

CSW65 SIDE EVENT

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 **HUAIROU COMMISSION**
Women, Homes & Community

Transformative women's leadership: enhancing women's participation and decision-making in public life

Organizer and co-organizers: UN-Habitat; Concertation Montréal, Metropolis, Euronews, Huairou Commission, CILG-VNG International, City of Banjul-The Gambia

Date: Tue 23 Mar 2021, 09:00-10:15 EST

Type: Virtual Panel discussion, Zoom

RSVP: [Register](#) **Join:** [Click Here to Join](#)

Overall theme CSW65:

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.

Description of the event:

Many women have long-faced severe obstacles to participation and leadership where they have been underrepresented whether in elected office, the civil service, the private sector or academia. Some women, including young women, differently-abled women, indigenous women, transwomen and racialized women are even further underrepresented. While several women have individually overcome these challenges with great acclaim - and often to the benefit of society at large - there is a need to level the playing field and ensure opportunities are open for all women.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action highlights women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making as a critical strategy for achieving equality for women and girls. It clearly accentuates that global peace is inextricably linked with the advancement of women; and women are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels. Additionally, gender equality and women's empowerment are recognized as being catalytic towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Women leaders play important roles in mobilizing and advocating for legislative and constitutional reforms that benefit the lives of women and girls, and in scaling up efforts to expand opportunities to increase their participation. Women in leadership positions can also inspire and mentor other women and girls to assert their rights and to become future leaders. Participatory and inclusive urban governance entails increasing the avenues for women's input and ensuring there is no-discrimination (broad platform); customizing participation methods to women's needs; ensuring that women's views and experiences count in decision-making (and not merely involving them to fulfil formal requirements); and in assessing the degree to which processes and outcomes positively impact all women.

Additionally, women in leadership are great champions in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) which is one of the most prevalent and persistent human rights violations in the world. Globally, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime. Despite global progress in legislative and policing reforms to address this, ending violence against women and girls remains an elusive goal and an enduring problem. This is especially significant as

evidenced more recently during the ongoing Covid-19 global pandemic which saw a spike in GBV cases in many parts of the world and in online spaces. Women leaders command the authority to challenge unequal gender power relations as one of the root causes of GBV and advocate for resources towards scaling up prevention and response efforts.

This event, which takes place during the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65), will focus on women in leadership, women’s public participation, and inclusive governance structures. In addition, it will highlight examples of how women in leadership are supporting efforts towards ending GBV and how efforts to transform harmful masculinities contribute to ending GBV and creating and enabling environment for women’s leadership and participation. Inclusive leadership and representation are a prerequisite for sustainable, just and developed society. Discussion and case studies will look at transformative and innovative interventions that can be replicated to other regions/areas.

Outcomes of the event:

Opportunity to engage with and learn from some exceptional leaders about practical ways to promote women’s participation and leadership decision making and democratic life within different settings. Participants will also get a chance to engage on how women in leadership can leverage the positions and access to drive efforts towards combating GBV in all its forms.

Guiding Questions:

1. Briefly outline any actions or activities that you have taken or promoted as a leader, to enhance the ability of women to participate in society, decision making and/or political life?
2. How did the actions make a difference? What were the successes as a result of the increased participation of women?
3. In what ways can leaders ensure that there is increase women’s representation and impact in decision making and governance processes? What are some of the challenges that need to be overcome for this to be possible?

Panellists

Facilitator – Chris Williams, Director UN-Habitat

Title, Organization	Presenter (Name, Title)
Metropolis	Octavi De La Varga, Secretary General
Huairou Commission	Sri Sofjan and Bindu Shrestha
Concertation Montréal	Kathryn Travers, Development Officer -
CILG-VNG International	Dr. Neila Akrimi, Director General
Euronews	Naira Davlashyan, Journalist
Local Government	Mayor Roheyatou Lowe - Banjul, Gambia

Programme:

Time	Presentation title	Partner/Presenter
9am-9.05am	Introduction	Facilitator
9.05-10.05am	6 panel presentations	Presenters
10.05-10.25am	Moderated discussion	Facilitator
10.25-10.30am	Closing remarks and Thank you	UN-Habitat