

## My Day 2 at CSW 67

I arrived at around 8 am on Day 2 of the UN CSW 67 event on March 7, 2023. We had planned our day by attending the event organized by Italy, UNESCO, UNICEF and the Group of Friends for Education and Lifelong Learning, in collaboration with UN Women: “REWIRING THE NETWORK: DIGITAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS FOR GIRLS’ AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT” at 8:15 am at the Conference Room 4 in the General Assembly Building. Justine Sass, Chief of Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNESCO was the Moderator of the event. H.E. Eugenia Roccella, Minister of Family, Natality, and Equal Opportunities, Italy gave her opening remarks wherein she spoke about Intergenerational dimension and how gender stereotypes effect the Gender Equality. She emphasized on the importance of women’s participation in digital transformation.



General Assembly Building, Conference Room 4

H.E. Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, Commissioner of the Czech Government for Human Rights, on behalf of the Group of Friends for Education and Lifelong Learning began her speech by stressing the importance of bridging gender gap. Equitable education for women and girls is essential for women empowerment and also for social and cultural empowerment. To overcome traditional barrier and develop marketable skills, women must participate in digital economy especially for those in rural communities. It is a must that women should be educated regarding digital space to empower them to work on barriers in gender space and promote women leadership.

Next, Tara Chklovski, Founder, CEO, Technovation spoke on “Creating a movement: Girls as tech innovators, creators and leaders.” She emphasized the fact the women empowerment is often measured by the number of women who own a phone rather than who can develop technology. We must change the dogma of measuring success by realizing how many tech innovators do we have; how many women are problem solvers and how many are in digital space to improve the status quo. Fiving access to the girls to the content online is never enough even though basic literacy like concept and fundamentals is important it is not the key to education. Women and girls should be provided enough choices to explore different options. They need mentorship and need to work in teams. They need longer support especially from their family. Most importantly, they need to have fun or else its not easy to grasp. Digital Literacy is a very high bar for women. They should understand that its also for them rather reserved for the male counterparts.

Next, Motunrayo Fatoke, Education Partnership Centre, Nigeria, Youth leader, Global Partnership for Education spoke on “Breaking the bias for girls in STEM.” She stated the fact that in Nigeria there are lot many stereotypes about girls going to STEM school and there are many barriers for women to survive in the STEM based career. To build a strong transition, there is a lot to catch up for women and girls. She spoke a project wherein they support women and girls especially those who get married in a young age and their parents do so as even if they earn, their income will not help the parents but the husband’s family. This project works on removing these stereotypes by giving them access to education, provide wash facilities especially menstrual hygiene at school and home. She ended her talk by saying that Quality Education is important for girls and they should be encouraged to take up more ICT skills.

After that, Robert Jenkins who represented UNICEF spoke on identifying innovations that are promising and how we should work with partnerships globally to acts on it. Digital empowerment is being supported via multiple projects by UNICEF in Brazil, Indonesia, and India. Projects related to transferrable skills are being enabled in Guatemala and Serbia and expanding digital skills based on their inspiration in digital space in Bolivia. They are also working on Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality in the mountainous regions of Vietnam. They have also provided learning platform targeting girls so that girls are able to target and report Gender Based Violence. He ended the speech by emphasizing the fact that it is vital to mobilize global actors like UNESCO and others, bring them all to the table is significant for Gender Equality.

Later, Ms. Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO spoke on “Building a gender-transformative system: the Gateways initiative to public digital learning” virtually. She made a point that for transforming education systems in the future, STEM is an important field and it is important that in education we must include Gender Equality and connectivity and it should be accessible to all. We should make public education system easy to access and available online as well. For this to succeed we should be able to map what currently exists and see through that the government

makes available what does not exist. Covid-19 amplified the need to digital education and building ecosystem in digital learning. She concluded by saying that we should advocate and have strong commitment to make inclusive quality education for all.

