bills gained traction in the 109-seat Senate, so she went back to the drawing board, synthesized the Bills and returned with what is now known as the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill.

This proposed legal framework seeks to domesticate certain aspects of CEDAW and guarantee the rights of girls and women in Nigeria. It also seeks to address several forms of discrimination such as land ownership, inheritance, widowhood rights, child marriage, education, employment, and sexual and gender-based violence etc. Furthermore, embedded in the Bill are some of the historical issues of gender imbalance in appointments and representation in public affairs. Indeed, Nigeria lags far behind in the gender gap index in its federal and state parliaments, compared to numerous countries worldwide.

Also, only a few women hold appointments at the Federal Executive cabinet, as well as at the level of the States. However, there was hope and conviction that the Bill being centred on social justice for all would scale through the male-dominated senate. Unfortunately, despite all the best arguments and explanations put forward which included highlighting the benefits of women in decision-making positions in public institutions and a fairer society for both men and women, the Bill failed to pass its Second Reading in 2015.

The reasons set out by the male-dominated Senate ranged from religious and traditional beliefs to sociocultural values etc. But it was not a total failure, as the Senators resolved



that the Bill should be revised considering the concerns raised on the floor of the Senate. Undeterred Senator Olujimi in collaboration with civil society organisations, technical partners and other stakeholders, reworked the contentious parts of the Bill and on 15 June 2016, re-presented a revised version with the title: "A Bill for an Act to Incorporate and Enforce certain Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Protocol to the African charter On Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa and Other Related Matters Connected Therewith." This time, it passed over the hurdles of the male objection, but due to the pressure of time, went no further because of the expiration of the 8th National Assembly's tenure.

**Contributor:**

Gloria Laraba Shoda



# CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES DE MADAGASCAR (CNFM)

## MADAGASCAR



### MIREILLE RABENORO, THE ICON OF THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS: AN ATYPICAL LIFE COURSE (1953-2021)



Swearing-in during her taking office as President of National Independent Commission of Human Rights

Mireille RABENORO passed away on 16 June 2021 in Montpellier (France) following a lengthy illness. In acknowledgment of the recent repatriation of her ashes to Madagascar, the National Council of Women of Madagascar (C.N.F.M) wishes to pay her a last tribute with this article.

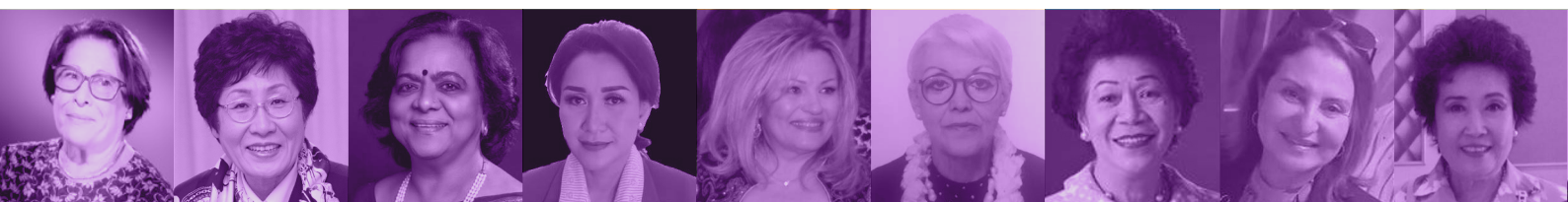
Thirteen years ago, in 2010, Mireille co-founded the CNFM with her colleagues. Their main objective is to promote the rights of Malagasy women. According to her (among her many struggles), body autonomy or the right of a person to make decisions about his/her own body is the ultimate human right.

The right for safe abortion was thus one of her last crusades; a long-term battle that we, Malagasy women, must continue in honour of her legacy.

Mireille was the daughter of Césaire Rabenoro, a Malagasy politician in the early days of Madagascar's independence, working with the first president Philbert Tsiranana. This paternal heritage paved the way for the exemplary life of Mireille Rabenoro. A well-known adage of

the Malagasy people: "a child has to be better than his father", takes here all its meaning to express the fact that the life to which we aspire is an even better life than our parents' life. For that, you must first have roots well buried in a nurturing soil before you can fly off on your own. Deeply inspired by this Malagasy wisdom, Mireille Rabenoro was thus able to take the path laid out by her well-known father to fight fiercely against the injustices of this world.

