



**NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva**  
**Comité ONG de la Condition de la Femme, Genève**  
**1973-2023**  
**50 years of advocacy for women and girls**

**Beijing +30 Regional Consultation UNECE**

**Background**

The Fourth World Conference for Women - and the last - took place in Beijing in 1995. The outcome document called the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action listed 12 Critical Areas of Concern. Until now nowhere in the world has achieved all 12. It remains the basic document that is referred to in order to assess achievements, gaps and challenges for women and girls domestically and globally. Despite best efforts of those interested in achieving equality, in recent years there has been push-back and during the UN Commission on the Status of Women, trying to keep existing positive language and outcomes for women and girls around the world has become challenging, leave alone moving forward for positive policies, programmes and structures to achieve equality and justice for all people.

In keeping with UN practice, there is a review every five years of significant Conventions and major agreements. As such there would usually be a conference every five years. However such a conference would, given today's geo-politics, probably lead to a less robust outcome document and therefore no World conference for women has taken place since Beijing. Thus the five year consultations to assess progress are ever more important. These take place at the regional level - the 5 regions according to the UN. The region we live in is called Western Europe and Other States with the regional UN Commission being UNECE that includes 56 countries including Europe, Turkey, Russia, Canada and North America. There is a disparity between our UN region, through which all UN process allot seats and votes, and the UNECE. The UNECE and UN Women for our region also include some of Eastern Europe which is a region in its own right in all UN processes. Thus the consultation for both the Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Other States regions will take place under the auspices of UNECE.

The formal Member States analysis of B+30 will take place through the 69th Commission on the Status of Women in March 2025. The Preparatory Committee for our region will take place in Geneva on 21/22 October 2024 hosted by UNECE. The result of this consultation on the achievements, gaps and challenges for our region will be shared with UN Women and will be included in the global report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Civil Society will hold a two day event prior to this. Civil Society engagement is vital and NGOCSWGeneva has consulted widely to find the most inclusive manner for Civil Society engagement.

**In person event Geneva October 2024**

We are consulting with all stakeholders to ascertain the best use of the two days that is hoped to take place within the UN Headquarters in Geneva. Your views on this would be most welcome. Thus far ideas include hearing stories of best practice from around our region; intergenerational discussions; and World Cafe. Much will depend on the venue that is confirmed for the event. Once we have received sufficient input from you all, we can create a



programme that reflects the wishes of Civil Society. As yet there is no funding for this event, however we invite organisations to donate funds to provide travel and substance expenses for those unable to participate due to financial reasons to increase inclusion. Once such funds are known, there will be a transparent process to shortlist applications for such funding.

### **Analysing achievements, gaps and challenges**

In order to ensure full participation, all interested civil society are invited to participate in on-line working groups for each of the critical areas of concern. These Working Groups have already almost completed draft statements which it is hoped will be ready by the end of April. Each group has two Co-Chairs. As each area covers a range of issues, it may be that some groups will sub-divide. For example the VAWG group will have a sub group on trafficking. There is also a Working Group drafting the Chapeau statement that will take into consideration the intersection between all themes.

The outcome for each of the groups will be a 1000word document with 3 calls to action. These documents will be presented to the Member States as the Civil Society analysis of the past 30 years and published on our website for wide dissemination. The deadline for the creation of this document is 15 September 2024. The outline draft will be ready by the end of April. The document should use existing agreed UN language. As there are often diverse opinions in many of the areas, in addition all groups are welcome to draft additional statements with signatures of those supporting it using their desired language. These will also be published on the website for dissemination. Each Working Group is also creating a background paper to include their reasoning and evidence for the summary statement.

There is also a desire for a critical analysis of the Beijing Platform for Action as a whole and a consideration of its achievements and gaps, especially in regard to CEDAW and Agenda 2030. In order to achieve this analysis we are inviting interested individuals to offer their help in research and editing. Again the deadline for completion is 15 September 2024.

### **Expert Round Tables**

In coordination with UNECE there will be five expert round tables with Member States on women, peace and security; the environment; Violence against women and girls; Education and Health. Three of these will be via zoom and two in person with Ambassadors and UN personnel. The working groups on the relevant round table will be invited to suggest civil society experts to participate and also to share their working document, with the recognition that it is a work in progress. This process is an attempt to have an ongoing conversation with Member States on the areas of concern to ensure a more in depth analysis of the issue than that which can take place in a 2 day event.