Next, Anita Bhatia, UN Women Deputy Executive Director for UN Coordination, Partnerships, Resources and Sustainability spoke on how to reduce gender equality gap in digital education and provide them equal access. Poverty rates was not in route towards achieving SDGs by 2030 even before Covid-19 and post Covid-10, this rate plummeted in negative direction and now it is horrifying. She highlighted the point that Girls' Education is a single most investment tool to achieve SDGs as stated by Larry Summers – a chief economist at World Bank. For the women who missed their first chance at education, personalized support all the way is very much required especially indigenous education. She then gave the example of Nakoa Pitt from 'Real Futures' organization who had missed her first chance at education.

Next, there was the testimonial from Nakoa Pitt, Australia and she spoke on " Pursuing second chances: Lessons on inclusive e-learning." She spoke on how she had low self-esteem and suffered depression due to less self-confidence but she wanted to make a change in intergenerational trauma. Real Futures was her healing workshop wherein she got her second chance and learned her potential. She interconnected with other women and built rapport with women who had the similar mental background. She now facilitates the content that she learned to other women via workshops and empower and educate them in completing their education journey.

At the end, Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology gave the closing remarks for this session. He spotlighted that we should break the paradigm and make women and girls come out of their cages. If we are working on improving gender equality metrics, then we need gender balance, bridge the gender digital divide access by using content, data and Artificial Intelligence. He also stressed the fact that leadership matters and the progress is sooner if all countries partner together. Digital divide bridge for not only for girls but also for global good.





### General Assembly Hall

Next, we proceeded to the General Assembly Hall to attend the “Ministerial round tables on the priority theme.” Here, South African representative spoke on setting up infrastructure framework for building science institute especially while keeping in mind the career of women in ICT. The real gaps to achieve gender equality is infrastructure and investment must be done by state intervention. As of now, 90% of the men in South Africa are in ICT studies. Thus, we should aim to change the institutional structure and people’s mind and hearts as well.

Next, the Serbian representative’s stresses the key role women in labor market. Serbians are the first to introduce gender equality in digital space. Early education is very important to overcome gender differences. Digital literacy has always been an obstacle for women and there is a need to break harmful stereotypes and achieve girl empowerment and leadership in STEM areas. We should stop hate speech in social media and promote girls in digital space.

Next representative from Lichtenstein emphasized that women are underrepresented in terms of training. France encourages all forms of support for girls in use of technology. President Macron has supported the importance of disabling violence against women and France has built a platform that detects violence 24/7.

Later, representative of Morocco highlighted on the fact that smart social services are being set up in Morocco for women who are facing difficulties and, in the areas, where conditions are critical. Thus, they are motivated to improve digital infrastructure and giving free services to vulnerable groups and provide remote learning platforms to reduce the gender gap.

Later, Luxembourg representative stressed that the students majoring in ICT is very low in her country because of inequalities prevalent over there and how education in ICT area is the key element to achieve digitization. They are keen to promote gender equality and promote digital day of European Union .

Next, Representative of Ireland spoke on how the state’s STEM implantation plan promotes gender balance in STEM. Their aim is to break gender stereotypes and give women full potential

and reinforce STEM education especially to girls and prioritize girls who were excluded from education at their first chance and lessen digital divide and support digital economy.

The last speaker during my attendance was the representative from UK. She highlighted a very crucial point on how Technology can be an educator as well a divider. She said that marginalized women can many a times be excluded from digital world and this barrier leads to no access to digitized economy. UK government is working on investing in countries like Kenya and Nigeria so that women can have access to Tech. They also have state bill passed which protect the children from cyberbullying. Digital age works for all of us and it is the only way to achieve SDGs.



General Assembly Building, Conference Room B

Later, we attended “THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION” at 12:15 pm hosted by Palestine and ESCWA. We heard few talks between the delegation team and her highness of Palestine and proceeded for Lunch.



