
Promises, Praxes, Paradigms: Knowing and Acting for Change 30 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

International Women's Day Annual Conference
Feminist Legal Studies Queen's and Queen's University Faculty of Law
March 28-29, 2025

Robert Sutherland Hall (School of Policy Studies)
138 Union Street, Katarokwi (Kingston), Ontario

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANEL PROPOSALS

Feminist Legal Studies Queen's is delighted to circulate the call for our annual International Women's Day Conference with the Faculty of Law at Queen's University. We invite submissions of **individual paper and complete panel proposals** for presentation at this event to be held on **March 28-29, 2025**. Deadline for submission February 10, 2025.

About the Conference Theme

Canada is a signatory to a number of international instruments that together commit to the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, disability, and gender. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted unanimously by 189 countries at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995 to secure active state engagement in bringing all laws, policies, and practices into compliance with the Convention on the Eradication of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as with other human rights instruments. Yet, according to the 2024 Global Gender Gap Report it will take 134 years to reach gender parity (measured across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment); as noted by the UN, "gender equality remains elusive across the globe."

Within country inequality has been rising (including in relation to women's reproductive rights and in access to education for women and girls); the planet and biodiversity continue to suffer (with natural resource processing and extraction being credited significantly for contributing to the loss); and climate change accounting for mass fires, mass floods, implications for food costs and insecurities, and anticipated mass extinctions and migrations. It is clear, the status quo is simply not working. There are growing legal actions being taken ranging from the assertion of judicial rights for non-human actors to holding governments accountable for climate obligations in international law, to national actions for intergenerational harms.

This year's conference theme aligns with the focus of UN Women, *For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment* in the sixty-ninth session of the Commission for the Status of Women, CSW 69/Beijing +30 (2025) to capture the range of issues arising from the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality since the Beijing Declaration, toward the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including the commitment to the biosphere, and for the empowerment of women and girls, toward reduced inequality in all forms within and among countries.

In 1995, at the NGO Forum Indigenous Women's tent, the Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women was also signed and continues to provide formative critique of the Beijing Declaration, including in the commitment to existing paradigms and overall normative structures of the gendered political and market economies, with their "clear bias" toward "...big industries, big agri-business corporations". The Declaration emphasizes that the violence and sex-trafficking of Indigenous women has been aggravated by the entrenched economic model. Poverty and inequalities perpetuated by colonial legacies of dispossession of lands disregard the traditional knowledges and practices of Indigenous women. It asks a question of continued resonance: why "'equality, development, and peace,' becomes more elusive to women each day in spite of three UN conferences on women since 1975". Paragraph 13 of the Indigenous Women's Declaration specifically provides:

The critical areas of concern it [the Beijing Declaration] has identified are also critical for Indigenous women. While it correctly identifies unequal access to education and health as areas of concern, it does not question the basic Western orientation of the prevailing education and health systems. It does not reflect the fact that these systems have perpetuated the discrimination against Indigenous peoples. It also does not acknowledge the role of Western media, education, and religion, in eroding the cultural diversity which exists among Indigenous peoples. These Western systems hasten ethnocide. It does not give proper recognition and importance to Indigenous health care systems and the role of its practitioners.

An examination of the two Declarations and the efficacy of actions taken since then will be featured as a critical element of the conference theme for dialogic engagement toward equality of ALL women and girls. The Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women has central to it a focus on interconnectedness and planetary health; it opens with the following declaration: "The Earth is our mother. From her we get our life, and our ability to live. It is our responsibility to care for our mother and in caring for our mother, we care for ourselves." The interrelatedness of violence on land and violence to bodies is something Indigenous women have worked diligently to document and evidence (see e.g. Native Women's Association of Canada's position on *Violence Against the Earth as Violence Against Indigenous Women and Land Justice as Gender Justice*; Women's Earth Alliance and Native Youth Sexual Health Network Report, *Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies*). There has been critical Indigenous feminist, eco-feminist, and relational feminist work in this space.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) recognizes that respect for Indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment. UNDRIP declares the rights of Indigenous Peoples including to health, education, spiritual knowledge, culture and tradition, amongst the rights recognized and formally committed to in international law. Canada has passed the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, SC 2021, c. 14 that obligates the government by way of domestic legislation "in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, [to] take all

measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the Declaration.” (s. 5) and to establish an action plan for achieving the objectives of UNDRIP (s. 6). Recently passed, Bill C-13, regarded for its commitment to government-to-government relations, further secures changes to Canada’s *Interpretation Act* to ensure against derogation of Indigenous and Aboriginal Rights.

