POSITION PAPER

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COUNTRY: CANADA

INSTITUTION: UNCSW

TOPIC: INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

I RAISE MY VOICE NOT SO I CAN SHOUT BUT SO THOSE WITHOUT A VOICE CAN NOT BE HEARD WE CAN NOT SUCCEED WHEN HALF OF US ARE HELD BACK -MALALA YOUSAFZAI

Women’s empowerment plays a critical role in the development of a society, as women can make choices and become active members of a community, and develop capacity. Women’s empowerment emerged in the 1970s with a trend in gender equality. Technology has empowered women to make choices and shape their own lives in a move toward gender equality. In many high-income countries, women are more self-reliant than their counterparts in rural and low-income countries with a lack of access to resources and cultural gender barriers. Technology now enables access to learning resources and provides a way to circumvent gender barriers. Canada is one of the world’s leaders in supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women; exemplified by the gender-balanced Cabinet of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Canada was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which sets international standards for eliminating gender discrimination. The Government of Canada supported UN Women’s work to ensure women’s engagement in and contribution to the peace processes in South Sudan and that gender man streaming is incorporated into those processes. This has led to the formation of several local women-led networks advocating for peace. With support from the Government of Canada, UN Women is working to improve and strengthen the participation of women as political leaders, as agents of change, and as peacebuilders in West and Central Africa. The city of Winnipeg was the first Canadian city to participate in the UN Women Flagship Global Initiative on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces in December 2013, together with Manitoba Status of Women, aboriginal-led organizations, and other community partners. UN Women has made significant progress toward the economic empowerment of women and girls. Between 2018 and 2019, 81 new and/or improved gender-responsive policies on land rights were developed or implemented.

 Disrupting this gender bias in educational settings will see more diversity among workers in all sectors at all levels. Women today have on average more degrees than men, but [their monthly salary is 24.5% lower than men’s](http://www.cae-eco.fr/IMG/pdf/cae-note017.pdf). The gender segregation between the scientific and humanities fields explains almost one-third of the salary differences: all things being equal, girls are half as likely to choose a scientific field than boys.  The prevalence of stereotypes and certain social norms seem to be the main causes of women’s underrepresentation. We need to make sure that everyone, male or female we treat them with respect and humility be it at a workplace or home.

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