

Committee – International Relations		
Committee Chair – Barbara DuMoulin	Phone 250-537-1338	e-address barbdumoulin@gmail.com
IR Resolutions Chair – Joy Hurst	Phone 780-430-3640	e-address jghurste@gmail.com
Proposer of the Resolution Joy Hurst	Phone 780-430-3640	e-address jghurste@gmail.com
Date of submission February 9, 2023		
Title of Resolution: <u>Impact of International Trade agreements</u>		

RESOLVED, that CFUW urge the federal government to use international trade agreements as instruments to accelerate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically; goal 3 good health and well-being, goal 4 quality education, goal 8 decent work and economic growth, goal 10 reduced inequalities and goal 12 responsible consumption and production.

RESOLVED, that CFUW urge the federal government to include women's organizations in all aspects of developing and evaluating Canadian international trade agreements.

RESOLVED, that CFUW urge the federal government to ensure that current and future international trade agreements are used as tools to maximize efforts to promote gender equality, food security and support sustainable economic development.

Background:

Given the impact of international trade on women as consumers, producers, workers and entrepreneurs, it is important to have a CFUW policy that reflects the current environment and new opportunities to influence policy. This resolution expands on CFUW's 1998 policy on International Trade and Investment Agreements. In the post COVID-19 recovery, international trade agreements have significant potential for influencing the achievement of the interrelated Sustainable Development Goals (The 17 Goals, 2015). Trade agreements have the potential to act as catalysts to improve gender equality at the complex intersection of policies on trade, development, employment, migration and equality (Gender Equality & Trade Policy, 2011).

Development assistance programs and specialized institutions in the area of trade are increasingly attentive to gender issues. This is reflected in the activities of organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)-Prosperity for all, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-Better Policies for Better Lives).

As of December 30, 2022, according to the Government of Canada website, Canada has 15 free trade agreements with 51 different countries (Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, December 30, 2022). We cannot effectively hold the federal government accountable for its contribution to gender equality and improved status of women through international trade agreements or advocate to governmental bodies on behalf of women and children impacted by international trade agreements without an adequate supporting CFUW policy.

World Bank and WTO reporting describes the relationship between trade and the status of women as follows: "Trade can dramatically improve women's lives, creating new jobs, enhancing consumer choice, and increasing women's bargaining power in society. But women's relationship with trade is complex, as it can also lead to job losses and a concentration of work in lower-skilled jobs. To ensure that trade enhances opportunities

for everyone – regardless of gender – policymakers should assess the potential impact of trade rules on various groups of people and develop policy responses based on evidence.” (World Bank and WTO, 2020).

The WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. It includes 164 member countries and represents 98% of world trade (World Trade Organization). The WTO is extremely important to the economies of the world and the structures that perpetuate inequalities but is an organization which can also promote economic justice. One of the WTO’s main objectives on trade is to become a gender-responsive organization. The WTO’s three priorities for gender equality include Promoting Gender-Responsive Trade Policy-Making, Driving Research on Trade and Gender Globally and Making Aid for Trade work for women.

The rules within International trade agreements are central factors in the setting of prices, tariffs, quotas, import and export activity, determination of commodity production, price of agricultural products, employment levels in sectors such as manufacturing, the clothing industry and environmental standards; all of which can have a net positive or negative impact on women. (Women’s Issues & Trade Agreements).

In September 2022, Global Affairs describes Canada’s approach to trade and gender as consistent with the Government of Canada’s broader commitment to advancing gender equality and women’s economic empowerment and complements its efforts to advance gender equality both at home and abroad (Global Affairs Canada, 2023).

In order to fully understand the impacts of trade agreements on women and to mitigate negative impacts thereby decreasing inequalities, it is necessary to have data disaggregated by gender/sex. Disaggregated data and an intersectional approach are critical to analyzing the gender impact of trade policy, and subsequently to strengthening policies so that they advance the economic empowerment of women. Gender data collection has now become important in the WTO as reflected in the WTO Gender Research Hub created in May 2021 (WTO Gender Research Hub). This kind of data allows policy analysts to observe trends over time and respond accordingly as reflected in the Trade and Gender Framework of Analysis developed by OECD (Korinek, Moïsé, and Tange, 2021).