We invite proposals that will look at how the Beijing Declaration and the Declaration of Indigenous Women intersect with any and all of the 17 SDGs, particularly those that contain gender, physical and planetary health, and the interrelated and co-dependent realization of the commitments when the two Declarations are read and advanced together as a platform of action (with particular regard to SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 13, 15 and 17).

The pursuit of development and its sustainability cannot be made in the absence of cross-cultural, epistemological and knowledge-based deference, forming bridges and policy pathways for better action through different ways of knowing that are communal, experiential, evidence based, and evidence-informed. This call invites submissions on all aspects of the conference theme, from personal physical health to mental health, community and planetary wellbeing, to recommendations for paradigm shifts with a commitment for better ways of knowing and doing, toward more equitable and sustainable relations, and compassionate and healthy societies.

We are delighted to be hosting **Dr. Nicole Redvers**, DPhil, ND, MPH, as the **Keynote speaker** to launch our event this year with delivery of her lecture, "**The Indigenous Determinants of Planetary Health: Respect of the Feminine**" on Friday, **March 28, 2025**, on the Queen’s University campus.

Dr. Nicole Redvers is an Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and she also holds the position of Western Research Chair and Director of Indigenous Planetary health at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario. She is a renowned and respected expert in the areas of Indigenous health, planetary health, traditional medicine, Indigenous knowledge translation, and Indigenous global health. She helped co-develop the first Indigenous Health PhD degree program in North America in her previous appointment at the University of North Dakota.

Dr. Redvers sits on the Canada Research Coordinating Committees’ Indigenous Leadership Circle in Research. She also sits on the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health Advisory Committee, and on the steering committee for the Planetary Health Alliance at John Hopkins. She is a commissioner on the Lancet Commission on Arctic Health and the Lancet Commissioner on Prevention of Viral Spillover. She was recently appointed as Vice President (Research) with the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC). She is an advisory member to the World Health Organization (WHO) Technical Advisory Group on Embedding Ethics in Health and Climate Change Policy. Dr. Redvers developed Northern Canada’s first and only integrative medical clinic. Additionally, she co-founded and chairs the non-profit organization Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation (AIWF) that was awarded \$1million as a Laureate in 2017 from the Arctic Inspiration Prize for their work with vulnerable populations in Northern Canada.

Dr. Redvers has made significant and consistent contributions to advance initiatives in bridging the gap between Indigenous and Western ways of knowing pertaining to individual, community, and planetary health. Amongst other works, she is the author of the book, *The Science of the Sacred: Bridging Global Indigenous Medicine Systems and Modern Scientific Principles* (North Atlantic Books, 2019) in which she combines her experience as a naturopathic doctor, her time working with Indigenous groups around the world, and her background as a member of the Deninu Kųę First Nation to examine modern Western

medical practice and scientific principles while invoking and sharing traditional knowledge and medical practice.

Indigenous plural traditions, cosmologies, praxes, and practices have garnered growing attention to what they provide for individual and planetary health, for mutual respect and responsibility toward human and non-human beings and actors, and belief in actions for intergenerational and inter-species commitments, away from human-centric and anthropocentric hierarchies towards an eco-centric approach as emphasized in Dr. Redvers work.

