

VP International Relations - Work Plan Reports from Committees for 2025-26

The meeting dates for IR meetings 2025-2026 (circulated previously)

3rd Thursdays at 4pm ET unless specified otherwise:

Sept. 25*, Oct. 16, Nov. 20, Dec.18, Jan.15, Feb. 19, Mar. 19, Apr. 16, May 21, June 18.

Highlights of International Relations work September-December 2025 for CFUW Special Advocacy Newsletter CFUW

1. GWI Triennial Planning Subcommittee: Joy Hurst, Chair,

- CFUW delegates will travel to Lusaka, Zambia to take part in the GWI 2025 Triennial from September 11-13. The 8 voting delegates and 3 alternates will decide on Constitutional and Policy Resolutions which have been submitted by National Federations and Associations (NFAs), meet with women world-wide and attend presentations and workshops, including an interactive CFUW presentation on AI by Joy Hurst and Kathryn Wilkinson.
- The circulation of the CFUW report on the Triennial, which is intended to augment the GWI's post-triennial report, concludes this committee's assigned work.
- A post-triennial virtual Drop-In session is being considered for CFUW members to hear more about the Zambian experience.
- A vote of thanks to committee members for their work in preparing and supporting CFUW's active participation in the GWI Triennial and Conference.
- CFUW contributed greatly to GWI Constitutional and Policy Resolutions. GWI will publish a special advocacy report outlining ways in which NFAs and individuals can advance the Advocacy policy resolutions passed by the 35th GWI General Assembly in Zambia. The material will be broadly circulated within CFUW.

2. UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 70) Planning

Tasks for September to December 2025, include:

- Review the draft topic for an in-person parallel session for March 2026 at New York City, to be sponsored by CFUW and WG-USA, that connects with the theme(s) of CSW70:
 - **Priority theme:** Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers

- **Review theme:** Women’s full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls ([agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth session](#))
- Identify possible presenters/panelists (e.g., women on the ground working with migrants)
- A **preliminary** list has been generated for discussion at the Sept. 22nd committee meeting and committee members were asked to bring other suggestions to the meeting. (under consideration for panel foci are “Women and the Media” (e.g., ratio of male and female perspectives reflected in news coverage; social media giants’ responsibility for policing their platforms to reduce online sexual harassment, online stalking and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.”/ “Women and Health”/ “Women and the Law” “Responsible global citizenship and critical thinking through media and information literacy, health literacy, democratic literacy, legal literacy
- Invite panelists and confirm preparatory meeting dates with them
- Decide on session format and prepare guidelines including for slide presentations
- Prepare information for National Office for promotion of the session including a poster
- Confirm date and plan a drop-in session with Members about CSW with delegates of CSW69 and others, to increase knowledge and interest in CSW70
- Start a column in Club Action News of issues that will connect with the theme of CSW70.
- Consider “Women and the Media” (e.g., ratio of male and female perspectives reflected in news coverage; social media giants’ responsibility for policing their platforms to reduce online sexual harassment, online stalking and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.”/ “Women and Health”/ “Women and the Law” in discussion for panel foci

The next meeting of the CSW70 Parallel Session Planning Committee is scheduled for September 22, 12:30 EST. They are normally held on the second last Monday of each month at 12:30 pm ET.

3. International Service Project (ISP) Fall 2025-2026 Program

CFUW members were extraordinarily generous in 2024-2025 in donations for our ISP partner 60 Million Girls with clubs and individuals raising \$16,326.

During our next year of fundraising our new partner is the **Stephen Lewis Foundation** with the project **Young, Happy, Healthy & Safe – Zambia**. Over the upcoming year, our goal is to raise \$15,000 from CFUW Clubs and members to support girls learning about sexual and reproductive health in rural Eastern Zambia. Education for girls on health and rights information can help protect them from early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, HIV infection, caregiving responsibilities and other determinants that directly impact their quality of life.

Five of our members attending the 35th GWI Triennial General Assembly and Conference this September in Lusaka, Zambia will be visiting our project partners in rural Eastern Zambia as part of their travel plans. This is a unique and exciting opportunity for our Club to connect in the field with the Stephen Lewis Foundation at their project sites.