The importance of evidence and data is highlighted in the publication, Gender and Trade, Assessing the impact of trade agreements on gender equality: Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (Peltola, A., and Dei, S., et al.). Canada has implemented an intersectional approach to the assessment of trade agreements by using environmental assessment with two other complementary assessments, namely Economic Impact Assessment and Gender-Based Analysis+ (GBA+) (Global Affairs Canada, 2021). Intersectionality considers how the combination of factors intersects or interacts to affect a person, a group or a greater entity. It looks at the whole picture rather than considering each factor separately.

Current trends indicate that investing in women's entrepreneurship has proven to be profitable in some sectors ([Abouzahr, Krentz, Harthorne, and Taplett, 2018](#)). Therefore, support for women's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is an important practice in working toward gender equality and sustainability. This just makes economic sense ([Czerwinska, Pavlova, and Vigliotti, 2022](#)).

Investing in women entrepreneurs is also smart for achieving social and environmental objectives. Studies suggest that women entrepreneurs show higher levels of social and environmental orientation than their male counterparts. Women were also found to be more likely than men to emphasize social goals over economic goals and to engage in ecological venturing. ([Estrada and Schuber, 2022](#)). It should be noted that the implementation of voluntary sustainability standards in the agriculture sector provides another mechanism to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development goals and interrelated economic, environmental and social justice goals ([Sexsmith, 2019](#)).

Women in the agriculture and food sector can be significant actors in sustainable agricultural methods and climate resilient food systems as promoted by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) ([International Development Research Centre, 2021](#)). Furthermore, women can also make important contributions to "Better Agriculture" based on four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all, leaving no one behind ([Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)). The World Bank blog on March 8, 2022, describes this as "Gender-smart agriculture: The only way forward for women and climate." ([Van Nieuwkoop, Van De Velde, Huyer, and Kennedy Freeman, 2022](#)). A variety of projects such as women's empowerment through marketing agricultural products using collective-based organizations are documented by the International Food Policy Research Institute ([International Food Policy Research Institute](#)).

One of the world's most pressing humanitarian issues is that of food insecurity which has devastating impacts. "The invasion of Ukraine further disrupted food supplies, pushing prices to record highs. The combined result is that today 345 million people are in hunger crisis, including some 50 million people in 45 countries who are in hunger emergencies, which is a step away from famine. The world was already dealing with a severe hunger crisis when Ukraine erupted" ([Husain, 2022](#)).

Data consistently shows that women are especially vulnerable to food insecurity and its health consequences ([Hartline-Grafton, 2017](#)). According to the March 8, 2022, Global Nutrition Report, women's empowerment cannot be achieved without addressing malnutrition. It identifies three ways in which nutrition promotes gender equality; improved health outcomes, increased attainment in education and greater economic participation ([Moquette and Feutl Kent, 2021](#)). For these reasons, it is necessary to remain vigilant regarding international and regional trade agreements in the food and agricultural sectors. Advocates must also be alert to the harm created by international trade agreements, such as free trade of highly processed foods contributing to malnutrition and the impact of cheap imports depressing the prices of locally produced food crops. However, this does

not mean that NGOs should not advocate for the potential benefits of international trade to stabilize markets and reallocate food from surplus to deficit regions, helping countries adapt to climate change and contribute to food security (Garton, Swinburn, and Thow, 2021).

Fortunately, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has embraced the challenge of transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2021).

In summary, regional, and international trade agreements are vital structures to move the world to a more equitable and sustainable future for all peoples and an arena in which non-governmental organizations such as CFUW can have a role in ensuring that agreements promote gender equality, the alleviation of poverty and welfare of all people.

Implementation:

CFUW national, provincial councils and individuals may use any of the following implementation strategies or other strategies to advance this resolution:

1. Educate members and promote public awareness of the WTO, other international trade organizations and development assistance organizations.
2. Work with community members to inform the public about Regional and International Trade agreements that Canada is a participant in, and also about the gender provisions of these agreements.
3. Monitor data regarding the impact of international trade agreements on women and promote public dialogue regarding the impact of these agreements.
4. Join coalitions to advocate for international and regional trade agreements that support food security both domestically and internationally.
5. Join coalitions to advocate for Canadian international trade policies that include specific gender equality and empowerment targets.

