



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Annual High-Level Panel Discussion on Human Rights Mainstreaming

#HRC58 • 24 February 2025



BACKGROUND AND THEME

Pursuant to paragraph 42 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, the Council held a panel discussion to interact with heads of governing bodies and secretariats of United Nations agencies within their respective mandates on specific human rights themes with the objective of promoting the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/4 and the related decision taken by the Council at its organizational session held on 9 December 2024, the theme for 2025 of the annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming was dedicated to the '**Thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**'. The panel discussion was fully accessible to persons with disabilities through the provision of international sign interpretation and real-time captioning together with other measures.

OPENING STATEMENTS

H.E. Mr. Philemon YANG, President of the United Nations General Assembly

The commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA) should ideally be a moment to celebrate 30 years of progress, yet we are forced to confront hard truths. The truth is so stubborn that it is irreversible and eternal.



Women's rights under threat worldwide, albeit steps onwards

While there has been some progress in areas such as closing the gap on girls' education, improving health outcomes for women, and the adoption of more gender-related laws, we are still a long way off from achieving gender equality and women empowerment. We have a moral obligation to promote the empowerment of women all the time and everywhere. Globally, women's rights are under threat or being curtailed outright, reversing years of hard-won progress. Concurrently, fewer resources are being devoted to support initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality. This affects women's education, health, and the ability to participate in politics. It also hurts their decision-making as concerns matters of economic opportunities. Sometimes we forget that women's rights are fundamental human rights. In many societies, the fundamental freedoms of movement, association, and speech of women continue to be restrained in various forms. Such restrictions are socially unnecessary and discriminatory.

The Pact for the Future as an opportunity to seize momentum

Today's commemoration is therefore both timely and urgent. It is a commemoration which celebrates the past, the present, and the future. We must act with greater resolve to uphold the Beijing Platform for Action in both word and deed, and strive with renewed determination to protect the rights of women and girls. We would be remiss if we did not recognise successes and areas to build upon. Today, more countries than ever before have adopted laws to advance gender equality, including to protect women and girls from violence and ensure non-discrimination. Governments have adopted numerous policies and programmes to address education and training, social protection, and economic empowerment targeted at women and girls.

Women and girls occupy a place of choice in my presidency of the United Nations General Assembly. In legislatures globally, the **share of women parliamentarians has grown from 11 to 27 percent**. While this is far from parity, it nevertheless constitutes a good step in our onwards might towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. We have the opportunity now to seize that momentum. In September last year, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to accelerate efforts to promote women's rights and achieve gender equality in the Pact for the Future. The pact affirms that this is essential to achieving the SDGs.

Women 'hardest hit' by conflict, violence and climate change

Through implementation of the Pact for the Future, we can address the obstacles that are holding back our progress. There are some examples. First, such as the sad reality that women and girls continue to be more harmfully impacted by conflict and wars. Secondly, that 736 million women have experienced physical and or sexual violence at least once in their lives. Third, that an additional 158 million women and girls will be pushed into poverty by 2050 if the current climate change statistics are not reversed. And fourth, that the digital divide is more pronounced along gender lines with a 19 percent gap.

Empowering women and girls as a 'call to duty' and everyone's responsibility

My very recent designation as an International Gender Champion is not meant as an award, but rather as a call to duty. All of us, particularly those of us in positions of authority, have a responsibility to champion gender equality in all our activities. We have a responsibility to



empower women and girls at every step. It is a responsibility I take very seriously, and I have re-established the **Advisory Board on Gender Equality** to guide me in these efforts. The board will help to ensure that gender equality is integrated in the high-level events and work of the General Assembly from non-communicable diseases to social development from youth to artificial intelligence.

A urgent call to action to fulfil a moral imperative

The Board will also guide my efforts in planning the commemoration of the anniversary of two important milestones in the global agenda for gender equality, namely the 30th anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women, which will be commemorated with a high-level meeting in September 2025, and the 25th anniversary of the adoption of by the UN Security Council of the **landmark Resolution 1325**, which will offer an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to increase the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations' peace and security efforts.

