

CSW Parallel Event: Advancing the Rights of Haitian Women & Girls: Haiti's Transition & Beyond

Panel Discussion

Date of Event: March 14, 2025

Panel Composition: Carine Jocelyn, founder of HWC (moderator); Souzen Joseph, executive director of 100% FANM; Laura Nyirinkindi, Chair of UN WGDAGW; Pascale Solages, general coordinator of NÈGÈS MAWON; Nathalie Vilgrain, general coordinator of ORGANISATION FÉMINISTE MARIJÀN



Left to Right: Carine Jocelyn (HWC), Nathalie Vilgrain, Souzen Joseph, Lucia D. Pascale Solages, and Laura Nyirinkindi (UN WGDAGW)

Below is the CSW Panel Discussion [Recording](#) Transcript (EN):

Sasha Filippova (SF): Hi everyone, thank you so much for being here today. My name is Sasha Filipova, I'm the senior staff attorney for the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti. We, together with the Haitian Women's Collective and Haitian feminist organization Nègès Mawon, are the co-sponsors for this wonderful event focused on organizing for and by Haiti's women and girls. We're so thankful you're here with us today for this important conversation. Before I hand it over to our amazing panel, I just wanted to flag that we have interpretation into Haitian Creole and French today. For that reason that our interpreters are not in the room, we ask everyone to speak with some deliberation just so our interpreters can keep up. We will leave some time at the end for Q&A and really encourage you to ask your questions for this wonderful panel. You can log on to the Zoom that you will need to get interpretation through this QR code. There are also written instructions if you need them and again thank you so much for being here.

Carine Jocelyn (CJ): Good afternoon, hi everybody. Bonjou, bonswa, kontan wè ou. I'm happy to see all of you here and thank you for your time. I know that this is Friday. It's been a long week for many of us. I'm Carine Jocelyn. I'm the founder of the Haitian Women's Collective. The

Haitian Women's Collective is not a direct service provider, our work is really to amplify the voices of Haitian women-led organizations, talk about the issues of philanthropy or doing philanthropy better in Haiti, and this year we will launch the first feminist fund in the Caribbean for Haitian women, for Haitian women-led organizations.

So thank you and thank you so much to Sasha and IJDH for their continued leadership and allyship in the work that we do, certainly putting this together, getting us to this final point here. So we're very grateful for them. I'd like to take this opportunity now to really review the goals and objectives of this panel today and what the panelists will be sharing. Our goal for this conversation is to really focus on how to enable transformation of policies, politics, and practices, while also looking at how to decrease violence and discrimination against Haitian women and girls. We have interpreters so I'm trying to be slow. I am a native New Yorker, so I apologize. We also want to be able to look at the effective participation of women in political and public spaces and the centering of a feminist agenda - very important to us.

So now we're going to spend a bit of time talking about the specifics of the present crisis. But it's important to have it as a context and really talk about - I mean I know that many of you here are probably here because you're interested in Haiti, know of Haiti, maybe worked in Haiti, connected to Haiti, support Haiti in some way and obviously at this time the country is going through and the people of Haiti are going through a very challenging time. We see high levels of gender-based violence and especially sexual violence affecting primarily women and girls. The judicial system is basically dysfunctional at this time. Women and girls have heightened violence due to migration within the country and displacement within the country. Those of you who live in the U.S. or in New York certainly know there's quite a bit of migration out of Haiti into New York and Boston and Florida. Underlying discrimination is rooted and requires really long-term organizing, which many of these organizations here do so well at. And really the fragility of the government clearly leads to continued violence against women and girls and it seems very little attention [is] being paid to them. So I'll take a minute to ask each panelist to take 60 seconds - I know - they do amazing work and their organizations are fabulous and they're wonderful leaders, but I'm giving them each 60 seconds to introduce yourself and your organization, what your organization does, and how you're engaged with Haitian women and girls. So I will pass it to Nathalie.

Nathalie Vilgrain (NV): Good afternoon everyone, my name is Nathalie Vilgrain. I'm the co-founder and first Coordinator General of Marijan, which is a young feminist organization based in Haiti. We work on gender-based violence, climate justice, sexual and reproductive health. We [also do] a lot of advocacy on abortion rights in Haiti and women[']s representation. It's really nice to see you all here, thank you for coming.

Souzen Joseph (SJ): Good morning everyone, my name is Souzen Joseph. I am the co-founder and the current Executive Director of 100% FANM. We mainly work in terms of program with farmers women and mostly in the really isolated areas like Île-à-Vache or Île de la Tortue. As you know, these women, they are facing multiple and multi-dimensional challenges and the stakes are always higher for us. Thank you.

Pascale Solages (PS): Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Pascale Soulages, I am the co-founder and General Coordinator of the feminist organization based in Haiti Nègès Mawon. We are working on gender based violence, reproductive justice, advocacy for abortion, the decriminalization of abortion in Haiti and also reproductive health in Haiti. We are working also on political representation of women in the country. So thank you for being here.

Laura Nyirinkindi (LN): Good afternoon everyone, I'm really happy to be here, thanks for the invitation. My name is Laura Nyirinkindi, I'm the chair of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls. Our Working Group has been engaging on the Haiti-issue. We have sent official communications to the government on human rights violations against women and girls, issued press releases and public statements, but we have also documented their situation in a recent country visit to the Dominican Republic where we raised the issues and you will see that in our report. And I really look forward to the discussion today.

