

Report on the United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC) July 15th, 2026, High-level Political Forum: *Partnerships for Equitable Cities and Sustainable Economic Transformation: How Coordinated Action can Create Opportunity, Resilience and Quality of Life.*

The discussion explored how governments, civil society, Indigenous peoples, youth, academia, investors, and the private sector can work together to move from ambition to implementation in building equitable, resilient, and sustainable communities.

The session was highly relevant to the NCWC as it complimented the values that are central to our work as well as directly addressing our mission to improve the daily lives of women, girls, families, and communities. It also aligned closely with the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

Key messages from the event

Noting that society already knows the outcomes they seek: - better housing, healthier communities, stronger stewardship of the land, greater opportunity, and a better future for coming generations, and that progress – it is also clear that actions are often delayed not by a lack of ideas, (or advocacy efforts!) - but by fragmented planning, weak coordination, and limited local capacity to implement ambitious goals.

The speakers stressed the importance of designing partnerships that are practical and implementation-focused so as to bring together those able to deliver results. In other words: governments can create enabling policy conditions; communities contribute lived experience; Indigenous peoples bring stewardship knowledge and long-term perspective; youth contribute urgency and innovation; researchers provide evidence; and investors and the private sector help mobilize capital, scale, and delivery.

The event also made clear that data, while essential, is not enough on its own. Data can identify needs, risks, and gaps, but durable action also requires a shared story, a credible sense of purpose, and trust in the direction being proposed.

Relevance to NCWC's mission and values

The session connected closely with NCWC's mandate to advance the status of women and promote social justice through informed public engagement and policy advocacy. Its emphasis on participation, inclusion, and collaborative problem-solving reflects NCWC's longstanding view that policy is stronger when shaped by lived realities.

The event also underscored that meaningful participation matters more than symbolic representation. Women, youth, Indigenous peoples, seniors, newcomers, persons with

disabilities, and rural and remote communities must be involved in setting priorities, defining success, and shaping implementation, rather than being consulted only after decisions are largely formed.

This aligns directly with NCWC's history as a bridge between lived experience and public policy. The discussion affirmed the continuing importance of civil society organizations that convene diverse perspectives, elevate underrepresented voices, and keep equity at the centre of sustainable development.

The strong focus on trust, transparency, accountability, and inclusive institutions was also highly relevant to NCWC. These conditions are essential to lasting partnerships, public confidence, gender equality, and democratic engagement.

SDG 7 and SDG 17

The event clearly linked sustainable development, energy transition, and partnership-based implementation. It was noted that progress in clean energy, sustainable transportation, affordable housing, and climate resilience depends on pairing infrastructure planning with workforce development, lifelong learning, and inclusive access to quality jobs.

- Relevance to SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy is not solely a technical or financial issue; it is also social and institutional. A just transition requires skilled workers, inclusive pathways, and policies that ensure benefits are broadly shared.
- SDG 17 was even more central to the discussion. Strategic partnerships were presented as the mechanism that connects ideas to outcomes, aligns incentives, unlocks capital, shares risk, and makes implementation possible over time.

Housing, adequacy, and quality of life

One of the strongest themes was that housing must be understood as a matter of adequacy, not only affordability. Housing should be connected to transportation, employment, public spaces, community services, and opportunities for social participation. It was stressed how safe, accessible, and connected housing affects mobility, caregiving, employment, mental well-being, and security. Housing policy should therefore be assessed through a human rights and quality-of-life lens, not simply by unit counts or rent levels.

The discussion also identified homelessness as a severe form of exclusion and a violation of rights, requiring responses that include wraparound supports such as mental health and addiction services.

Youth participation and intergenerational engagement

A strong message from the event was that youth are not only future leaders; they are current partners in implementation. Young people should be engaged in defining problems, designing responses, implementing solutions, and evaluating outcomes- aligning closely with NCWC's

ongoing goal and efforts to have substantive as opposed to symbolic intergenerational dialogue and leadership.

Implications for NCWC engagement

The event affirmed that NCWC's engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals remains timely and necessary- especially as we prepare for CSW/71. Sustainable economic transformation must be understood not only through markets, technology, or infrastructure, but also through equality, care, access, safety, social cohesion, and democratic participation.

In practical terms, the discussion supports continued NCWC attention to several areas of work:

- Advocating for women's perspectives to be integrated into housing, infrastructure, clean energy, and resilience planning.
- Strengthening partnerships across civil society, governments, communities, and international institutions in the spirit of SDG 17.
- Promoting inclusive engagement that reaches youth, Indigenous women, seniors, rural women, those with disabilities, newcomers, and other underrepresented groups.
- Advancing a vision of sustainability that links environmental responsibility with human dignity, social justice, and community well-being.

Conclusion

The HLPF side event delivered a clear message: equitable and sustainable communities are built through trusted partnerships, inclusive institutions, and coordinated implementation. Effective development strategies bring the right people together early, define success collectively, and keep human well-being at the centre of action.

Respectfully Submitted

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