



Emerging Issues for UN Commission on the Status of Women 70th Session

Consultation UNECE region

**8 October 2025
Report**

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Notes
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Background

In view of the Methods of Work Resolution of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, wherein UN regional entities are requested to consult with civil society in regard to the emerging issue for the upcoming CSW session, NGO CSW Geneva requested a meeting in preparation for the 70th session of CSW. The meeting was convened for 8 October and took place on Zoom. In addition to the membership and networks of the NGO CSW Geneva, the NGO CSWs of New York and Vienna were invited together with the Europe and North America Caucus, the Women's Major Group (advocacy, ECE and general groups) and the UK Civil Society Women's Alliance. Organisations from across the UNECE region contributed either in the meeting or by sending their suggestions by email. UN Women and UNECE were warmly invited.

Agenda for the meeting

It was agreed that after the initial welcome by NGO CSW Geneva President Carolyn Handschin, the UN Women representative would open the meeting. Yolanda Iriarte, Regional Programme Manager from UN Women, represented UN Women. After this, each organisation present was invited to share their top three suggestions for an emerging issue.



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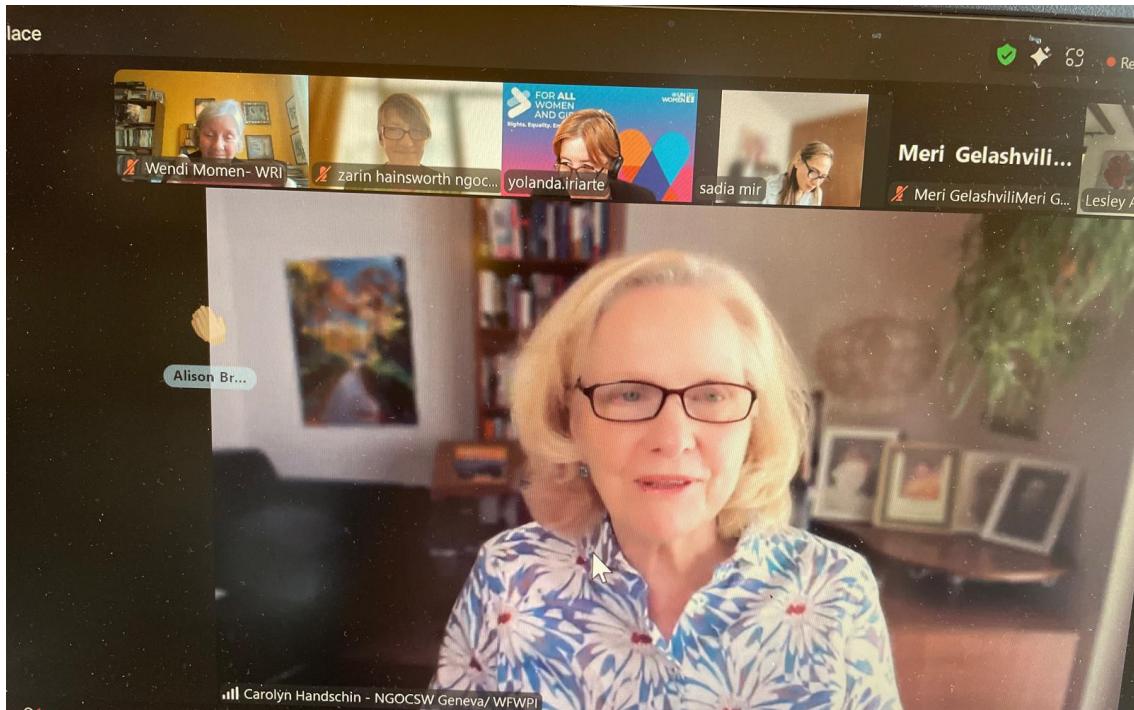
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Suggestions from organisations in alphabetical order:

Age International

Ageing, older women and demographic shifts (and ensuring that the resolution from CSW69 to have a dedicated focus area on older women at CSW70 is upheld).

Disaggregation of data - ensuring that data is disaggregated by age, sex, disability, and is sufficiently measuring and monitoring the situation of women and girls in relation to the Critical Areas of Concern.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) - in particular the impacts on women with intersecting marginalisations, and new emerging forms of VAWG.

Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH)

Violence with intersectional lens

Representation and participation of some groups of women and girls still behind

Funding

Biovision

Hunger as a weapon of war

Bloomwell Collective

Collective care, collective voice: community-based mental health solutions as pathways to gender-equitable justice

Proof of Concept Framework: PEACCE (Prevention through Empowered Action, Community & Cultural Engagement)Gendered impacts of unaddressed mental health crises on women's participation, safety, and leadership

Business and Professional Women International

Economic empowerment

Leadership development

Removal of legal barriers by strengthening laws on discriminatory laws and invest in affordable justice systems

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Canadian Women's Alliance

Indigenous women (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/home-page/>)

Restructuring of the UN and the UN80 Report

Canadian Labour Congress

Indigenous Women

Climate crisis

Gendered impacts of the volatile trade and tariff systems and economic policies.

FAWCO

Justice for victims of image-based sexual abuse and digital/AI-enabled violence.

Erosion of space for women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Disinformation and cybersecurity.

Geschäftsführerin NGO-Koordination post Beijing Schweiz

Shrinking civic space

Transnational anti-gender backlash

Green/Tech transition without gender lens

Graduate Women International

Educational Inequities as Structural Barriers to Justice

Digital and AI Gaps Creating New Forms of Inequality to Achieving Justice

Weak Integration Between Education and Justice Frameworks

International Alliance of Women

Reforming legal and institutional frameworks to guarantee women's equal access to justice, including family law, gender-based violence protections, and reproductive rights.

Achieving gender parity in political, peace, and economic decision-making through structural reforms, inclusive media representation, and elimination of discriminatory barriers.

Closing the pension gap and ensuring digital, social, and health inclusion of older women as an integral dimension of gender equality and empowerment.

Addressing the shrinking space for civil society to safeguard the independent work and influence of women's organizations and human rights defenders within the UN system.

International Council of Jewish Women

Conflict Related Sexual Violence- need for justice and accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence

Importance of including women in decision making and peace negotiations

Climate Change and its impact on Health, Migration, quality of life...

International Council of Women

Need for justice and accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence, particularly in the context of war.

Importance of including women in peace negotiations.

Justina Mutale Foundation

The pension gap

Menopause in the workplace

Tech facilitated violence against all women

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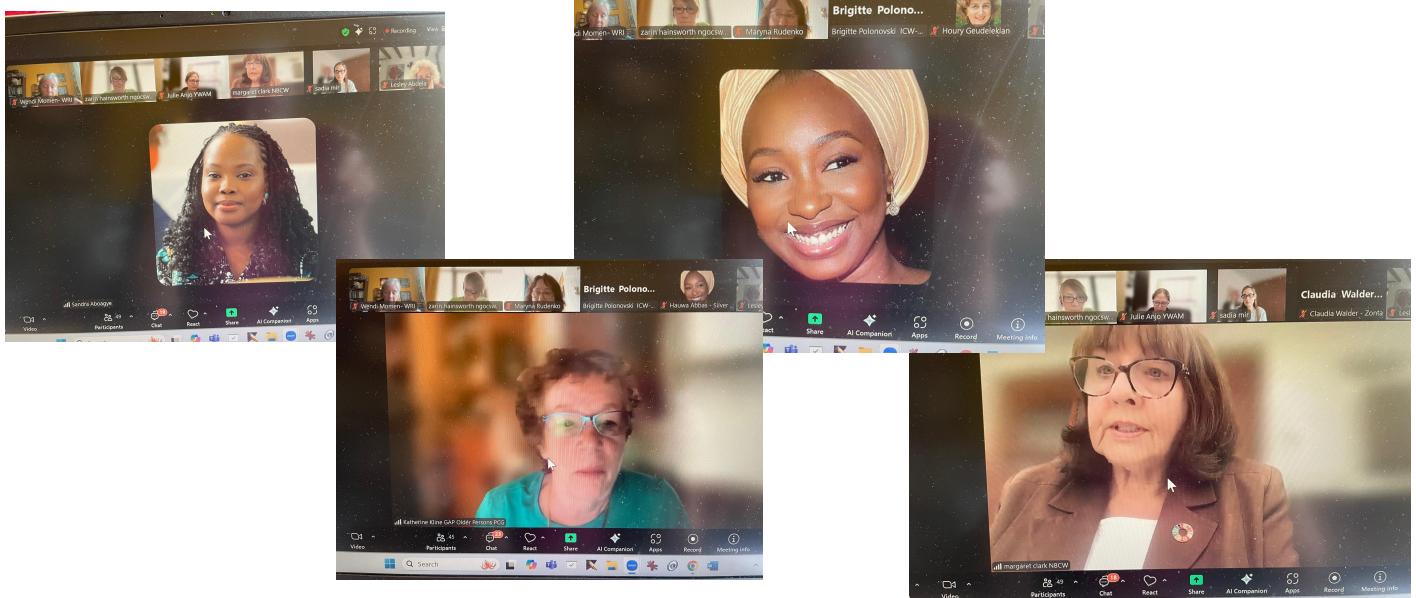
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NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva Comité ONG de la Condition de la Femme, Genève



