

Thirty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, it is clear that achieving gender equality is essential for driving sustainable development, economic prosperity, and peace.

As the world faces economic uncertainty, climate and environmental crises, and deepening inequality, recommitting to gender equality is critical for building a just and sustainable future. The global community must reflect on the progress in advancing women's and girls' rights while addressing persistent challenges hindering their full participation and empowerment.



It is, therefore, imperative to reflect on progress made and address the persistent challenges in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, alongside the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), CEDAW, and other international women's rights frameworks, remain crucial guiding instruments.

However, delivering on these commitments requires urgent reforms, renewed investment, and robust accountability mechanisms. We cannot afford to backslide on the hard-won gains for women and girls. To falter now is to undermine the strides we have made and compromise the future of generations to come.

We welcome the assessments and reports prepared by 159 countries on the implementation of the Beijing Action Agenda and the recent report of the Secretary-General, where it is made evident that despite progress, systemic inequalities persist:

Relative and Slow Progress Achieved :



Legislative Gains

Many countries have introduced or strengthened laws to combat gender-based violence, eliminate workplace discrimination, and ensure equal access to education. Many countries have implemented laws and policies, including quotas and affirmative action measures, to accelerate gender parity, but challenges persist.



Social and Economic Progress

Expanding social protection systems and care services has improved maternal health, supported caregivers, and enhanced education opportunities for girls.



Education

Gender gaps in primary and secondary education have narrowed, with more girls accessing education globally than ever before.



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GWL Voices' Statement for CSW69

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Safeguarding Gains, Accelerating Equality:
The Road Ahead for the Beijing Platform for Action

Persistent Challenges : Despite progress, systemic challenges continue to undermine the full realization of women's and girls' rights



Political Representation

The proportion of women in national parliaments has more than doubled since 1995, signaling slow and incremental progress in women's participation in leadership and decision-making. However, women remain underrepresented in top political, economic, and corporate leadership, including in the top international positions. Women continue to face structural barriers, discrimination, and gender-based violence in public life.



Global Financial Barriers

Current international financial structures are ill-equipped to address the unique challenges women and girls face in developing countries, especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate emergencies. Mounting debt, inadequate fiscal space, and unequal access to financial resources hinder progress, particularly in developing countries.



Disproportionate Impact of Crises

Climate change, conflicts, and economic instability disproportionately affect women and girls, deepening vulnerabilities and exacerbating inequalities.



Economic Inequality and Unpaid Labor

Women remain disproportionately over-represented in informal, low-paid work and carry the burden of unpaid care work, which limits their economic opportunities.



Backlash Against Gender Equality

Misogyny, violence against women's rights defenders, and the rollback of gender-sensitive policies continue to threaten hard-won gains.



Disparities in women's access to healthcare:

Women, especially in low-income and conflict-affected countries, continue to face barriers to essential healthcare services, affecting their well-being, economic participation, and life expectancy.



Underinvestment in Women

Achieving gender equality in developing countries requires \$6.4 trillion annually, yet funding gaps remain vast, exacerbated by mounting debt burdens and insufficient fiscal space.



Persistence of gender-based violence

Recent global data highlights a troubling increase in gender-based violence. Nearly 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. Last year, the number of intentional killings of women and girls reached the highest level in the past two decades, affecting all regions across the world.



Unfulfilled Commitments and Accountability Gaps

Many commitments made have yet to translate into transformative, measurable change. Weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms allow them to go unfulfilled.



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Against this backdrop, GWL Voices calls for:

First: A strong and action-oriented CSW69 Political Declaration, with precise accountability mechanisms, to:



Accelerate Implementation

Fulfill commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action, SDGs, and other international frameworks, with a focus on women's leadership and participation, the needs of marginalized women and girls, the rights of indigenous women, the rights of rural women and women living in conflict zones and fragile urban settings, the needs and agency of women with disabilities.



Increase the representation and participation of women in the international System:

Call on member states to nominate women candidates for the selection of the next Secretary-General and the presidency of the UN General Assembly.



Bridge the Digital Divide

Equip women and girls with the skills, access, and resources needed to thrive in a digital economy while addressing risks such as online violence.



Strengthen Legal Protection:

Eliminate discriminatory laws, strengthen and enforce legal protection against all forms of violence against women and girls, and promote equal rights in all spheres.



Guarantee the universal access of women to healthcare:

Call on the need to invest in gender-sensitive healthcare systems, including quality services, research and innovation in female-specific diseases, and the participation and leadership of women in health governance and decision-making.



Scale-Up Investment in Women and Girls

Close the gap on investment in women and girls. Investing in women is a moral imperative and a robust economic strategy. Investing in women and girls drives inclusive growth, reduces poverty, and strengthens resilience to global challenges.



Expand Women's Leadership and Participation in Decision-Making:

Apply special measures to ensure women's full and equal participation in all levels of governance and decision-making in public life, from local to national governments, parliaments, and the international system.



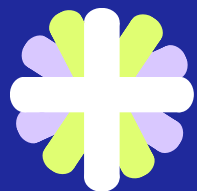
Advance the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

Ensure women's participation in peace processes in all stages: negotiations, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction.



Recognize, value, and professionalize care work:

Include care work into formal labour structures that guarantee fair wages, social protections, and career development as a means to combat poverty and promote the rights, wellbeing, and economic empowerment of women.



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Embed Gender Equality in Financial Systems:

Design gender-responsive budgeting and ensure financial institutions and international cooperation prioritize gender equality and women's rights in their programs and policies. This will require a gender-sensitive reform of the international financial architecture.



Integrate Gender in Crisis Response:

Ensure gender-responsive approaches in addressing conflict, peace processes, climate shocks, and humanitarian crises.



Strengthen Accountability

Improve reporting and monitoring mechanisms to accelerate the implementation and effectively address persistent gender inequalities.

GWL Voices Calls for:

Second: The call for a stronger, more effective, and revitalized CSW in line with the *UN Pact of the Future*.

Progress on the Beijing Platform for Action, the SDGs, and other women's rights instruments require better accountability and monitoring.

To close this gap, the reform of CSW should allow to:



Strengthen Monitoring Mechanisms

Establish clear benchmarks, accountability, and reporting requirements for commitments made under international frameworks.



Optimize coherence, consistency, and coordination

Among different reporting mechanisms and bodies, including CSW, the High-Level Political Forum, CEDAW, and all human rights treaty bodies.



Enforce Legal Obligations

Ensure national and international legal frameworks to increase accountability of all sectors on their gender equality commitments.



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Enhance Data Collection

Collect and publish disaggregated data on gender equality outcomes to inform evidence-based policies and track progress.



Involve Civil Society

Support women's rights organizations and youth in monitoring and advocacy efforts to ensure accountability at all levels.



Establish CSW Regional Hubs

Promote regional dialogue and exchange platforms and support and localize implementation and accountability.



Include Youth

Create a youth advisory mechanism to meaningfully engage in CSW processes.



Promote Multilateral Cooperation

Foster cooperation within and among governments and sectors to ensure that gender equality remains a priority in international development, trade, and environmental policies.