Please fill in the form below to indicate your area of participation.

<https://forms.gle/tRBFoW1ggh3UDrT1A>

Information on the 12 critical areas of concerns can be found below together with the names of the Convenors. If you would like to contact any of the Convenors, please fill in the form

<https://forms.gle/RidZMBebF2GJjbTCA> and you will be put in touch with them. **DEADLINE TO**

**JOIN THIS PROCESS 30 JUNE 2024 (first invitations circulated October 2023)**

## Working Groups and Convenors

### Women and poverty



When women are poor, their rights are not protected and they face double discrimination, on account of their gender and economic situation. Women, their families, communities and economies suffer as a result.

**Convenors: Anna Bonny and Margaret Clark**

### Education and training of women



Education is essential for women to reach gender equality and become leaders of change. While women and girls today are far more educated than ever before, gaps remain. Educated women benefit entire societies, contributing to flourishing economies and the improved health, nutrition and education of their families. Education and training are also tools to help change harmful gender stereotypes.

**Convenors: Berthe De Vos and Carolyn Handschin**

### Women and health



Women need to be healthy in order to realize their full potential. This includes proper nutrition, sexual and reproductive rights, and mental health, as well as freedom from violence.

**Convenors: Veronica Ventura**

### Violence against women



Violence hurts women and girls and hampers their ability to thrive in multiple ways. Since the Beijing Conference, an historic two-thirds of countries have put laws on the books to stop domestic violence. Yet gaps in laws, implementation of legal protection and lack of access to essential services remain for women globally.

**Convenors: Mary Adams and Fariba Bashiri**

## Women and armed conflict



Wars and armed conflict destroy families and societies and leave women and girls particularly vulnerable. Sexual violence is widespread and often used as a war tactic.

**Convenors: Daniela Chivu**

## Women and the economy



Whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or through unpaid domestic or care work at home, women make enormous contributions to economies. Gender discrimination means women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs, and constitute a small minority of those in senior positions.

**Convenors: Valerie Bichelmeier**

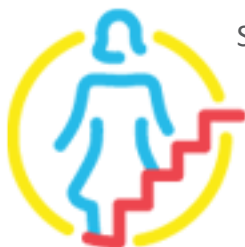
## Women in power and decision-making



Once in leadership roles, women make a difference. But they are under-represented as voters and in top positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, corporate boardrooms or academia.

**Convenors: Connie Philipot and Shaila Rao Mistry**

## Institutional mechanisms



Specialised institutions have played an important part in informing laws, policies and programmes and advancing gender equality. Robust laws and policies coupled with stronger mechanisms to coordinate various actors and ensure their effective enforcement and implementation can push the agenda.

**Convenors: Zarin Hainsworth and Monica Maghami**

## Human rights of women



Women and girls are entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all of their human rights. The [Beijing Platform for Action](#) confirms that protection and promotion of human rights is the first responsibility of governments and core to the work of the United Nations.

**Convenors: Gertrude Åström and Mary Manning**

## Women and the media



The media plays a significant role in perpetuating and challenging social norms that condone discrimination or violence against women. It can objectify women but also showcase strong women leaders and protagonists who can become role models for their audience.

**Convenors: Jessica Buchleitner and Sallie Chaballier**

## Women and the environment



Women are among the most affected by climate change. They are often the ones gathering water, fishing or farming land affected by flooding. Meanwhile, their voices are often ignored in environmental planning and management. They also have less access to land and productive resources.

**Convenors: Merly Barlaan and Monica Maghami**

## The girl child



Specific forms of violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and cutting, breast ironing and child marriage, affect girls in particular, including child sexual abuse.

**Convenors: Karen Castellon and Ellen Cormack**

## Chapeau statement

All areas are intersecting and in order to cover these issues, a chapeau statement is being drafted.

**Convenor: Linda Witong**

For more information on the Beijing Platform for Action and 12 critical areas of concern:  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>