

Questions from CFUW Stratford and Answers from CFUW National

Much of the background and many of the answers to these questions can be found in the series of questions that CFUW has been asking GWI throughout the year

They can be found at

<http://www.cfuwadmin.org/Governance/GWIGoingForward.aspx>

- April 4 2015 Responses from GWI to CFUW Questions
- May 7, 2015 Responses from GWI to CFUW Questions
- July 11, 2015 Responses from GWI to CFUW Questions
- August 2015 Responses from GWI to CFUW Questions
- October 2015 Questions and Answers on GWI Webinars and Projects
- November 2015 Responses from GWI to CFUW Questions

When a question is before the voting body, the Board of Directors must maintain neutrality. This is true of both proposed amendments to the Articles and Bylaws and to resolutions. Because of this, the Board may only answer certain questions you have proposed. There will be no discussion of GWI except to state unalterable facts that have no value placed on them.

For more information, please go to:

Visit GWI's website for more information

<http://www.graduatewomen.org/>

The questions pertaining to GWI will be forwarded to Myra Willis, Chair of the Articles and Bylaws on your behalf for consideration by the proposers of the amendment.

1.(a) How might CFUW "better achieve its goals on the international front" without being part of GWI?

This has been referred to the Articles and Bylaws

Please note the following is only in reference to what CFUW currently does.

CFUW's international policy objectives are extensive, ranging from violence against women, to economic empowerment and the education of women everywhere. At the CFUW national office, our Advocacy Coordinator has developed strong relationships with internationally-focused organizations such as Oxfam, AIDS-Free World (which uncovered the UN peacekeeping scandal earlier this year), and the Women, Peace and Security Network, which encompasses several organizations. The VP International engages and maintains relationships with international NGOs that may or may not be stationed in Canada. One of her responsibilities is the relationship with UN branches such as UN Women and ECOSOC.

CFUW has always been an outward facing organization – historically our first goal has been to be part of the internationally engaged civil society that supports the education and human rights of girls and women. Examples of groups are the UN domestic partnerships such as Women, Peace and Security Network .and Interpares. Through the work of CFUW Clubs, we are supportive of internationally established aid organizations who do direct project delivery.

On February 26, 2016, Peter Fragiskatos, MP for London Centre North, tabled a bill in the House of Commons of Canada, Bill C 242, to amend the Criminal Code to included inflicting torture. This was based on the work of two CFUW members, Jeanne Sarson and Linda MacDonald who have worked on this for 23 years. In 2011 CFUW accepted the resolution on non-state torture and took it forward to the international stage.

(b) What are CFUW's current international goals?

Answer: CFUW has specific international policies that have been developed by members through the AGM resolution process. Examples are: disarmament, women's roles in peace and conflict, and non-state torture. Many of our other policies designed for advocacy within Canada are also applicable to international politics. Examples are child poverty, pay equity, economic empowerment, and female representation in politics. Big issues that CFUW is pursuing at present include non-state torture, support for the education of girls, and support for refugees in Europe and the Middle East.

The office of H  l  ne Laverdi  re's (MP Laurier-Ste. Marie) has just given CFUW notice that the motion CFUW supported on Women, Peace and Security has passed. This was the motion that went forward in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development that would commission a study of Canada's implementation of the UN Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.

(c) Do CFUW's current international goals address gender inequality at the global level?

Answer: CFUW's international advocacy certainly addresses gender inequality. We have long been a supporter of implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which obliges governments to consider the impact of war, conflict and disaster on women, and to include women in peacebuilding. In 2015, CFUW helped develop a joint shadow report on Canada's implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The report informed the 20-year review process that took place at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW).

<http://www.cfuwadmin.org/AdvocacyResolutions/UnitedNations/BeijingPlatformforAction.aspx>

CFUW also participated in preparing Canada's eighth and ninth periodic reports to the UN in December 2014 on the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

We currently have a resolution going forward to support the United Nations' Global Goals. These are the Sustainable Development Goals, the successor to the Millennium Development Goals on which we also have policy. Please see:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

This year a number of women across Canada have been working with Cheryl Hayles, CFUW's National VP International from the CFUW Oakville club, on the development and evaluation of this mentoring pilot program. Cheryl will be part of the delegation from the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) participating in the United National Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) that takes place in New York from March 14 to 24, 2016. UNCSW is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Cheryl will make a presentation on the Mentoring Pilot Program at the UN meeting. Since the discussion at this year's session at the UN will primarily focus on women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development, sharing information about the mentoring program will add to the body of knowledge that contributes to the achievement of gender equality and women's rights and empowerment.

CFUW regularly monitors Canada's implementation of a number of United Nations conventions, resolutions, and agreements, particularly: the Conventions on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; the Convention of the Rights of the Child; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security; the Beijing Platform for Action; and the Platform for Action agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development. Where Canada has failed to implement conventions, resolutions and agreements, CFUW has pressed for further action for government. Canada's Continuing Committee of Officials on Human Rights (CCOHR) has also consulted with CFUW numerous times on the implementation of international human rights treaties in Canada. For example, in 2012, CFUW also participated in Canada's 2nd Universal Periodic Review, submitting a shadow report, attending the United Nations Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, and engaging in follow-up with the Government of Canada to implement recommendations from Member States.