Gender equality is a moral imperative that is essential to humanity's collective progress. The Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations demand the full implementation of international commitments on women's rights. The 30th anniversary of the BDPA must be more than a commemoration. It must be a call to action for advancement of the rights of every woman everywhere. We must reaffirm our commitment urgently and unequivocally to its full realisation. Let this anniversary be a moment of resolve, a turning point where we choose action over rhetoric, commitment over complacency.

H.E. Mr. Volker TÜRK, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

As a milestone in the history of women's rights and gender, the BDPA encapsulated the incredible mobilisation, the wisdom and expertise of feminist movements and women's rights organisations which led to major progress. The Declaration sparked a global stand against gender-based violence. Since the inception of the Declaration, more than 160 countries passed laws to address domestic violence; the number of women in parliaments around the world has more than doubled; and 50 million more girls have been enrolled in schools globally since 2015. We urgently need that same mobilisation and solidarity today to counter a **growing backlash against women's rights and gender equality**, especially targeting sexual and reproductive health and rights. We need to rally around the Declaration and the Platform for Action to send a clear message that resurgent gender-based violence, discrimination, and misogyny have no place in our world.

Violence against women and misogyny as a persistent scourge

Violence against women is rampant online, on our streets, and in our homes. Six women or girls are killed every single hour by their intimate partner or family member, and the real numbers are most certainly higher. In 2023, the proportion of women killed in armed conflict doubled compared to the previous years, and the number of United Nations verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence grew by 50%. The outdated notion that men should control women's choices and bodies is gaining traction once again. Even the very concept of gender equality is being questioned. It is shocking and bewildering to me that **misogynist influencers** have millions of followers on social media and are hailed as heroes in some quarters. Women's rights are being



dismissed and denied in one form or another all over the world. Not one country has achieved gender equality. This is a massive human rights failure and a problem not only for women and girls, but for everyone.

Driving forces for peace, climate action and economic growth

No country can make sustainable progress politically, economically, or socially while subordinating or excluding half of its population. Women's full leadership and participation make peace agreements more durable, development more sustainable, **climate action** more effective, and economies more resilient. Amidst the climate catastrophe, women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die in extreme weather events. Four out of five people displaced by climate change are women and girls. No region can truly address the climate crisis without listening to women, who are uniquely positioned to be agents of change. In **diplomacy**, a growing number of countries have adopted a feminist foreign policy over the past decade. They are prioritising equality and justice as preconditions for peace, prosperity, development, and security. This recognises, for example, that women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years by at least 35 percent. In terms of **economic growth**, estimates suggest that closing the gender pay gap could give the global economy a seven trillion U.S. dollar boost. Women's rights and gender equality are **non-negotiable**. They will have an outsized, catalytic, and multiplier effect across all the SDGs.

Spurring all countries to follow OHCHR's firm commitment to gender equality

We know that progress is possible. Our history and the leaders of the women's rights movements can show us the way. Women and girls all over the world who are demanding an equal share. My office is working with them to advance their struggle. In Mexico, we are backing the fight against impunity in cases of femicide. In Colombia, we supported key peace-building activities with women at their core. We are working to increase the participation of women in decision-making in South Sudan. In Ukraine, we are supporting women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. We will continue to support efforts like these all over the world, celebrating diversity, insisting on bodily autonomy, pushing for equality in family spaces, in culture, and in religion, and pressing for more women at decision-making tables. We will promote and protect women's rights and gender equality every day at every opportunity, in my office's advocacy and in my engagement with states. This is my firm **commitment to women and girls in all their diversity** everywhere. But this also needs to be a national priority and a global commitment, a promise by states and societies to women and girls to stand up for their rights, to protect and develop the legacy of the BDPA, and to dismantle the patriarchy brick by brick.