Bibliography:

Abouzahr, K., Krentz, M., Harthorne, J., & Taplett, F.B. (2018) *Why Women-Owned Startups Are a Better Bet*. Boston Consulting Group. https://web-assets.bcg.com/img-src/BCG-Why-Women-Owned-Startups-Are-a-Better-Bet-May-2018-NL_tcm9-193585.pdf

Canadian Trade Commissioner Service. (December 30, 2022) *Canada's free trade agreements*. Retrieved from the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service <https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/fta-ale-canada.aspx?lang=eng>

Czerwinska, T., Pavlova, L., and Vigliotti, G. (March 8, 2022) *Women entrepreneurs are our best opportunity*. European Investment Bank. <https://www.eib.org/en/stories/investment-in-women-entrepreneurs>

Estrada, C.U., & Schuber, C (2022) *Women, SMEs, and sustainable development – lessons learnt for the road ahead*. UN SDG Learn. <https://www.unsdglearn.org/blog/women-smes-and-sustainable-development-lessons-learnt-for-the-road-ahead/>

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2021. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4474en>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Leave No One Behind: Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=CC0689EN%2f>

Garton, K., Swinburn, B. & Thow, A.M. *Who influences nutrition policy space using international trade and investment agreements? A global stakeholder analysis*. *Global Health* 17, 118 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-021-00764-7>

“*Gender Equality & Trade Policy*” (2011) United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/trade/gender equality and trade policy.pdf](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/trade/gender%20equality%20and%20trade%20policy.pdf)

Global Affairs Canada. (January 21, 2021) *Environmental Assessments of Trade Agreements: Process and Revised Framework*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/envIRON-assessments- evaluations-environnementale.aspx?lang=eng>

Global Affairs Canada. (February 17, 2023) *Trade and gender in free trade agreements: The Canadian approach*. [https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/gender equality-egalite genres/trade gender fta-ale-commerce genre.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/gender%20equality-egalite%20genres/trade%20gender%20fta-ale-commerce%20genre.aspx?lang=eng)

Hartline-Grafton, H. (May 19, 2017) *The Impact of Food Insecurity on Women's Health*. <https://frac.org/blog/impact-food-insecurity-womens-health>

Husain, A. (September, 30, 2022) *Global food crisis: Fuelled by conflict*. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2022-10/global-food-crisis-fuelled-conflict>

International Development Research Centre (February 9, 2021) *A more sustainable and inclusive world*. <https://www.idrc.ca/en/stories/more-sustainable-and-inclusive-world>

International Food Policy Research Institute (2021-2023) *Applying New Evidence for Women's Empowerment*. <https://www.ifpri.org/project/applying-new-evidence-womens-empowerment-anew>

Korinek, J., Moisé, E., and Tange, J. (March 2021) *Trade and Gender: A Framework of Analysis*. OCED Trade Policy Papers, No. 246, OCED Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/6db59d80-en>

Moquette, A. and Feutl, Kent, E. (March 8, 2021) *Why tackling malnutrition matters for women's empowerment*. Global Nutrition Report. <https://globalnutritionreport.org/blog/why-tackling-malnutrition-matters-womens-empowerment/>

Peltola, A., & Dei, S., et al. (2020) *Gender and Trade, Assessing the impact of trade agreements on gender equality: Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement*. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/UNWomen_2020d1_en.pdf

Sexsmith, K. (March 2019) *Leveraging Voluntary Sustainability Standards for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Agriculture: A guide for development organizations based on the Sustainable Development Goals*. International Development Research Centre. <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/publications/vss-gender-equality-agriculture-en.pdf>

"The 17 Goals" United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Van Nieuwkoop, M., Van De Velde, P., Huyer, S., Kennedy Freeman, K. (March 8, 2022) *Gender-smart agriculture: The only way forward for women and climate*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/climatechange/gender-smart-agriculture-only-way-forward-women-and-climate>

"Women's Issues & Trade Agreements" (n.d.) Citizens Trade Campaign. <https://www.citizenstrade.org/ctc/trade-issues/womens-issues-trade-agreements/>

World Bank and World Trade Organization. (2020) *Women and Trade: The Role of Trade in Promoting Gender Equality*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1541-6 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/trade/publication/women-and-trade-the-role-of-trade-in-promoting-womens-equality>

World Trade Organization. <https://www.wto.org/>

World Trade Organization. Action Plan on Trade & Gender 2021-2026 (January 31, 2021) https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/action_plan_21-26.pdf

World Trade Organization. Gender Research Hub. https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/gender_research_hub_e.htm