CJ: Thank you so much. Before continuing, I do want to just highlight two of our partners and friends, two organizations in the room: Haiti Adolescent Girls Network, Miriam Narcisse as well as Fondation Toya, Nadim Louis who is also in the front. They are all partners and friends, and we all work very well together around all of these issues, so thank you. Thank you so much for being here. So my first question actually goes to Nathalie. I, you know, I mentioned a little bit about kind of what's going on in Haiti or what we see in the news and so forth. I think for the group here, it would be great for you to set the scene of women's rights opportunities and challenges in Haiti. I mean, we all have our notes in front of us and you know sometimes I think data... data is absolutely important but I think that sense of ***“what's really going on? what is it like day-to-day for women and their families living in Haiti?”***

NV: Thank you Carine. I think what we are seeing right now in Haiti, it's really a regressing of Haitian [women's] and girls' rights in the country and I'm always going to be unapologetic in saying that it's under the watch of the international community. And I think by supporting corrupt leaders having no agenda, they can be complicit also in what's going on. So Haiti signed a key agreement on gender equality including CEDAW in 1981, Belém do Pará 1996 and we see that systemic discrimination still persists in the country even if we have tools that can help us prevent that. So women...women are marginalized in economic, political and social sphere(s), facing widespread violence, abuse, rape, and harassment, and femicide. So today, we talk about data and I think it's really important to know exactly what's happening and what key data that we have today. According to OEM (IOM) we have more than 1 million people internally displaced seeking refugees in camp(s) in Haiti. We don't have any war with anyone but despite we don't have a healthcare system, judicial system or state structure who I can say can prepare for such a catastrophic [situation]. So for me it's really important to highlight that this regression of rights that I spoke about earlier, restorative justice it's not a priority, leaving survivors with little hope of ever seeing like their aggressor brought to justice. Law enforcement agency and judicial system are often corrupt and deeply patriarchal, creating like a system that fails, I think, to protect survivors in Haiti. And organizations like ours, young feminist organizations who are continuing to fight and we've been seeing that a lot without any resources, without any help from the state it's really an important thing to highlight also. Thank you.

CJ: Thanks so much. Souzen, I know that, you know, everyone you know you have people who are your go-to so I go to each of them for certain things I guess. So Souzen's area is about - the question is about - ***what's the history of successful mobilization for women's rights in Haiti? What were elements of success, you know, what were some of the impediments and maybe even speaking to what you see as the challenges to that to move us forward?***

SJ: I'll say, Nathalie just mentioned the Belém do Pará and the ratification. Let's say Haitian feminists have always been in the front lines fighting for women's rights and (to) make sure that (the) Haitian government make - have - structure to guarantee that women and girls have their rights respected. Unfortunately, [the] Haitian government has always failed to create those structures or to feed the structures in terms of funding or in terms of policy structure to allow us to move forward. Not to go that far, I'll take it from the 1990, right after the military coup in September 30 1990, the families were the first ones and during 8 months they collected data on the multiple human rights (violations) against women and what they did with this data and the support for feminist organizations around the world, particularly from Canada, they pushed the international community to document the use of sexual assault of this purpose and raise awareness for Haitian women among this issue. And once the military war in 1994 end and the deployment of the multinational military force, the Haitian feminists occupied the space. They have wins: the fact that they created the Ministry of women's status and women's rights. The executive goes on November 1894 and then they themselves, not the leaders at the time, themselves, they sat down and work the support to create a law to support the Ministry itself and on August 11 1995 we got the ministry. There (is) so much (that has) been done. The ratification of the Belém do Pará, the ratification of the Beijing conference in 1995. The... one of the things that I think it's really important to notice in our current situation is the fact that they have the investigation by the National Truth and Justice Commission in 1994 to 1996, where they forced the Haitian government, the Haitian leaders, and the international community to admit the crimes against women, the sexual crimes against women, during the military coup. And they organized the symbolic international tribunal against violence against women in 1997. Of course we had so much win after that. I can talk about the CONAP, the denunciation of rape perpetrated by the soldiers with the United Nations stabilization mission in Haiti, and obtain recognition of the fact from the UN that these had happened and we need justice for them. Unfortunately what happened is the follow-up: Haitian government still failed Haitian women. Even though we do all this work, the follow-up has never been done. Even the Ministry of the status of women and the women's right itself have never had any steps to follow up for those things. So I'll stop by with the adoption of the third national plan to combat violence against women 2017 to 2027. We have the plan. We have developed the plan. We submit the plan. We advocate for the plan. And still, unfortunately, we never had any Haitian government or leaders that said "okay let's let's allow, this let's implement it, let's vote for this." So I'll stop right here, just because we have win and we have won because at the time, fellow feminist organizations across the world at one time or another supported Haitian feminist organizations.

CJ: Thank you so much. I often try when I speak about Haiti or Haitian women in general to really come from a positive approach. Often you know we talk in such a deficit way: "they're poor, they don't have water, their kids are not going to school." Meanwhile right during a coup or after a coup, look at what were they were able to do right? Look at all of the struggle and the

difficulties and yet they were able to stand up and they went out and collected data. Nobody told them to go out and collect data, right, they... they're smart enough and they certainly know what to do. So I just wanted to highlight that as well. So Laura, thank you for joining us today, we're very happy to have you here. You know the crisis, of course, it's awful. We can talk about how this is a moment of transformation. Perhaps you can share an example for us in Haiti of a model that can be duplicated or leveraged. You know, social disruption might be a... a part of that. But also just thinking about the transition because Haiti is going through a continuous political transition. I'm always continuously trying to figure out who the president is. The president of the month or the quarter I don't know. It's hard to keep up. But you understand. So how can that be done in a manner that is also decolonized and deracialized, right, and that is equitable to Haiti.

LN: Thank you so much and it's been very insightful listening to the panelists that have spoken before me. The Working Group has consistently emphasized that the needs of women and girls must be prioritized during crisis, as political transitions offer both opportunities for advancement of women and girls rights but also risks of regression. So this calls for really heightened vigilance at all times. And a good example of a country that has dealt with this issue and overcome it is Rwanda. we call it "Ronda," maybe the rest, they call it "Ruanda" but it's "Ronda." Following the 1993 genocide, I don't know if you were aware that they had a terrible genocide in which women were, you know, disproportionately targeted for sexual violence, it demonstrates how a crisis can be transformed into an opportunity to enhance women's leadership. The women in Rwanda played a pivotal role in the transitional process with women's organizations facilitating reconciliation dialogue within the communities. There were also government-led dialogues to address troubled colonial legacies because this played a huge part in the conflict. And many women stepped forward as victims and witnesses and it takes courage and resilience, but it also can lead to...to gender-responsive justice and truth-telling processes, and many of them served as judges in the courts and although that process was not flawless, their active participation established a strong foundation for women's leadership across the board in all areas of public life in the post-genocide period. And I'll give a few examples: since the 2000s Rwanda has made notable progress as the country rebuilds its society and with emphasis on inclusivity and equal... And I use the word equal representation. We are tired of equity, we want equal gender parity representation. So in 2003, Rwanda adopted a highly gender-responsive Constitution and established a minimum quota of 30%. Let's just say that 30% is the minimum standard of the Beijing declaration for women in decision-making positions within the government. But as we speak today, Rwanda boasts the highest percentage of women parliamentarians in the world at 60% and the country has gender parity in cabinet. 50-50 women and men in cabinet. In 2023, women held key positions in the Ministries including Foreign Affairs, Justice, and Health Ministries. Since 2003 - so it's important to have women in decision-making processes so that they can make gender-responsive laws, policies, budgets, right, otherwise then we're just having tokenism or window-dressing okay. So in Rwanda we can see the result of having women in decision-making, in enhanced roles. Since 2003, numerous legal reforms have been enacted to guarantee equal equal rights for women and men, especially in the areas of inheritance, land rights, family law, and the criminalization of gender violence. But unfortunately these situations are quite rare, especially after a crisis. And especially in this moment of global gender backlash - we've been talking about that all week -