LDS Charities

AI

Suicide and mental health
Online violence

Make Mothers Matter

"Motherhood penalty," referring to discrimination against mothers in the workplace
Maternal mental health issues
Single motherhood and the need for targeted policies to address these challenges.

Mothers Legacy Project

Internet generated abuse
Mental Health of young mothers
Obesity

National Alliance of Women's Organisations

Education & Human Rights
Leadership Development
Economic Empowerment

National Council of Women GB

On-line harm

NGO CSW New York

The pension gap
Menopause in the workplace
Tech facilitated violence against women in all their diversity

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Pomegranate House

Citizen Data for Justice: the feminist data systems to strengthen access to justice
Inclusive legal systems, renewal structures - Feminist Approaches to Legal Reform and Customary Justice.
The Governance Gap - Data on women's participation and violence in public life.

Scottish Women's Convention

Worsening Economic Inequality and Gendered Poverty
Crisis in Women's Health Access and Rights
Heightened Gender-Based Violence, Insecurity, and the Housing Emergency

SEDRa

SRHR for autonomy of body and empowerment of women

SecurityWomen

Women Peace and Security
Impact from climate change and likely mass movements of displaced women and girls
Gender-sensitive security and peacekeeping at refugee and IDP camps

Shevelution

The Invisible Gap: - Men wounded in war are (often rightly) treated as heroes, rewarded with respect, medals and even statues. But women survivors of Conflict Related Sexual violence (CRSV) are mostly treated as damaged goods and seen as shameful and rejected and stigmatised by their communities and family. This stigma of unjust shaming of women CRSV survivors and their children must be eradicated.

Soroptimist International

Women's Leadership and Economic Empowerment: advancing women's representation in leadership and entrepreneurship, tackling pay inequity and promoting digital and financial inclusion.
Health and Well-being: advocating for equitable access to health care and information including specific female issues. Addressing emerging issues such as mental health, reproductive rights, and the gendered impacts of global health crises.
Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: combatting all forms of violence against women and girls by challenging harmful norms and discriminatory laws, strengthening prevention and protection systems, and amplifying survivors' voices.

Wales Assembly of Women

VAWG
Health - Treatment post childbirth
Women & Finance - Gambling

Widows Rights International

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Widows

Women and girls living under occupation

Women suffering from displacement for any reason

Women's Federation for World Peace International

Access to Justice for Women and Girls

Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls by promoting inclusive, equitable, and gender-responsive legal systems; eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices; and addressing structural barriers that hinder equal protection and participation.

Environment and Climate Change

Advancing gender-responsive approaches to environmental sustainability and climate action, recognizing the critical roles women play in climate resilience, natural resource management, and decision-making processes at all levels.

Women's Leadership and the Gender Pay Gap

Promoting women's full and equal participation in leadership and decision-making across all sectors, and addressing persistent gender pay gaps through equitable employment practices, transparent pay systems, and policies that support work-life balance.

World Federation for Mental Health

Access to and funding for mental healthcare for people of all ages in primary and community care as part of the integrated provision of healthcare services.

The widespread impact of climate and environmental change manifested in catastrophic events such as storms, fires and floods and famines.

Peace and Security including cybersecurity.

WUNRN

Women and girls with disability

Homelessness

The Care Economy

Widows

Women in prison

UK Civil Society Women's Alliance

Women and Girls Living Under Occupation

Widows

Data desegregated by Marital status

Ukrainian Women's Alliance

Justice and reparations for survivors of war, including survivors of CRCV.

War's impact on the environment and climate change.

War's impact on the status of women and girls: access to housing, mental health support, poverty, and employment.

Youth with a Mission

Young women as leaders - to see more walking alongside and raising young women up into public life and spaces

Education, greater cooperation on the ground, and trauma healing training to empower women as peacemakers in conflict areas.

Zonta International

Access not only to education, but also continuing education

Meaningful participation as leaders and decision-makers in reform processes

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Inequalities and barriers in legal systems and law enforcement practices

From the chat

Concern about mental health especially for young men and women due to Internet, new media and AI

From outside UNECE region



Next steps

It was noted that the report of the suggestions of emerging issues would be presented to UN Women, UNECE, CSW Bureau, ECOSOC and UN SG and all those who had been invited to participate.