We are also hosting a webinar on the project with the Stephen Lewis Foundation on **October 1, 2025 at 6pm ET**. Upcoming newsletters in September will include the link to register for this webinar to learn much more about this exciting new project and hear about our member's experiences in Zambia.

-A schedule was prepared leading to the planned official launch of the ISP website on Sept. with the SLF as follows:

- Fri Aug 1: CFUW Newsletter: "Save the Date" with launch date 5 Sept noted as well as the Webinar with SLF scheduled for 1 October at 6 pm ET.
- Mid-August: Reminder of the Project Launch on 5 September
- 5 September: Announcement that the project has launched and on CFUW website.
- September: 2-3 more announcements and Webinar reminder.
- 1 October at 6 pm ET: Webinar with SLF
- October: Article on the visit of CFUW members to the SLF school in rural Zambia and the rural school visit associated with the GWI Triennial GA. Possibly photos and interviews with attendees. **DATE**
- Fall meetings of the ISP committee are scheduled for 2 Sept 2025, 14 Oct 2025, 4 November 2025, 9 December 2025

4. CAMEUS

CAMEUS, is the North American GWI Regional with three members CFUW, WG-USA, and Mexico's FEMU,. It focuses primarily on issues that migrant women and children face in our three countries due to social, political, and climate changes

CAMEUS chair Barbara Dumoulin works with representatives from FEMU and WG-USA to decide the year's program.

The fall program is planned to include:

- Follow up to issues discussed in the virtual CAMEUS presentation at CSW69 entitled "*Recognizing Qualifications for Employment of Women Migrating to North America*"
- Review of the CSW70 themes and decision on a topic for the CAMEUS virtual presentation:

Priority theme: Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers

Review theme: Women's full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls ([agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth session](#))

- Inviting prospective panelists for the CSW70 presentation.
- Confirming preparatory meeting dates
- Providing all registration and promotional materials in a timely manner.

5. Awards and Special Days: Chair Phyllis Scott

- Review the list of UN special International Days for commemoration and decide which CFUW will select and the manner of commemoration.
- Discuss the plan with CFUW Executive Director, Jaime Began, to ensure materials are prepared to give the office sufficient time to handle communications with members
- Review who does what for each Day being commemorated
- Promote IR Awards

Contact International Award winners of 2024-25 and invite them to participate in a fall webinar when they can explain their project to other members, to increase understanding of international advocacy issues and to how to use those projects to raise the profile of CFUW Clubs in local communities.

6. Work planned by UN Agency Observer Sandra Thomson and UN Observer Mary Scott

Report from S. Thomson, UN Agency Observer

August, 2025

Work Plan for 2025-2026

- **Monitor UN Women' programmes and initiatives for updates on current activities whereby Canada may be able to play a key role (consultations, etc.)**
- **Follow progress on CSW Revitalization**
- **Attend HLPF September 22, 2025 and report out**
- **Attend monthly meetings, virtually, NGO CSW NY.**

Report from UN Women

The annual session of UN Women was held from June 17-19, 2025. Executive Director S. Bahous presented opening remarks and provided following achievements from 2021-2024:

- a. Received \$593 million (in US) dollars from contributions
- b. #109 countries benefitted from \$622 million to advance Gender Equality
- c. \$220 million given to women's groups, from civil society organizations to grass roots groups
- d. #71 countries have supported women leadership roles
- e. #70 countries have engaged in gender budgeting and transforming care systems
- f. #60 countries have benefited from disability inclusive projects
- g. #325 laws have either been adapted, advanced, improved or repealed for gender equality
- h. Gender data now comprises over half the SDG indicators
- i. A global program has been developed targeting digital violence
- j. Draft legislation in #24 countries with respect to women and children in conflict areas

She stressed the need for the UN multilateral system and have committed UN Women to be fully engaged with the UN80 for reform. "We can offer better with less. We believe we can do so." A great deal of emphasis was placed on financial integration with a financial administration division being created, along with a CFO.

