

## **Final Summary report of**

### **NGOs across the Region, Sharing Best Practices and Hopes for the Future Panel October 20, 2024**

**Moderated** by Paula Daeppen, Biovision Foundation and FAWCO

#### **Panelists:**

- Prof. Reyhan Atasu-Topcuoglu, NGO Steering Group, Regional Civil Society Consultation
- Tumu Johnson, Sisters of Freda
- Ingrid Green, Director Research and Evaluation, Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA)
- Brigitte Polonovski, Vice President NGOCSW Geneva, Past President European Council International Council of Women
- Alice Pome, Soroptimist International
- Elena Bauchiero, Youth representative Graduate Women International

The purpose of this diverse, high-level panel was to showcase the outstanding work of Civil Society organizations and reflect on the progress made over the past 30 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. By sharing best practices, the panellists demonstrated how innovative solutions and collaborative efforts can effectively address the many challenges that remain. The session celebrated some achievements in the hope of inspiring future efforts with actions that can be adapted and scaled up across the UNECE.

#### **Key take-aways:**

- The importance of data collection across all areas.
- Engaging youth activists for their skills, ideas and innovation while taking advantage of mentorship from more experienced changemakers. Crucial is intergenerational collaboration to make a meaningful impact on society and our ecosystem.
- The need for a gender-focused digital transition in work, daily life and education with awareness of the positive and negative impacts of digital technologies, particularly AI and the media.
- Addressing violence against women through social protection services, investing in and improving social services and ensuring that survivors have effective access to justice.
- The necessity of advancing human rights through engagement in the local and international political arena. Using existing legislative tools and legal systems to force change and implement action across all areas.
- Recognizing and promoting education as “the” means to empowerment, promoting access to quality education for women and girls to create better life opportunities and to cultivate future women role models and leaders.
- The importance of sisterhood in building networks and support groups.
- Valuing diversity as a vital strength to be embraced in advancing gender equality.

- Recognizing and working to end the impact of social gender norms that arise from stereotypes passed on through generations. Education and the media can be a setting for transmitting these biases, but also a critical platform for correcting them to promote gender equality.
- The need to amplify the voices and knowledge of indigenous and rural women and to advocate for solutions created and led by them.
- Awareness of the nine strategic issues identified by indigenous women as integral to their safety and wellbeing: Mother Earth, Family Violence, Sexual Violence, Child Welfare, Human Trafficking, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), Housing and Homelessness, Justice, and Health.
- Acting to elevate the voices of elderly and disabled women, and gender-expansive people through an intersectional lens. Recognizing that barriers to every day life, equality and empowerment are ever present for them and that discrimination exists at all levels.
- The need to develop strategies to counter growing anti-gender movements and hate speech while promoting inclusive education and peace-oriented terminology in public discourse.
- Strengthening cooperation between governments and civil society on gender and climate policies. Building the capacity of all women, but in particular indigenous and rural women, to contribute to climate justice.

The overriding consensus of the panel was the importance of civil society organizations joining forces to build peaceful and healthy societies, free from violence, stigma and stereotypes. Progress will be made when we (CS) mobilize to create a critical mass within our communities and organizations to continue the work of the 17,000 women who gathered in Beijing 30 years ago for women and girls.

Submitted by Paula Daeppen, Biovision Foundation and FAWCO