Notes

It was noted at the outset that suggestions should be in addition to the 12 critical areas of concern and SDGs that are already covered in the mandate of CSW for priority themes. In addition, suggestions from organisations not present were put forward and comments from the Chat presented. After all suggestions were put forward there was a request made for any comments or questions. Responses were provided by UN Women and NGO CSW Geneva.

It was noted that many of the suggestions could be included as priority themes, but concern was voiced that they are not being adequately addressed, hence including some ideas as emerging issues.

It was noted that there was some representation from outside the region.
The meeting closed on time.

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After an initial welcome by Zarin Hainsworth, Chair of the NGO CSW Geneva UNECE Task Force, Carolyn Handschin shared a few thoughts:

This is an opportunity to share our concerns with UN Women and with each other leading up to CSW70 in March. We have had a briefing on girls' education and our Ambassadors meeting here in Geneva. We are moving along together with UN Women in Geneva, Vienna and in NY.

The meeting began with Carolyn Handschin, president of NGO CSW Geneva, welcoming participants and introducing the format for the discussion. Yolanda Iriarte, representing UN Women, shared updates on the upcoming 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and expressed

gratitude for the opportunity to listen and learn from the attendees' perspectives. Participants were encouraged to share their ideas for emerging issues at CSW70, with Carolyn emphasizing the importance of concise contributions to allow time for everyone to speak.

Yolanda Iriarte, UN Women representative for this region mentioned the following:

1. Many thanks for inviting us. She will learn from this group's thinking. She will take notes and will pass them on to others
2. Revitalization of CSW – new resolution was adopted by consensus in early September. Our positive takeaways:
 - 1) Signals a strong push to make CSW more relevant, actionable, emphasizing impact and possibility for cross-regional acceleration and to advance gender equality
 - 2) Increase participation – e.g. general discussion; interactive hearings with member states and civil society to ensure broad inclusion
 - 3) Considers 5 year reviews on equitable and diverse regional basis
 - 4) Do not want long list of outcomes but it calls for short, time-bound actionable resolutions; states can submit annual national reviews
 - 5) Regional issues are new – stronger role for regions and for you to bring your views and wisdoms to upcoming CSWs
 - 6) Regional perspectives and invitation for UN Regional Commissions to host pre-CSW meetings and update CSW
 - 7) Opens opportunities for civil society and for UN Women regional offices
3. The expert gender meeting meets in the autumn and informs UN Women on main theme:
 - a. Need from reform to transforming justice; exclusion is not accidental but is structural

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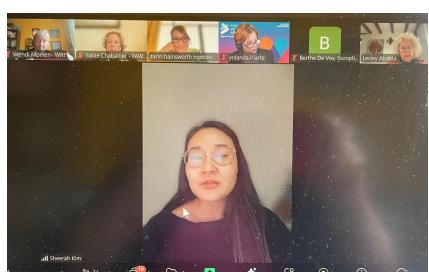
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- b. Importance of intersectionality to create solutions
- c. Justice must be survivor-centered
- d. VAW as an emerging issue – call for trauma informed and mental health and care
- e. Legal pluralism is everywhere; reform processes
- f. Intentionality must be used;
- g. Ageing and older women
- h. Conflict and crisis situations – peace was discussed by many

4. UNSG will prepare a report as usual

Yolanda shared a positive reading of the new CSW resolution adopted by consensus in September, highlighting its focus on increased inclusivity, regional relevance, and action-oriented outcomes. She

emphasized the resolution's provisions for broader participation, including general discussions in the UN General Assembly Hall and interactive hearings, as well as the rotation of 5-year review sessions across regions. The resolution also calls for shorter, measurable conclusions and invites UN regional commissions, like UNECE, to convene preparatory meetings and share regional perspectives. Yolanda expressed confidence that this revitalized CSW represents a significant step forward in regionalizing global gender governance.



After the presentation of ideas, Yolanda was asked if she wished to make any comments.

Yolanda shared updates from an expert group meeting in September, highlighting the need to transform justice systems rather than just reform them, with a focus on intersectionality and survivor-centered approaches. She noted that access to justice for women is often a matter of survival, and the experts emphasized the importance of trauma-informed systems and addressing mental health. The discussion also covered

technology-facilitated violence against women and the need to include ageing and older women in justice discussions.