Strategic Plan 2026

Four Priority Areas of Work:

- Women's Leadership
- Women's Economic Empowerment
- Women's Peace and Security
- Addressing Violence Against Women

Integrated Budget calls for the following:

1. Total Voluntary Contributions Projections of \$1.05 Billion dollars
2. Continued Prioritization of Programmatic Work with 87.3% of total projected use of the resources going to programmes
3. Fiscal Prudence and Cost Effectiveness: Reduction of \$2 million in institutional budget to \$202.4 and Prioritization of \$4.6 million in projected regular resources to programmes also enable a total additional allocation of \$6.5 million in projected regular resources going to programs.
4. *Pivot to Regions and Countries*: #50 identified posts to move from NY to Nairobi and Bonn, representing 31% of current NY based institutional budget funded posts
5. Optimization of Structures and functions in a cost neutral manner
 - a. Strategic communications and advocacy in the heart of the Plan
 - b. An integrated and holistic financial resource management and oversight function and strengthened management, reporting and oversight of organizational results, through streamlined functions.

CSW Revitalization

The zero draft for revitalization was drawn up and several sessions held over the course of the year. The five page document can be found here: [revitalization-of-the-csw-resolution-zero-draft-en.pdf](#) a culmination of work as a directive coming from the Pact of the Future, September, 2024.

Economic and Security Council

Lok Bahadur Thapa of Nepal has been elected President of ECOSOC. He will emphasize Climate Action and Food Security. For more information:

<https://ecosoc.un.org/en/about-us>

CSW NY

The report from the co sponsor of CSW may be found there: [NGO CSW69 Forum Report](#).

Highlights:

- Close to 13,000 participants from 110 countries
- Over 750 parallel events with 63.8% indicating it was favored over Networking (45.2%) or Civil Society Briefings (26.5%)

Work Plan for 2025-2026

- Monitor UN Women' programmes and initiatives for updates on current activities whereby Canada may be able to play a key role (consultations, etc.)
- Follow progress on CSW Revitalization
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Work Plan for September to December 2025

UN Observer (Mary Scott)

There are currently huge challenges at the global level, for women (in all their diversity), and indeed for humanity and human rights. Whether it be women and violence, women and peace, women and caregiving, women and education, women and work, women and the environment, women and technology – the list goes on, starting with the Critical Areas of Concern listed in the Beijing Platform for Action back in 1995. Reference to key findings on gender equality across the Sustainable Development Goals provides some current background - <https://www.unwomen.org/en/resources/gender-snapshot>

The United Nations has been the body that offers a structure where human rights groups (NGO's; CSO's) have met, discussed, advocated and worked for change. CFUW, with its ECOSOC status, has engaged at the UN, in particular at the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women. CSW provides a forum for CFUW to talk about it's priorities, it's work here in Canada and offers an opportunity to engage with others from around the world who may be working on similar challenges. We speak, we listen, we learn.

There are many reasons to be attuned to what is happening right now at the UN. With changes that are happening in the United States, and the apparent movement away from support (including financial) of the United Nations, we must be conscious of what this means at the UN itself. Funding is an issue. As well, financial assistance by the U.S. to countries that are in desperate need, has been reduced or ended, affecting women and children.

Starting with monitoring the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, coming up September 22 to September 30, I will try to monitor what is happening at UN, and in particular Canada's role. The hi level meeting at the UN, on September 22, will be live streamed on the UN WebTV. It is from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm in the General Assembly. This will be specifically focussed on the outcomes of the most recent meetings of the CSW. On September 24, there will be a Climate Summit, which will include the effects of climate change on women and girls.

I will continue to be part of different networks and caucuses, leading up to the meeting of CSW 70. "Priority theme: Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers. Review theme: Women's full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth session)." '

It is important to note the document that has been prepared on the Revitalization on the Commission on the Status of Women and its process to date. This will definitely be part of the discussion moving forward. The mandate for the revitalization comes from the Pact for the Future (September 2024) where Member States requested ECOSOC explore options to revitalize CSW. Read more here: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/revitalization>

I look forward to working with Sandra as it is impossible to cover all that is happening at the UN and I know she has considerable knowledge and experience.

Thank you for including me in the work of this important committee.

Mary Scott

mary_scott@shaw.ca UWCW August 17, 2025