we observe a troubling trend of increasing marginalization of women and girls during political transitions and peace negotiations. For instance, the proportion of reference to women and girls in peace agreements has decreased from 31% in 2020 to 26% in 2023, meaning that the outcomes of peace processes and negotiations rarely mention girls by 5% [less]. Furthermore, women remain chronically under-represented in transitional and peace negotiation processes. In 2023, women made up only 9.6% of negotiators, 13.7% of negotiators [mediators], and 26.6% of signatories to peace agreements and ceasefire agreements on average. This trend is also evident in Haiti, where all seven voting members of the current transitional presidential council are men, despite the constitutional requirement for at least 30% women involvement in all public positions. And what this means is that it significantly undermines the chances of achieving lasting peace. We know about the women, peace, and security agenda that the United Nations has tried to form since 2000. We're celebrating 25 years now. There is a reason for that because there can be no lasting peace when you leave out half of humanity. So I...my colleagues say governments can fail. That is the bottom line. Governments can fail and we have to be watchful. We recognize that merely electing or appointing women to public and political office is insufficient. Evidence indicates that women in those roles do not automatically advocate for gender equality agendas. They can, but it's not automatic. In fact, significant progress towards equality between men and women occurs when there is a wide range of women's engagement and activism in political and public life, including all state institutions, diverse civil society organizations and very public discourse. Empowering grassroots feminist movements is really critical for rebuilding peace and facilitating political transition in a decolonized, deradicalized manner. However, the Working Group has recognized over the years that political transitions and state-building processes often create new vulnerabilities for women's rights movements. In fact, we have consistently observed that women human right defenders, activists, and politicians frequently become targets of violence, harassment, and defamation, to say the least, both online and offline. And these threats are often intensified during periods of political transition. Any discourse or movement that seeks to discredit and exclude women's voices should be met with clear condemnation and pushback from both domestic and international stakeholders. Lastly, the Working Group believes that safeguarding civic space and freedoms is critical. We must call for stringent legal protections for the rights of freedom of expression, association, and assembly for both individuals but also civil society organizations, opposing any effort to undermine civic freedoms. Without respecting these rights, women and girls cannot meaningfully engage in dialogues that are important for shaping their futures, of their nation and influence decision-making processes. Thank you.

SF: Just a reminder for everyone to slow down.

CJ: Ok... so so much was said there, so much around equality and parity, and that without women being present, there's not a lot of solutions I guess, right. We need them to be at the table. And you mentioned slightly a little bit about Haiti and certainly we have a 30% (constitutional requirement for Haitian women to hold political positions) also, ***have we ever gotten to 3%? 5%? Of Haitian women involved in political positions and so forth. 10%?*** Maybe. We're still trying to figure that part out. However, this next question is for Pascale. We talked a lot about a lot of things and certainly for many of us involved in different sessions this week around Haiti and there are well-written policies and laws for Haiti. ***What does Haiti need***

to do in order to address endemic gender-based violence and empower women? Is there anything in particular for you about this being a moment of extreme crisis, government transition that you think we should be taking into account?

PS: We have to remember that what we are facing now in Haiti is, first of all, a governance issue. Yes, we can see all the aspects, all the consequences, the gangsterization, the violence against women, the displaced people, the impact on the economy, and, you know, the migration and everything. But the key reason is the governance issue. And yes we need more policies, we need more laws, but I have to remember, I have to remind you that we signed so many international conventions, we have a decree for rape, yes we need a specific law for violence against women, we need policies against femicide, we need so many other kinds of laws, of policies, but the first thing we need in Haiti is a political will to address the problem. In this government, this government of transition, with the ambition to win election in the country, with the ambition doing constitutional reform, with the ambition doing reform of the penal code, the same government in the country [doesn't] respect the Constitution because the same government doesn't respect the quota of minimum of 30% of women in the government. And you want to reform the Constitution of a country but you don't want, you don't have the will to respect the same Constitution? You don't have the will to dialogue, to have conversation with civil society, with feminist organizations, about how you can mobilize more resources, more people, more everything to address this crisis of GBV in the country? As Nathalie said, we have, for now, more than 1 million of displaced people in the country and more than half of those people they are women and children. Where is the plan? Where are the resources? Where is the conversation, the collaboration between this government and the civil society, especially the feminist organizations, to address this situation regarding the specific situation of women and girls? Yes we need more policies, we need more text, we need more laws, we need more conversations with the international community, but we need more institutions doing their work, we need institutions, state institutions, doing their work in the country. When we are seeing what happened with the Ministry of women's rights, by example, when we are seeing what happened with the Ministry of Affairs Sociales in the country, by example, unfortunately, we don't see the real actions that we need. We don't see the mobilization of resources, of people, of expertise we need to address this crisis in the country. For now, by example, the response to the insecurity issues in the country is, by example, the multinational force. But where is the real agenda addressing the specific needs and the specific situation of women and girls in this response from the international community? Yes, we need to adapt what we have today as policies, as a law for the actual situation of women and girls. Because the fact is, what we saw in 2018, by example, as civil society, as organizations and what we are doing as work today in 2025, is so different. And, by example, we did assistance to survivors of GBV, sexual violence, but it was, you know, women coming from families having violence in domestic contexts, by example. But now we are facing situation when we - Marijan by example, Nègès Mawon - we are having hundreds of women coming in our organizations, victims of gangs and displaced at the same time, so it's a new situation for us. It's a new kind of challenge for the civil society and we don't have enough resources and even, sometimes - we have to be honest - the expertise to address the situation like that today. So what we need is to see that this government is really, really want to address the situation with what we need, have solutions for the women and the girls. And you