Mireille Rabenoro was the first Malagasy woman to hold the position of President of the National Independent Commission on Human Rights (CNIDH), one of the highest institutions of the Malagasy State, guaranteeing respect for these rights. This immersion in politics - after her passages at the Ministry of Population and the Prime Minister Office - reflects one of the salient features of her personality: the instinctive ability to seize all the necessary instruments to carry out her fight. Due to her far-sightedness, she very quickly understood that in Madagascar, politics is essential to achieve a cause of such importance.



# CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES DE MADAGASCAR (CNFM)

## MADAGASCAR



In Madagascar, we believe that the more you wish to fight a major battle to play a role in the social landscape of your time and your country, the more you must know how to adopt the posture of a hands-on woman and of a committed intellectual woman.

This double posture accompanied Mireille throughout her life as a fighter. She was able to combine the collective aspiration of her community, that she wanted to alleviate their daily suffering on the one hand, and on the other, the need to participate on the debates and resolutions of international bodies on the subject.

Mireille Rabenoro knew that most clandestine abortions result in a meaningless medical patch ups. Although pregnant women are aware of this, they continue to pursue this path as they simply have no choice. The number of post-abortion deaths thus increases from year to year, with an increasingly younger population. The bigger issue in Madagascar is the cry of distress of these pregnant women who, for some reason, do not feel ready to face the consequence of pregnancy and motherhood: In fact, they continue to choose clandestine abortions even at the expense of their lives.

Mireille Rabenoro clearly heard these cries of distress, but in her political realism she knew that these tears of despair were unfortunately not enough to influence the process. So, she took her pen to write editorials in the major Capital newspaper with further publications in specialized journals to advocate in favor

of abortions to save a mother in the event of a complicated delivery, in favor of abortions carrying fetal malformations and in favor of abortions related to incest or rape.

She also did not hesitate to take to the microphone in national and international bodies, to tirelessly remind Politicians in Madagascar that even after Madagascar ratified the Maputo Protocol on 11 July 2003, nothing really concrete has been done since then and Malagasy women continue to suffer.

Consequently, CNFM still has a long way to go, but Mireille Rabenoro has already given us a head start. Mireille is and will remain a model for us.

Contributors:

**Soatody Estelle Amad Razanadrakoto**

General Secretary of the National Council of Women in Madagascar



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA (NCWA)

## AUSTRALIA

**NCWA** NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA

## DR LAUREL MACINTOSH OBE

1924 - 2022



For International Women's Day 2023, I would like to share the life story of Dr Laurel Macintosh OBE. Laurel and I both live in Brisbane,

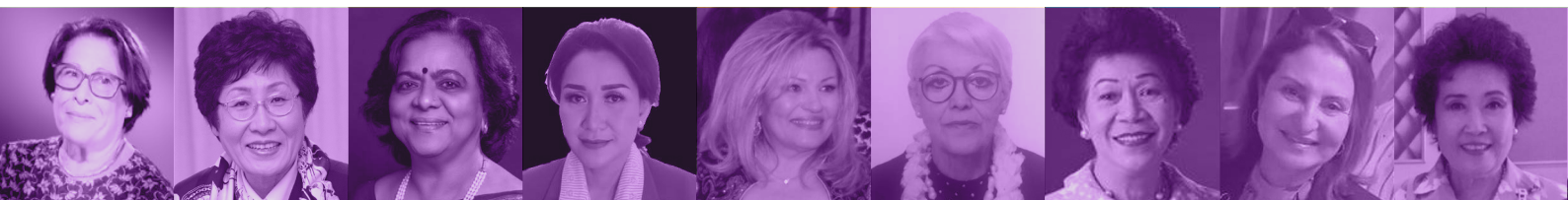
in the State of Queensland in Australia. Over the past decade, I met Laurel at several NCW events and feel privileged that I was able to spend a few precious moments with her before her passing last year at a ripe old age of 98.

She was delighted to learn about my appointment as NCWA President in 2021 as she was the last Queenslander to serve as National President between 1979-1982. When I met with her a couple of times to discuss my vision for a House for Women and the obstacles that I had in my way, she advised me to think big and to take on the good fight. As NCWQ President, Laurel took on the unions and retailers in the late 70s, demanding that shopping hours be extended in Brisbane and Ipswich to cater for working mothers. Like many working mothers, I am a happy recipient of this change in legislation, and I am grateful for her advocacy.

Laurel never married, instead choosing to dedicate her life to service. This is her story.