Participants were invited to make further comments. The following were noted:

1. WRI - How do we have meaningful conversations about intersectionality – overcome siloing as well as unpack them and go in deeply in each? How do we have a meaningful discussion in short statements.
2. BPW - are focusing on responsible AI and gender parity becoming impossible. AI is highly subject to regulation – laws and the system. We would be happy to cover AI themes. See this YouTube discussion re real dangers of AI: https://youtu.be/675d_6WGPbo?si=Xe99vvP9iaFQN0yX
3. Age International – It is important to take a life course approach and looking at how each stage of life for girls-women and what specific things arise at each age.
4. WURUN - online violence against women and SDG 5 breaks the siloes.

The group discussed challenges in addressing intersectional issues within the 12 critical areas of concern, particularly the intersection of health, mental health, and media in today's society. Zarin highlighted the difficulty of creating meaningful, action-oriented commitments while avoiding the siloing of themes, and suggested finding solutions to overcome this challenge. The discussion touched on the role of new media and AI as emerging issues, as well as the need for reforming discriminatory laws related to justice and gender parity.

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The meeting focused on the challenges and opportunities for addressing women's issues, particularly in the context of peace and security. Lesley emphasized the need for increased funding and budget allocation for projects related to women affected by war. Maryna raised questions about the inclusion of civil society organizations in the regional report to the Secretary-General, which Yolanda confirmed would be addressed. Katy highlighted the importance of a life course approach in addressing intersecting issues affecting women at different stages of their lives and requested further opportunities for input in the lead-up to the CSW.



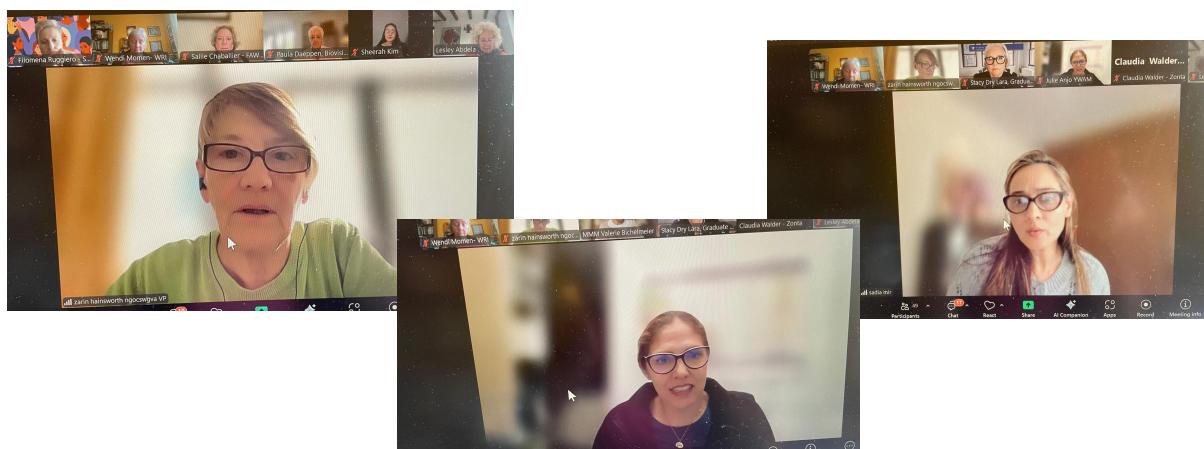
Yolanda Iriarte's response:

1. The importance of the resolution supporting the inclusion of regional civil society in the UN SG's regional report
2. Ability to input earlier was requested
3. Regional commissions will be encouraged to organize meetings including from civil society prior to CSW70 – make sure that their outcomes inform the CSW
4. Global process whereby EGM in September will inform draft report to the UNSG.
5. She asked the organisers - How you will channel your discussions to UNECE and after to the Commission itself? The answer from NGO CSW Geneva: two years ago we coordinated with UNECE a similar meeting and have tried to do so this year. Last year we organised the B+30 regional civil society forum. For this year, the report will be shared with UNECE, UN Women, CSW Bureau and will be disseminated as widely as possible.

At the close of the meeting:

All participants were thanked.

Carolyn Handschin, President of NGO CSW Geneva thanked Zarin Hainsworth who pushed to hold this important meeting. We need to know where each of this is coming from and will continue this discussion perhaps in smaller groups. All participants were encouraged to contact NGO CSW Geneva directly if they wish to be involved in the future to continue the discussion.



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