can have all the policies, all the laws, all money, all resources you need, but if the Prime Minister, if the Ministries and if the international Community, they don't want to find a concrete response and solution to the problem, we will not see the end of the problem. And this is why, as civil society, as feminist organizations, we continue advocate, to push them to do their work. Sometimes it can seem that - oh you know - we are always complaining, but it's our work. We have to do pressure, we have to push them to take their responsibility because the money they have, the privileges they have, it's from the money of the people. It's from my tax money, it's from the million of people in the streets. So with this kind of resources and privileges, you have to have a response. It's not my world, not my place, not my responsibility as civil society: it's yours as state. Yes, I can do my part because I'm mobilizing money and people to help as civil society but the real response, the real responsibility is the responsibility of the state. So, as a feminist organization, we have to continue to be in place to remind all people in power in all kinds of institutions that they decide, they have the capacity to do the work, they took the job, the position to address the situation, and they have this responsibility to have an answer for us. You can be in media, you can be, you know, in all kind of places, complaining as me, as a citizen. You know, you are supposed to have an answer for me. So we will continue as civil society to advocate, to push the people in power, the Prime Minister, the Presidential Council, and we have to remind also that the same Presidential Council with nine members are only one woman, with no right to vote. So when we think about if the... if this transition is the real answer to what we expect as women and girls to resolve the situation, this crisis in the country, we know that we have long days as civil society to continue to work, to advocate, to fight every day. And unfortunately this kind of crisis we are seeing in the country today, this is not - the answer will not come from the international community, from the civil society it will come from all actors of all of course, from all citizen, from a political will also, but we have to remind everyone every day that the real responsibility for security for being safe in our country to have the right to vote, to have election by example, today yes we need policies we we need laws but we have to remind people that we don't have a parliament in the country, we don't have a president, we don't have local power because we didn't have election for 10 years in the country so where are the people we have to talk with about the policies about the law, about pushing an agenda, a feminist agenda. So it's hard at civil society because we are also facing the situation we have members in our organization they are displaced people we have to leave our office every day you know with the tread with the attacks with the you know and the violence online the violence from the population the violence from other institution, we have to face that continue to do the work in the community, and continue to do the advocacy nationally and internationally. So to continue to do this work every day is because we know that the result will be for us as Haitian women but also for women we can they can be in this kind of place they can have this microphone to talk to people, we they don't have access to some places so we have to do the work but it's hard. So I think we have to remind people you have to do your work, you have to take your responsibility because we will continue to take our responsibility to remind you that it's your job for Haitain women and for Haitian girl.

CJ: You know how they say mic drop? So either Nathalie or Susan I wanted to ask you know what kind of leadership is necessary to be at the service of Haitian women you know we're talking about the policy framework and we can come back to explaining any more about that but

you know there there is so much that is well-written, as I said before research is important, data is important having expertise is really important, you know ***what is it that is perhaps not necessarily missing but maybe needing some support or enhancement? What kind of leadership do you think is necessary*** and in terms of the international context, you know lost of funding loss, of you know Haiti's priority, people are saying you know they're they're "Haiti-tired", fatigued, they're "Haiti fatigue", though we didn't create the "Haiti fatigue" they're tired but okay so you know just kind of your feedback either of you on that.

SJ: I smile, I smile when you say that that's that's true people keep saying whenever you go to a place and someone you say "I'm from Haiti" and everyone so "I'm so sorry", and we've been in that, of course today it's worse, this is something worse than we've ever seen in our life from now, but we're used to that because that means it's been it's been a while now we having this type of relationship. I'll say this for now we need really really really we need a constructive international engagement to support feminist movement in Haiti. By prioritizing local leadership, sustainable funding, and accountability partnership. I used to say that I'm very proud that I knew people like Magalie Marcelin, I knew Myriam Merlet. I was young feminist activist those people took me under the aisle and teach me stuff. They did their work. One of the lesson learn that we have is when international community or international organizations say we support what we they do, probably it's part of their strategy they go to funding basket fund and then they give it to the international...they give it to the government to the state. What's happening is... I love also listening to Haitian leaders saying that when the international came to the meeting they have all the data but what they forgot is they got their data from local organization. We are on the ground doing the work that they should have done or they have to do. So when you take the money and give it to the state without first the local organization they don't know about it at all. So that means even when we start asking for money to do the job they have to do, we look like people that begging for money and we provide a service to the community which is not normal so we need this. And historically we have experience today Nègès Mawon is doing the work in progress but guess what we have the same gang violence in Artibonite. I have women that I work with in Kenscoff now I'm all over the place because most of the time I directed the gender-based violence survivors to Nègès Mawon so what do I do? In Artibonite I don't have that, we have economic project economic programs to support these women we don't have that and these people they don't used to this extreme kind of violence. That's part of things, so we need this. The second thing is we need long-term accountability, hence an institutional reform and systemic shift. We need that, don't let the local organization aside discuss only with the state and then ask us to do the job. This has to be something we need to be at the table this is a must this is an imperative. The third thing I will say is... oh oops I'm back okay... it's so long time accountability it's I was saying that it's the new time for justice for survivor. I was saying this to... to Karen. It's not normal that a women that been victim of rape and I know a lot to walk in the street and meet the same person, the perpetrators. It's not okay. We tend to after crisis after crisis, we just brushed everything and keep moving. We cannot ask this, this trauma is too much. Nègès Mawon, Marijan, they are having women GBV survivors coming at them. They collect the data what happened next? And we know that our justice system it's been a while, it's corrupt I won't sugarcoat anything, it's corrupt and undefining. And literally every judge or every lawyer now is a politician. So if we need really to support local organization let's do something

that all the local organization are on the table when you give money we know but we can have peer-to-peer organizational support. We have partnership with IJDH we have other organization with Black Feminist Forum don't only support the state because we are on the ground doing the work for them.