Ms. Martina Štěpánková, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic



One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 885 Second Avenue, 48th Floor

After lunch at 1:15, we proceeded to One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 885 Second Avenue, 48th Floor to attend “INTEGRATING WOMEN REFUGEES: NGOS AS KEY PARTNERS AND A FORCE FOR CHANGE” hosted by The Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN. H.E.

Mr. Marian Jurečka, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic conveyed that it is important to integrate women refugees and NGOs are going to act a key actor in this process. Most of the refugees who fled Ukraine are women with children and the number comes close to half a million of them. NGOs and Civil Society support these people by supplying immediate assistance to them and give them long term support like education and work. So that when the war is over, they will be able to get back home along with whatever they gained in this conflict period. Gender Equality can be of help the refugees by adopting multistakeholder approach. Due to war in Ukraine, many minorities are fleeing and have settled in Czechia republic. Women face greater discrimination of GBV and sexual exploitation especially the ones with children. The Human Rights approach and related policies should be adopted, respected, and promoted as they provide assistance to these refugees. The civil society organization will play a key role in providing humanitarian benefits, transportation, emergency aid, and medical care. Identify the gaps in policies, so that civil society can function seamlessly at the same time funding from state governments, almost half a million is not easy and face lot of financial challenges.

Ms. Kateryna Levchenko, Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, Ukraine continued with the opening remarks wherein she spoke about migrants from the Ukraine were very high in number almost 14 million people inside the country of Ukraine and 5 million in Europe were displaced. Providing the needs of migrants especially the young women is challenging and new reformation to adopt the Human Rights for these women. She conclude her speech by saying this is not the end and there will be new problem in the recovery process in Ukraine.

Ms. Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, Government Commissioner for Human Rights of the Czech Republic spoke on High Level Political Forum is necessary so that the panelists can understand the support of NGOs to these refugees. Civil Society organizations will play an important role as they will play first hand role in providing accountability. NGOs will help migrants by integrating them and providing access to full time employment and this will continue unless the war and conflicts are solved as this is a global situation.

Ms. Blanche Tax, Deputy Director of the UNHCR New York spoke on how the UNHCR work on the their partnership with member states and the role of civil society, NGOs, local organizations and community based organizations play a major role in helping refugee women, women with disabilities, elderly women and so on. UNHCR has worked with Kenya to improve sexual and reproductive health of women and against female genital mutilation. UNHCR believes in localization, they are the first to help people during crisis, strengthen the efforts that already exists, take steps to provide financial help to vulnerable people. Their advisory boards created globally are trying to create and strengthen their partnerships with local organizations. At Quintana, UNHCR won award for feminist engaged force for change. In Iraq, they won the lotus flower UNHCR award for their Boxing sisters' program. To prevent Gender Based Violence, women lead organizations increased by 60% in 2021-22. He concluded by saying to think in the direction of partnering with women-led organizations or refugee led organizations, make an exception, and get the space as they need to support themselves.

Ms. Magda Faltová, Director of the Association for Integration and Migration, Czech Republic, states that they have never seen a bigger number of migrants till now until the Ukraine war. Their department are the first responders to situation. There are a lot of challenges before war and for the years to come specially in terms of setting policies for vulnerable refugee women and children. Maternity and Community center of refugees, a female-led organization which aims to help refugee women and are keen on volunteering and is run on participatory approach. To run such programs effortlessly, it is vital to build support mechanism and strong network especially with governmental organizations.

Finally, closing remarks were provided by Brenda Behan, Director of Gender Equality, WFP wherein she emphasized how the domestic violence survivors open shelters for women and it is very much necessary to keep ourselves informed. "Help Ukraine" platform help local communication for people and municipalities. By developing participatory approach, design the policy making process. For people who are fleeing the war, so that they can have fast access to protection ,Conventions in many areas of legislations are being prepared.

Later from 3 to 4 pm I was practicing my speech for the next day's side event and the last-minute changes needed to be done. We finished all our events agenda scheduled for the day and I headed back home early at 4:30 pm to get enough rest before the Side event tomorrow.

**Priyanka Prem Kumar, UIMF member**