In that same year, CFUW also submitted a shadow report and attended the United Nations Human Rights Council for the review of Canada's sixth report on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

<http://www.cfuwadmin.org/AdvocacyResolutions/Issues/ViolenceagainstWomenGirls.aspx>

<http://www.cfuwadmin.org/AdvocacyResolutions/UnitedNations/ConventiononTorture.aspx>

As well, CFUW is active in promoting activities around International Women's Day, assigning a fund raising goal each year in partnership with an international aid organization, and Clubs Across the country

<http://www.cfuwadmin.org/AdvocacyResolutions/InternationalWomen%E2%80%99sDay.aspx>

(d) Do they [CFUW's current international goals] include advocating for systemic change worldwide, as well as developing or funding individual programs to address inequality?

Answer: All of our international resolutions and policy, particularly that which supports UN policy, urge systemic change among member states of the UN. Whether it be education for girls, poverty alleviation or disarmament, our international advocacy is focused on creating critical change that would affect women on a larger scale. For example, the advocacy we do to support the continued funding of the Afghan-Canadian Community Centre and the Kandahar Institute of Modern Studies has a double impact: encouraging the education of women and girls in this particular region, in this specific cultural context; and also demonstrating our support for the education of girls everywhere, and our belief in the power of education for attaining economic independence.

2. Does CFUW have a concern about GWI being an "Association" under Swiss tax laws and Swiss non-profit laws and if so, what is that concern?

Answer: GWI should be following Swiss law with regard to being an "association".

3. We understand that the re-investment in GWI began in 2013 and a deficit budget was approved. In what ways would the CFUW Board expect that GWI funds spent on fundraising, streamlining and modernizing the organization would *currently* produce increased revenue?

CFUW cannot answer this because it would be only hypothetical. No plan was given to us and therefore we are not in a position to evaluate GWI's success.

For annual reports and financial documents of GWI go to:

<http://www.cfuw.org/whoweare/ourstructure/graduatewomeninternational.aspx>

4. The by-law amendment motion and other discussion have tied GWI's benefit to CFUW to the issue of voting rights. What are the other benefits of GWI membership?

Did CFUW have a concern about the proportion of voting rights before becoming the NFA with the most members? Is there a history to the voting rights issue?

There is an amendment processes underway and the Board must remain neutral. The question has been referred to Articles and Bylaws.

There is an analysis of voting at

<http://www.cfuwadmin.org/Governance/GWIGoingForward.aspx>

5. What are the options for CFUW input into GWI activities besides voting?

<http://www.cfuwadmin.org/Portals/1/cfuwadminfiles/webfiles/governance/gwogoinforward/Fact%20Sheet%202.pdf>

Does the CFUW Board perceive that CFUW's women's rights/education priorities domestically in Canada and GWI's priorities internationally must be the same for CFUW to get value from GWI activities?

Answer: Women's rights/education priorities domestically do not have to be the same as GWI's priorities internationally. The reference in your question to getting value is at the heart of the question with which the Board has to grapple. We believe that it is quite possible to support women's rights and education priorities internationally in a variety of ways and to value any resultant progress wherever that may occur.

6. If not a part of GWI, what would it take for CFUW to have UN participation equal to GWI's current participation? How might international influence change with only Canadian membership rather than multi-national membership?

There is an amendment processes underway and the Board must remain neutral.

The question has been referred to Articles and Bylaws.

7. The withdrawal of United States, Netherlands and Germany from GWI is being raised as relevant to CFUW's position. How does the CFUW Board see the withdrawal of these countries as relevant to CFUW's relationship to GWI? Does the Board have official word from the Netherlands on the reasons for withdrawal and could that be shared?

We have received no official communication from these NFAs. There is an amendment processes underway and the Board must remain neutral.

The question has been referred to Articles and Bylaws.

8. When did CFUW become concerned about the fluctuation of the exchange rate of the Swiss Franc?

On January 15, 2015, the Swiss franc became “unpegged” and free floating. This caused CFUW to write to GWI to ask for an alleviation on CFUW’s dues as it was going to be a challenge to pay the dues at the elevated rate of exchange. At the same time, and given the difficulties that CFUW and other NFAs were experiencing with the uncertainty of the Swiss franc, CFUW asked for a re-examination of the way dues are calculated. We suggested that a special task force should be instituted to consider some of the suggestions that have been made as well as recommend others. Both requests were refused.

9. Besides withdrawal from GWI, are other responses being considered to address concerns about GWI governance, finances and benefits to members? If so, what are they?

There is an amendment processes underway and the Board must remain neutral. The question has been referred to Articles and Bylaws.

10. What are the risks to CFUW of remaining part of GWI for one year to be able to hear the reports at the upcoming Triennial?

CFUW is very respectful of governance processes. There is an Article and Bylaw amendment which will come to the floor as part of the 2016 AGM.

The current Resolution being proposed indicates that increased fees will be assessed as of 2017 and therefore decisions need to be made at this AGM.

11. What does the CFUW Board see as the possible risks to GWI if CFUW withdraws?

GWI as an independent organization and most knowledgeable about its internal issues, it should be the one to do the risk analysis. CFUW does not have GWI’s financials, business plans, fundraising plans, staffing policies, therefore nothing on which to be able to base an analysis.

12. If CFUW votes to withdraw from GWI, will CFUW fees be reduced as we will no longer be paying the GWI component?

This decision will be up to the membership.

13. Withdrawal from GWI by the US, the Netherlands and Germany has resulted in divisions in each country and in the groups splitting with some women organizing to continue support for GWI. If CFUW votes to withdraw from GWI, does CFUW have any plans to address possible secession from GWI?

Answer:

At the direction of members, we will examine alternatives.