CJ: Yes, thank you so much for that.

NV: So I could echo a lot of what Pascale and Laura has been said earlier, but one thing I would love to say is that when we talk about international community can we redefine what is their role in Haiti? Because it's been like since before 1935 they've been trying to help the Haitian people but what is their real role in Haiti? Are they there to facilitate, empower community, support? Or they are here to increase crisis? We've been working in a crisis situation as civil society that we didn't ask for, in fact we beg we protest, we write note, since I can even remember to say we need to take another direction with the country. But they didn't listen. They are working with corrupt leaders. International organization in Haiti right now, I'm going to give you a real example. Marijan is receiving hundred of case every month, but when we... when you see the kind of fund that our organization have right now, it's heartbreaking. Sometimes you have to use your own fund to do the work that we do. But does international organization, who has like million in budget, they don't choose us because we too radicals if I can say that. We don't have experiences, we too young, we talk a lot or we complain a lot. All I can... as I can say, we don't respect like the the way they work [PS: We don't have political respectability]. Indeed, so you talk about sustainable funding and in not a lot of place, we've been talking a lot about that. But for international organization and this is like for five years, I've been sitting and meeting with them and I know we need to do better, we can do better because they have the fund to do better. Strong partnership, I'm going to give you an example. I have one organization that we were like trying to work with and they were like you can talk about abortion we are a faith-based organization which we understand, but if you want to work on the same level with us, you have to like respect also the kind of a struggle that we've been dealing for decades and when we talk about international community in international organization, we need to talk more about partnership, real partnership.

CJ: So we you know I think the issue of international participation or agenda and how that either creates crisis or maintains us in crisis or from crisis to other crisis, is something that's always going to come up and certainly for locally-led organizations the issue of funding will always... will always be something to to talk about because you know for us at the Haitian Women's Collective, it really has been as I said in the beginning we these organizations and partners do amazing wonderful work. We we don't need to come in and do and do more work but we're very clear and it's shown that these organizations are brought to the table in a way that is helpful to those that receive the money, but they don't necessarily get the money right and so while a larger organization's that's very finessed and you know has all their systems in place you know marketing, QA, HR, all those types of departments and support and capacity right, and then they give the organization \$100,000 and they you know throw them out to the wolves so to speak to do all of the work. And often times they're not really given the recognition, the applause, the support, and for me really as the Haitian Women's Collective, that that's the priority for me really about the fact that these local organizations do the work and often times

nobody recognizes that. And the other piece of it is similar to what you said Pascale about, you know it's the responsibility of the government, it is the responsibility of the government of Haiti to take care of the people of Haiti. And somehow that has been lost in conversation and and so forth. And it's the same way for international larger organizations that enter the country and want to do work in the country, it is their responsibility to figure out how to best do it with civil society, right? It's not we did this great report with data but you forgot who got it for you, who went to the you know churches and to the groups and to the schools and to you know informal spaces right, where folks hang out and talk and right to get that data. So I think that that's really important to lift up. We created and worked on several of us here a policy framework together also with the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, Madre, many organizations signed off on it. ***Pascale can you tell us a little bit about the framework?*** I know you talked already about the importance of civil society and so forth and then we'll speak to Laura a little bit about that as well.

PS: Yes of course, as I said earlier yes we denounce, we protest we work, and everything, but the civil society especially the feminist organization, we also we are doing the work of proposition you know to contribute to what can be the solution to to the crisis in this country and we did this policy framework, we work on in months and I want to say hello to Sasha in the room, we did a great work on the policy framework thank you Sasha. And all the organization also we were more than 150 organization endorsing the policy framework and it was because we wanted to see more women in this political transition in the country. Not because we are begging but because it's our place and because we as we said we have this Constitution with a minimum of of 30% of women a quota of minimum 30% of women in the country, so we propose this policy framework to see how women can have their real place in this political transition but also after the transition because as I said we didn't have election in this country for 10 years, and we have to remind people also that in the last election one of the biggest challenge for women to participate was the violence. Violence as candidate and violence also as women who want to vote, who want to be part of the electoral process [SJ: because they're citizens], exactly. So when we can see the report of so far and other organization and other also international organization doing elector observation in the country, the violence was a key issue for women to participate in election in 2015. So we work on this policy framework to say that if we want to see the end of this crisis in this country, we want to have women thinking about what we need in this political transition and in the next election to have a legitimate government in the country. We did all the work mobilizing other organization in the world we met with the former Prime Minister Garry Conille, we met with the the Ministry of women rights, we met with other institution you know giving them this document talking with them, saying that we are here also to help if they need you know the civil society to contribute to the work. And unfortunately for now no result from this contribution for civil society, and it shows. We can see it in what happened in the country today and we can't see where where... we where we will go in the next month, in the next year with this will of doing election, with the situation doing you know a real plan to end GBV in the country a real plan to end this security issue in the country and this policy framework is here, giving guidelines that can help you know this government of transition to address the lack of women in place in power during this transition because as I said in the CP, we only have one woman with no vote in the Presidential Council. We have less than 20% women in the

