



PSI in the Caribbean

Summary Report

2024 Sub-regional Women's Advisory Committee (SUBWOC) Meeting

Monday June 3 | Cortsland Hotel, Upper Gambles, ANTIGUA

Introduction

Twenty-eight women representing 12 of PSI's 21 affiliates in the Caribbean attending the one-day meeting.

Sis Tifonie Powell-Williams (JCSA), 1st substitute, chaired the meeting. She extended greetings on behalf of Sis Jillian Bartlett (NUGFW), Women's Titular. The meeting also noted excuses from Anguilla CSA, CTSP Haiti and WICSU-PSU. Br Stev Joseph, male Titular also extended greetings, noting that the work of women's committees is critical in the continued quest for and maintenance of gender equality and gender equity not only in the world of work but also in trade union organisations.

Equal pay and Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

In reviewing the discussions from the 2023 meeting, SUBWOC members requested a session devoted to Pay Equity. Members advised that governments in a number of countries have undertaken to conduct job evaluation exercises. SUBWOC members stated that their organisations needed technical assistance on the issue.

Promoting Workplace and Public Policies on Domestic Violence in the World of Work

The meeting examined a case study presented by Sis Marika Zunika (PSUB) on practical challenges faced by women public services workers seeking protection from domestic violence. The current Public Service Regulations do not allow for Domestic Violence Leave. A local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) provides support for survivors of domestic violence. This support includes the ability to shelter for a maximum of 30 days. If women public services workers use these reservices for the full 30 days they will be deemed to have abandoned their jobs and then face economic hardships.

SUBWOC members noted that the union is pursuing including Domestic Violence Leave as a demand in the next round of collective bargaining. The meeting examined examples from [Canada](#), noting the language used and the number of days' leave available.

SUBWOC members noted that the National Women's Committee of the PSUB plans to meet with representatives of the NGO as well with other advocates to identify the practical steps to promote and bargain for workplace and public policies on eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work.

Belize has not yet ratified [ILO Convention 190](#). The meeting agreed that the committee and union should thoroughly examine [ILO Recommendation 206](#) as well as the [Train the Trainers Toolkit on C190 and R 206](#) and the [Facilitators Guide on ILO Toolkit](#). This will be an important part of the work in developing the union's capacity to fight for the ratification of the convention. [ILO Recommendation 206](#) provides guidance on language and points to be used in collective bargaining. In addition, the meeting recognised that C190 can help unions negotiate clauses in collective

bargaining agreements and workplace policies to address and recognise the impact of domestic violence. It is also possible that even without ratification of the convention unions can start to negotiate workplace policies on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), equality, health and well-being, or in standalone domestic violence policies.

Bargaining for the rights of care workers

Sisters Winnifred Meeks (JALGO) and Tifonie Powell-Williams (JCSA) gave a spirited education presentation on PSI's focus on Care, emphasizing PSI's demand that governments see **care as a human right**. Recognising that many who work in the Health, Care and Social Services sector are women and that much of that work, especial care work is undervalued and underpaid.

SUBWOC members noted that the 2024 International Labour Conference (currently on-going) was having a major discussion [*ILO Report to the ILC – Decent Work and the Care Economy*](#)

Sisters Winnifred and Tifonie referred SUBWOC members to [*PSI and the Social Re-organisation of Care*](#), noting that some affiliates present had already signed on the PSI Care Manifesto, promoting the 5 Rs.

The sub-regional secretary recommended that affiliates take the time to review the following documents and see them as useful references for discussions on the issue of Care. The issue is an increasingly important topic in regional and global discussions.

1. *PSI's briefing for the [*ILC General Discussion on Decent Work and the Care Economy*](#)*
2. [*Making a Case for Universal Investment in Child care in Barbados*](#) research conducted by UN Women and the University of the West Indies
3. [*Fiscal Costs of Expanding Early Childhood Development Services in Saint Lucia*](#), research conducted by UN Women Caribbean and the University of the West Indies

As a result of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of care as well as the results from censuses highlighting the increasingly aging populations in the Caribbean, governments are now paying more attention to the need for delivery of care to various sections of the population – young children, people with disabilities, the aged.

Sis Winnifred, co-chair of the sub-region's Health and Social Services (HSS) Steering Group advised that care would be an additional area of focus in the sectoral Steering Group. She advised that it would be important to clearly define the categories of work to be covered and learn more about the Care sector in the sub-region.

Equality, Equity and Diversity

The SUBWOCs in PSI structures have traditionally taken the lead on issues related to equality, equity and diversity in the world of work. Working together with all structures/networks in unions, women's committees promote principles and policies and take action that promote and defend human and trade union rights especially for marginalised groups of workers: for example, women, young workers, workers with disabilities and LGBT+ workers.

Sis Llyodia Busano (PSUB), the union's national Young Workers' representative, gave a presentation on her plans for young workers in Belize. Prominent in the plans are:

1. Education and training
2. Recruitment
3. Community activities

SUBWOC members recognised and noted the calls from young workers. SUBWOC also noted with concern that not enough was done to integrate young workers in union campaigns, issues and actions. The meeting noted a lack of

training in unions for young workers. The sub-regional secretary noted that in general trade union education and training seemed no longer to be a major focus in unions. She added that while there was some training this was not focused on trade unionism and appeared to be very general in nature. She emphasised the need for trade union education & training that focuses on building the strength of unions.

“Union education is not impartial. It is aimed resolutely at the strengthening of unions as they struggle for better working and living conditions for all working people. It is education for political and workplace action with its aims set by members or affiliates.”

Unions will become increasingly irrelevant if they are not involved in making the world a better place for workers and their families.

The sub-regional secretary reminded committee members that if unions want to grow and win, on-going structured and focused trade union education and training is critical. Individual affiliates must pay more attention to this and must organise effective trade union education & training programmes for young workers.

The meeting noted the details for the upcoming IAMRECON in Bogotá. SUBWOC also noted that there would be further discussion on IAMRECON during the SUBRAC.

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