"Laurel Macintosh was born on 29 April 1924 in country New South Wales, the daughter of C.H.V. Macintosh, a 5th-generation Australian. She was educated at Sydney Girls' High School and the University of Sydney, graduating in general medicine in 1946. She trained in ophthalmology at the Royal Brisbane Hospital 1947-1951, and then as a surgeon at the Royal Eye Hospital, London, 1951-1953. She entered private practice in Orange, NSW, 1954-1958, then moved to Brisbane where she became a visiting ophthalmologist with the Royal Children's Hospital and, later, with the Brisbane Repatriation Department, the Princess Alexandra Hospital, and the Narbethong School for the Visually Handicapped. She joined the Queensland Medical Women's Society and the Ophthalmology Society (later Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists) in 1958 and was made a Fellow of the College in 1995. She was also made an honorary life member of the Australian Medical Association in 1996, after 50 years in the profession, and of the Queensland Medical Women's Association in 2004.

Dr Macintosh joined the Quota Club, a service club for professional women, in Orange and then Brisbane. Her introduction to the National Council of Women came in 1960 when NCW Queensland asked Quota to find someone to take on the job of state convenor for women and employment, and Laurel was duly appointed (1960-1975). In 1964, she was recruited to serve as international secretary on





# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA (NCWA)

## AUSTRALIA

**NCWA** NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA

Anne Hamilton's ANCW Board; she remembers those Board meetings as 'the most fun I [ever] had!' She took on the task of Australian convener for women and employment from 1970 to 1973, and the ICW vice-convener from 1973 to 1979.

Dr Macintosh's work for NCW led her into broader leadership roles within the women's movement: president of the Status of Women Committee (Brisbane) 1973-1976; vice-president of the United Nations Association Australia (Queensland) 1975-1978; chairman of the Queensland International Women's Year Committee 1974-1976 and a member of the National UNAA IWY Committee, under the chairmanship of Ada Norris.

In 1977, Macintosh became president of NCW Queensland and, on completion of this term in 1979, president of NCWA. She was rare among NCWA presidents in also holding down a full-time job, and only survived the workload by taking months of long service leave to allow her to travel within and beyond Australia. She remembers as a significant achievement of her presidency the development of close relations with the National Councils of Women of Thailand and Fiji-both 'twinned' with NCWA.

The most memorable event of Macintosh's presidency was the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, held in Copenhagen in July 1980. She was one of 4 women from voluntary organisations who attended as official Australian government representatives-a role she found restrictive. Macintosh enjoyed good relations with

politicians, state and federal, and with the federal Office of the Status of Women. When the Queensland government established an Advisory Council of Queensland Women 1975-1976, she was a founding member.

Dr Macintosh continued her involvement with Quota, holding the Queensland presidency from 1959 to 1961 and again from 1988 to 1989. She presided over the Queensland Branch of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists 1972-1973, acted as a federal councillor of the College 1972-1974, and, in 1995, became a Fellow of the College. She was twice elected president of the National Council of Women of Queensland-in 1977 for 2 years and again in 1994 for 4 years. As president of NCWQ, she was instrumental in obtaining late night shopping for Brisbane and Ipswich in December 1978, which involved appearing as an advocate in the industrial court where she encountered the opposition of unions and shop-owners alike. She also served on the Queensland Consumer Affairs Council.

From 1982 to 1991, Macintosh was ICW convener for the Standing Committee for Women and Employment and she continued to serve as a consultant from 1991 to 1994. During her many years of the involvement with NCWA and the ICW, she attended triennial ICW conferences in Nairobi 1979, Seoul 1982, London 1984, Washington 1988, Bangkok 1991 and Paris 1994, as well as executive meetings in Brussels 1981 and Kiel 1983.

Dr Laurel Macintosh was awarded a Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977 and appointed to



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA (NCWA)

## AUSTRALIA

**NCWA** NATIONAL  
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the Order of the British Empire in 1980 for her services to women. In 1984 she was made a life member of NCWQ and, in 1988, an honorary life vice-president of NCWA in recognition of her long and distinguished service to the organisation. In the same year (1988), she was appointed a dame in the Knights Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus, an international humanitarian organisation, and in 2001 was awarded an Australian Centenary Medal for service to the community as president of the National Council of Women in Queensland.

**'All people should have the opportunity to develop what talents they have, to choose the life they wish to lead, while recognising the rights of others to choose differently. We need tolerance and understanding of each other.' Dr Macintosh**

Article contributed by:

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