government of Alix Didier Fils-Aimé and I think they have new Nathalie, the vis-delegate? Delegate and vice delegate, less than 10% I think of women okay? So if the situation and it's a country where we have thousand of cases of women rape each month in all the country because we are saying only Port-au-Prince but organization working in other region in the country they are facing also a lot, a lot of challenges with women you know victims of gang insecurity in other Artibonite, Département du Centre, in the North, in the southeast of the country, so it's a it's a national problem, it's a national problem. And and as Nathalie said to finish, we want also to do beautiful pictures, in beautiful events talking about leadership talking about you know we want this too it's beautiful on social media, it's beautiful on our platforms also. But when we are thinking about an event talking about leadership of women in Haiti, I want, I have questions about what is women's leadership actually? If it's only having women in places pushing personal agenda or it's women doing the work for other women in the country. This is my question. So when you are doing beautiful events in the country talking about women's leadership as international community or as Ministries, having a former Ministry... Minister of Justice doing nothing for women facing violence and wait every day for months during the government of Ariel Henry, if I'm in the room I have question. I have question for you, what did you do with your leadership when you were in power? This is my question, I'm so happy having women in place, this is my fight, this is the fight of feminist [NV: You want to be in the room, Pascale?] I want to be in the room. They don't want me in the room, but I want to be in the room. So yeah so this is my question because just to I want to be clear, sometimes when feminist organization want to put pressure on political actors in the country not only men but all political actors because it's a big crisis for women in the country, the idea is we don't really want women in power in leadership no this is not the issue. The issue is we want allies we want people in place doing real things real things for Haitian women and our responsibility is to question you about what you are doing for Haitian women. Not to be there for opportunities from you not to be there for having funding from you because you are in power of you know having favors, is to question you about you are what you are doing in as a political actor in the country. We will continue to fight to have really more than 30% of women in place in power in the country [CJ: 30% is minimum], it's minimum we have to remind them but the real world in the responsibility of civil society to push the state and the government to do their work every day not only for Haitian women for the Haitian population.

CJ: Thank you, thank you so much you know this policy framework really identified and established looked at international laws and principles the WPS agenda. Laura, I'd really like to hear and appreciate it before your sharing with us around Rwanda which I'm saying it wrong now, say it for me, Rhonda, Ronda? [LN: Ronda]. Okay for Rwanda and ***I'd love to hear more about you know what you think the international community or if the community is doing enough for Haitian women and girls?*** And I know that's a that's a heavy question right because I think you know folks often feel you know they do what they can, and there's there there's a lot of twists and turns and and politics and diplomacy and you know what we can do what we can't do in public spaces or behind closed doors and so forth, and ***what more differently could and and should the community be doing, international community be doing?***

LN: Thank you I mean despite the gravity of the situation in Haiti the the international community has not done enough and attention has been diverted to other conflicts in other regions in the world. So we feel, we certainly agree with this perspective that the support is still significantly inadequate. For example there's been a rush to support the transitional Presidential Council despite it not having women and yet we're talking about a women peace and security agenda. The political decisions seem to be driven by an overwhelming urgency to address the human toll, violence, and security crisis and these are important don't get me wrong. But they should not undermine the establishment of a just and democratic future for the country, and sister eloquently talked about the governance deficits. Regarding areas of improvement I think also the points have been very very well made that there should be further investments in in in grassroots women voices, activists, feminists who have consistently documented the crisis and defended the rights of women and girls they are seated here we don't need to look further. And their voices should be amplified, especially during this period of political transition alongside the declining humanitarian aid that threatens to undermine decades of progress in this in this in women's rights globally, internationally. Partners should be stepping up their efforts to fill gaps and support the sustainability and growth of autonomous women's rights movement in Haiti. So as I said this includes funding the grassroots women's organization, inviting Haitian women leaders to participate in high level dialogues, and fostering the development of Independent women's funds. This has been done in other countries. Furthermore there should be increased calls for accountability regarding corruption allegations against certain you know influences of power and leadership so that's that's that's it.

CJ: Thank you, as as you were speaking I was just thinking about this sense of you know women's involvement and how we often broadly say women but the importance of feminist principles and and guidance right and and values and what we believe around that. So we you know we talked a little bit about equality and and and government and the need for responsibility, let's go back a little bit to the international engagement. You know we have our questions and and thoughts here but you know what would you like, I'll start with you ***Susan what would you like the international engagement in Haiti to look like?*** You know Nathalie and I were at, was it UN women right, last year in in Antigua, and you know when I spoke there I said you know if you've ever worked in Haiti and did something and it didn't work please don't come back and do it again. It's okay we're happy that you came to visit you know move move along just keep it keep it going right? Cuz it kind of feels like it's the same thing over and over again and we're having the same conversations right, which which is frustrating you know not to make light of it but it's frustrating because these are people's lives we're talking about right? We're really clear that we're sitting here we didn't have to deal with gunshots to get here today, we were able to have have a meal we were safe getting here right we're together. ***But what is it that you would say for folks in the room or wherever that are engaging in Haiti thinking about engaging want to see things done differently what would that look like?*** I'll start with Suzanne and then Nathalie I'll go to you.

SJ: I'll echoing what Pascale said and this is something that really I'll pass the word. To make it simple, centering Haitian feminist expertise and addressing root causes. We cannot address issue if you got all the data, we you we meet with you or you meet with us and we tell you exactly what's happening and then you go on another one having other strategy. It doesn't work

that way, and I use the word we've been stabbing in the back like this for more than a decade now. We cannot keep doing this because if you said are we going to support let's say in my case, I work with real women that most of the time they don't own the land and you come you said I going to support those bicameral commission Senators. When I come to you and said these women been working the land for so long and we need support to pass this law and you give the Senate the the commission group Senators money to do the other thing like oh no now we're going to invest our money in bridges, bridges to under we on top of a river that no one lives around like in what 100 miles from this. It doesn't work at all. I have women that live in la Gonave, they have to work have to walk 2 hours to get water. So when we talk about those type of things and then we said you need to listen to what we say, that's first of the thing. The second one is for the international organizations. I.. I'm sorry I have to say it sorry, we've... they they have this tend to have bilateral partnerships. It doesn't work. Even myself when you said okay you work with rural woman we're going to give you 50,000, 100,000, but I'm not the only one I work only in la Gonave, in Île-à-Vache there's so much organization working with rural women. Let's... I was talking about sustainable funding let's put a trust, put the money there, make call of application. This is something with transparency because we love that, we love people to know we got this money from not because we are friends but because there was a call we submit it we submit this that's what we do you want you come you visit one of the thing that I hate they visit and then they don't do nothing it doesn't work. We want respect, we got we got a statement that on March 8, 100% women get out, we want respect dignity and respect.

CJ: International engagement based on dignity and respect and shared accountability too right cause sometimes I feel like local organizations are held to a higher standard than the organization that's receiving the millions of of dollars for for for some reason. We are I'm watching time cause I the moderator not want to get in trouble, so we have about 20 minutes. We will have time for question and answer with the amazing panel. Laura, I do want to ask you from from your office working on discrimination against women and girls, what about other UN or international entities, how do they play a role in all of this? How can we bring in more support and justice even for survivors particularly looking at you know, because I think because it's been so much of an increase in gender based violence in Haiti right and these organizations are trying to do the best they can, but how do we strengthen kind of long-term GBV response and accountability, including in looking at kind of human rights issues, UN issues and so forth, thank you.