This conference continues the FLSQ annual tradition of hosting a major event in honour and celebration of International Women's Day. We are so very excited to welcome Dr. Redvers to Queen's University and the Kingston community. We look forward to the opportunity to advance important conversations together on sustainability and collaboration for progressive change, Indigenous praxes, and shifting paradigms 30 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with regard to the promises that were made then, where we are now, and our futures. We continue to examine the unique challenges faced in personal and planetary health in the age of compounding crises, normalized overconsumption and waste, growing socio-political and economic instability, and growing inequalities that perpetuate intersectional vulnerabilities. We look forward to receiving individual abstracts and panel proposals to this end.

We particularly encourage submissions that address issues relating to gender equality with an emphasis on Indigenous women. We also welcome submissions on the elimination of all forms of violence and inequalities toward all women and girls and their respective empowerment with greater allyship. Contributions that demonstrate how research and data gaps can be filled to ensure full analysis of the indicators being used to measure progress in meeting the SDGs are also welcome as we continue to encourage knowledge creation and diffusion for measuring efficacy.

This year's event will also pay tribute and honour the work of our colleague and Co-Director of FLSQ, Professor Kathleen Lahey who has dedicated much time and attention in her work to gender equality, and the development of metrics for and indicators thereof, as demonstrative evidence. Joining as a Queen's National Scholar, Professor Lahey has been a pillar of the Queen's Law faculty since 1987 and was recently named Patricia Monture Distinguished University Professor. She is cross-appointed to Gender Studies and has taught, supervised, and mentored many students over the years in the areas of tax law; sex, sexualities, and gender; property law; and feminist legal studies; making important linkages in tax law and policy governance to social programming, gender equality, disparate impacts and inequalities, and with considerations for inclusion, belonging, and individual and collective wellbeing. In addition to a formidable scholar, teacher and mentor, Professor Lahey has been a fierce advocate, championing amongst other things same sex rights for three couples who won the right to marry before the BC Court of Appeal and at the Supreme Court of Canada in *Reference re Same Sex Marriage* (2004). She was also legal counsel on behalf of the Métis National Council of Women in *Lovelace v. Ontario* at the Supreme Court (2000). Accordingly, we welcome and encourage individual and panel presentations that align with this year's theme that incorporate or pay tribute to Professor Lahey's research and scholarly legacy in tax and other areas of the law as well as her advocacy work.

Finally, it has become customary practice for the FLSQ IWD conference to create a welcoming space for cross cultural and cross-disciplinary conversations for action and agency, but also for showcasing fine and cultural arts, poetry and humanities that align our heads and hearts in convictions of love for the

other, incorporate affect in the academy, and resonate emotionally in meaning making, sharing the spark towards greater co-creation of more effective transformative change

Conference Details

Dates: Friday, March 28, 2025, from noon to late afternoon/early evening; Saturday, March 29, 2025 (~9:00 am) to mid to late afternoon (~4pm). All times and schedule TBC. Further details may be found here: <https://femlaw.queensu.ca/conferences/flsq-conference-2025>.

Location and accessibility: The conference will be conducted in person and in a hybrid format at Queen's University in Katarokwi (Kingston), Ontario. Parts of the conference may be streamed via secure links to be provided to conference participants and registrants.

Submitting proposals: Please e-mail title, one paragraph abstract, and brief bio, to Bitá Amani (amanib@queensu.ca) copying Natalie Moniz-Henne (natalie.henne@queensu.ca). Acceptances may be issued on a rolling basis.

- **Individual paper proposals:** Email presentation title and one-paragraph abstract.
- **Complete panel proposals:** Proposed panels should include three to four papers. Please e-mail proposed panel title and designated panel chair (who may or may not be presenting in the panel), along with a one-paragraph abstract.

Deadline for receipt: February 10, 2025, at 11:59 pm

For further information, please contact Bitá Amani (amanib@queensu.ca) and/or Natalie Moniz-Henne (natalie.henne@queensu.ca)

For registration details and future updates, please check our [conference website](#) (registration free but required, whether attending in person or online).

Block hotel room conference rate secured: [Book your group rate for FLSQ Conference 2025](#)

*Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territories.
We are grateful to be able to live, work, play, and learn on these lands.*