



## **COMMONWELATH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS (CWP) WORKSHOP:**

### **PARLIAMENTARIANS AS DRIVERS OF WOMENS' ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

28 April – 4 May 2025;  
Nassau, The Bahamas

**Report by Sioned Williams MS**



It was a privilege to represent Senedd Cymru (the Welsh Parliament) at the recent CWP workshop in Nassau, the Bahamas held during 28 April - 2 May 2025.

The theme of the workshop was parliamentarians as drivers of women's economic empowerment and there were timely and useful presentations and discussions over four full days, from some 60 representatives of parliaments across the Commonwealth and from policy experts. Common themes such as a lack of female democratic representation, unconscious bias in the media and within legislation, and misogynistic elements within cultures that hinder the development of women's economic potential were explored. The unique perspective of the different regions and nations represented was also presented, discussing the opportunities within sub-state cultures and structures to challenge mainstream narratives and discourse. Delegates were also given the opportunity to visit businesses in Nassau that were supported by a business initiative that promotes economic opportunities for women, and network with local representatives in a series of events at the Parliament of the Bahamas, and watch them at work.

I contributed a paper on the situation in Wales in terms of the economic position of women and efforts past and present to try to tackle policy shortcomings that create and deepen inequality. Drawing on my professional experience as a former journalist, I explored the question of how we could use one of the most powerful national and cultural tools - the media - to communicate and promote women's economic empowerment. The main points of discussion in my paper were to present examples of using culture and language to localise and enrich narratives about women's economic empowerment and equality more generally; the importance of funding and supporting media training, media projects and women-led storytelling; emphasising alternative economic models — co-ops, social enterprises, informal economies and challenging Western, capitalist definitions, which focus mainly on corporate models of economic success. My argument was that economic empowerment does not have to mean imitating Silicon Valley. It can mean investing in care, community wealth, circular economies—and storytelling—because changing who tells the story can change the ending. So we as representatives must look for success stories in our communities and share them, in order to highlight female entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders across our nations—especially those from under-represented backgrounds.

One of the most valuable sessions in terms of creating a better understanding of how to go about achieving better economic empowerment was the presentation which looked specifically at how to improve the capacity of laws and the legislative process—in particular the session on post-legislative scrutiny. This highly valuable workshop concluded with presentations by and discussion with female members of the youth parliament of the Bahamas. They were very interested in the work being

done in Wales in terms of the Youth Parliament and I offered to help foster a closer relationship and an opportunity to learn from each other.

I am extremely pleased to have been offered to publish my paper in The Parliamentarian Magazine (Annex A), and look forward to using what I have learnt in my own work as an elected member, and spreading that knowledge among my fellow MSs in Wales.