LN: I mean I can very clearly on behalf of the Working Group that we will continue to monitor the developments as part of the United Nations charged with ending discrimination against women and girls, and in specific cases that are brought to our attention we will communicate with the government in the various ways that I outlined urging prompt investigation and access to justice during this time and after the conflict. With the other in regard to the immediate needs of survivors of gender-based violence and sexual violence, we continue to urge UN agencies and international partners as well as local organizations, to enhance their efforts to strengthen, justice, law, and other institutions to provide psychosocial support. I think with justice especially criminal justice, they can be the urge to just criminalize I mean to to to sentence the criminals and then you to focus on the victim. So victim-centered justice is really critical and from a gender responsive lens, medical care including sexual reproductive health care is critical for

survivors and then reparations is a big question around reparations and other remedies. We are deeply concerned about the funding cuts on Haiti and we are you know urging other donors and the international partners to promptly address this gap. We are also aware that the UN integrated office in Haiti has recently collaborated with government on the judicial units aimed at prosecuting mass crimes, sexual violence, and corruption. But this requires significant technical human and financial resources and support to to to to ensure that the full extent of sexual violence that has occurred in gender-based violence is implemented in a way that is meaningful for the the the survivors. Lastly, the the establishment of a gender-responsive early warning system is really critical taking into account critical... I mean significant indicators like decrease in women's leadership roles, hate speech, reduction of women in public spaces, these are just a few suggestions of what such a mechanism could look at and the Working Group will pledge to continue monitoring the situation closely, amplifying the voices and concerns of the community to the international audience.

CJ: Thank you, *Pascale is there anything else that you would like to add in terms of how the international community can you know support the political participation of women in Haiti?* I was having this conversation with Madre recently about you know and I ask you guys all the time so *who's going to run for president? Who's the Haitian woman that's going to be the next, I know a few in the room that you know I could I could may be encouraged but who is that woman? And why why aren't we talking about it?* And it it doesn't necessarily have to be at the highest of the presidency or prime minister although I'd love to see them, but right it's that leadership across the board within government entities but you know at the kind of community-based level also. What can the community the international community in particular, what can donors do to get women cause you all you know there's been programs, there's been workshops, there have been leadership engagement, there's been all of these wonderful things written on paper and people have gone to, but with the understanding of the increase of violence in Haiti, *with the understanding that the former president was killed in his own home, will women really participate? How do we get them to participate?* I'm going to give you 30 to 60 seconds. I know it's rough out here but I'm I'm the moderator I don't want I want them to call me back next year. See look 15 minutes, ok go.

PS: Not a lot to say, I think we have to create condition to for women to concretely participate at any levels as candidate, at all the levels of the electoral process and women want to vote, who want to campaign, we have to create the material condition. It's money, first of all it's money because we know what happened in this country during elections period. It's all about money, it's all about violence and as we said the reports they are here. We know the challenges, we know the issues, we supposed to address the real issues and the real challenges for women in our context in Haiti to give them the opportunity to really participate in this process and the process is not only 3 days, three weeks, you know it's an ongoing process to help them you know be having you know their ID to to participate, the security to participate, the information to participate. We did I think Monique Clesca did a survey two years ago about how we saw less women in media during the crisis, after the PetroCaribe challenge, because of the violence. After the assassination of Antoinette Duclaire, our sister and colleague, a lot of women activists in the country, political women activists in the country, but also women doing politics in the country by example, Antoinette Duclaire was a political woman in the country. Because of the

violence the threat of the PetroCaribe challenge but also the threat on our families, people we all love we love, it's really difficult to continue to do this work. We don't have the money you know to compete with women who can attack us, kill us in the country, the protection, we need the resources, we need the information we need to really participate and to compete with people who want to do politics in the country.

CJ: So it's a multi-layer approach it's not as simple as you know [PS: it's a complex situation], it's very it's very complex yeah. Suzanne you want to add one thing?

SJ: Yes I'll add this, when people talk about participation you talk about like being candidate stuff like that but women participate. In 20 the election in 2016 women were 42% voters then only there were, 27 men 27% men, so they they they they have real interest in politics because they know how how challenging for them to be part of those the things, but what I would say also is I want people to understand is not having women being candidate. Pascale already said it, I leave it. This is something that I really don't understand, we had women that was in the Senate that don't vote a law because she was a married woman. So we need to address the fact that social norm and based-faith organizations is doing as well. [CJ: So the the issue of feminist principles...] It's a difficult conversation, we can address it, we have to address it, we've been addressing it as feminist, but this is something that you broadly people need to understand. You can have a political party having 30% of women they are women they call them group of women [CJ: so they're not necessarily feminists]. There we go and then they don't really understand, they are against abortion against [CJ: right all of it, LGBT all of that]. Exactly.

CJ: We're going to go to questions and answers in in the room because we don't have a whole lot of time and I think Nathalie you might have to answer the first question now. So I saw a hand here, yes please?

Q: Yeah hi one of the things I think you're not I'm from California for Haiti Action Committee and one of and the National Lawyers Guild, one of the things I think you're not talking about is you can't have all of this with the with the level of violence and the international community unfortunately has contributed for the last 20 years to the level of violence. Why are there more than the UN has documented 750,000 small weapons in Haiti? Where are they coming from? [CJ: the from the US], they're coming from the US. So yeah so if the international community is responsible for the violence, then how how do you see actually ending the violence so that women can participate in all the ways? And also dealing with the trauma that's going to result in this massive gender-based violence which isn't just about the like what do you do with a society where you have men, young boys, basically teenagers, raping and then they have to go back and they've had this experience so it's a complete like mess? So I yeah and also I have a statement I'd like to pass on.

CJ: I don't want us to leave this room without saying that we know that guns come from the US into Haiti and that if the US wanted to stop guns coming into Haiti, then they would do that they would do that that's one. And two I think that anyone who is a feminist and certain around the world globally right we know that militarization doesn't work. And I think what you're saying is really what what's the peace road map if you will right, how do we get to the other side of all of this? So I'll pass this to Nathalie and then we'll take another question.

NV: So I'm going to start by saying that the international community and especially the US, the US is really a violent country. They have violence policy also and one thing I think they need to address when it comes to Haiti it's the fact that they need to decolonize their policies in practice when when it come to Haiti. Then we can start having a conversation. I'm looking at what's happening around the world right now and we see when the US have a real friendship what it mean, like Israel, sometimes Ukraine. I don't know if I can say that today but it was a a day by day... yeah now it's a day by day [PS: it's a mood thing], so we we can see what it's mean to them when they have real friendship and when they respect and treat other country with dignity. We cannot having any conversation about violence if we don't put like the the way that US operate as a country in itself, the kind of policy that they have, the the racism okay? And we need to start by here talking about that before we talking about violence in Haiti. And yes the the gang that the the gang violence that we have right now by in Haiti, the US and not not the US because we can talk also about Canada and the French government also it's not only the US, they have a lot of part of this. Starting by the way that they work with and the work and promote corrupt leaders in our country, leaders that can kill us when they want, leaders that can save our lives when they want also. So yeah I don't know.

CJ: Thank you, and leaders are sanctioned but still get to live their best lives right with the with the money of the people of Haiti right, there's always tha. So another question, gentlemen right here?

Q: Yes my name is Dr Theo Foucault (?) I'm with NIAC TV (?). I'm very happy to hear statement from the distinguished panel. One of the things that I wanted to ask what is the role of self-defense group? What are they, are they an alternative to the gang gang problem in Haiti? Can Haitian people organize self-defense groups to get rid of the gang? Is that possible?

CJ: Pascale?

PS: It's really a complex conversation because the self-defense group, there on both side. The population has to defend itself because the National Police the state, the MSS, and everything doesn't work... doesn't work. For now by example, I think each people on this table can testify a situation in our family with people with displaced people. My mom is a displaced person, my family is a displaced family for now. I know that Nathalie has members of her staff displaced, we have killed [inaudible comment] exactly, so the staff of Fondation Toya and everything I guess Mawon has to leave we have to leave our office the two months ago because of the violence in Port-Au-Prince. Yes, so I know neighborhood where people have to organize themselves to defend themselves against the gang, but it can be also really dangerous. Two months ago, I have to send two members of my staff to take two other members of my staff in a National Police...how to say that... police station because they were in the neighborhood doing service and a group of self-defense attacked them they were only two women, 20 years old they attacked them, they didn't kill them because they were women but they were with you know everything badge and everything doing their work. So we we have a National Police, we have an army also... it's million of dollars for a multinational force that's right. Why they are putting the population in a situation where they have sometimes become criminals to defend? I saw videos with children participating in killing people. It's I don't know as a human rights you know it's

complex, but we have to defend ourselves, we have to survive and I understand. [CJ: 30 seconds].

SJ: We need to understand about guns, just because she mentioned it. Even if Haiti we still have all these guns you know, Haiti has restriction to buy guns, that means the Haitian government they still have the restriction there the they still have and it's a long one they still have restriction to buy guns themselves. So it's kind of a complex as we said.

CJ: I also think to that just to that question that the government of Haiti has a responsibility to protect its people right? When we bring in I don't even remember what you know every time how much it's costing us to bring in the MSS, the multinational peacekeeping, right where's all that money, how is that all kind of working out? So I just wanted to kind of highlight that also. We are going to close out with our last oh boy somebody has a question and we might need an extra few minutes, I'm going to ask this wonderful lady here last question all right.

Q: I'm Verta Ollalinca (?), I am a researcher. The key point that has not been mentioned is the people or groups or organizations that have international, in other words they control the gold coming out of Haiti and other minerals that are around Haiti, and they want to continue to have it happen. I I've got enough information on that and you can't consider how to get around this without looking at those organizations that have the monetary interest of keeping things as they are because they have interest in in the minerals.

CJ: Thank you I appreciate that and I know the the panel would want to answer but we have an expert in the room around that. Gabrielle Apollon who's here with us and I know there's a study that has come out about mining and so forth in Haiti and certainly you all can perhaps connect and and and share. My last question to the group each of you, Laura we're going to start with you on this question also. I just feel like I should you know sister to sister here, in your work what keeps what gives you hope and what what keeps you going right? I'm sure you could be doing other things but why this work is important and what keeps each of you please? What hope that you have what gives you hope what keeps you fighting?

LN: I have to say that and this has been a big theme for me all week but women's activism and young young women and older women's activism. Their sacrifices is what gives us, they're the shoulders that we stand on even as a mandate. We we believe that the work that they're doing is incredible it is much needed it is in keeping with international human rights frameworks and the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we are happy to hold hands with them and to further amplify their voices their visions and their aspirations through our mandate and we really commit to continuing to do that in the Haiti experience.

CJ: Thank you and thanks for being with us today. Pascale, what keeps what gives you hope keeps you fighting?

PS: Do you know the story of my country? Do you know the story of the feminist movement in my country that gives me hope and keep me fighting?

SJ: The sorority. I've lived it in 2010 after the earthquake and I've seen it I've live it now with my I call them my my ladies. When you have 50 women from Solino that been relocated in Kenscoff, after all the things that have been happening in Kenscoff, I still have hope.

NV: So for me is really the friendship that you create along the way when you do this kind of work. The sisterhood, the way you can count on others that really give me hopes. And lastly, I think it's the girl optimism when you see that they still dream about Haiti, they still have hope, and they can really experience joy, that really give me hope. Thank you.

SF: Carine, how about you?

CJ: Thank you, oh me, all of you being here and giving Haiti a level of importance today. You could be somewhere else there are so many sessions going on so I appreciate that that gives me hope. It gives me hope that this younger generation will fight through this and that the history of Haiti is not for anything. We're not the first Black Republic for nothing, right? And so taking that and I think them as partners and our other partners in Haiti and just the great work that they do and all of you who just support and fight and continue to connect with us and obviously connect with them that gives me hope. Thank you all for coming today we appreciate you.