STATEMENTS BY PANELLISTS

Ms. Sima BAHOUS, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

30 years ago, the world made a promise to advance the rights, opportunities, and dignity of all women and girls. That promise was not just words on paper. It was a blueprint, a rallying cry. For three decades, it has fuelled progress. More girls in school, more women in parliaments, more laws protecting women from violence, more nations recognising gender equality as a necessity.



Amidst sluggish progress, high time to accelerate gender equality

But let us be honest. We are not where we should be. Women and girls' rights are under attack. The spaces for women's voices are shrinking. If we continue at this pace, a girl born today will be 39 years old before women hold as many seats in parliament as men. She will be 68 before child marriage ends. She will be 137 years before extreme poverty for women and girls is eradicated. We cannot accept this. This year's Commission on the Status of Women is a moment to act decisively, invest ambitiously, and demand accountability. A moment to push for a bold, forward-looking political declaration that does not just reaffirm commitments but accelerates them. We cannot do this alone. Change has always been contested. Our response must be just as strong. We must build alliances, amplify voices, and stand firm, including at the Human Rights Council. The Beijing Platform laid the foundation for a world where all women and girls have equal rights and opportunities. Now, at Beijing+30, we need an all-hands-on-deck approach to turn that vision into reality.

Six key priorities to urgently address

Our review of progress from 159 Member States points to six urgent priorities. Close the **digital gender gap**. Ensure every woman and girl can access technology and shape the future. End women's **poverty**, not in a century or a generation, but in our lifetime. Stop **violence** against women and girls. Pass and enforce laws and dismantle the norms that allow violence to persist. Ensure women's **full and equal power** at peace tables, in parliaments, in boardrooms, in every room where decisions are made. Put women at the heart of **peace** and humanitarian action, because when crisis strikes, they lead the way. Make women and girls the driving force of **climate action**, especially rural and indigenous leaders who hold the key to a sustainable future. Across all these areas we must engage young women and girls.

As we mark this anniversary, let it be a call to shape the future and ensure that the promises made in Beijing are not only remembered but fully realised. Let us act with urgency. Let us act with courage. Let us deliver for all women and girls everywhere, leaving no one behind.

Ms. Doreen BOGDAN-MARTIN, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

As we look back to 1995, the year the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted, think about what the digital world looked like. Less than 2 percent of the world's population had a mobile phone. Less than 1 percent – or actually, to be precise, 0.8 percent, about 40 million people at the time – were online, had access to the Internet. Delegates to the Fourth World Conference on Women may not have referenced the Internet or the mobile phone, but they did understand and recognise this well, the immense potential of technology and its ability to empower women and girls. The outcome document mentions technology 31 times. Ten years later, we held the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, where Member States acknowledged the full participation of women in the Information Society as necessary to ensure inclusiveness and respect for human rights.



Leveraging digital technologies to advance women's economic rights

By 2005, 34 percent of the world's population had a mobile phone, and about 15 percent - 1 billion - were connected to the Internet. But not Rebecca. An inspiring fashion designer from Ethiopia, she never made a mobile phone call. She didn't have access to the Internet. But a few years ago, after receiving digital skills training from the ITU and the Enhanced Integrative Framework, Rebecca was able to launch Helmi, her e-commerce business that now reaches customers all over the world. Rebecca's story is one of progress in leveraging digital technologies to advance opportunities for women and girls everywhere.

Hard truths – A deepening digital divide

This progress was re-energised when Beijing+15 review took place, and Member States decided to encourage the implementation of women's economic empowerment policies that leverage digital technologies for lifelong education. 30 years after Beijing, parity in Internet use has been achieved in some places, in some regions. But the digital gender divide is far from closed, and by referring to the words of the President of the General Assembly, that is one of the hard truths. We have not closed the digital gender gap. In least developed countries, the gap is actually getting bigger, with less than 30 percent of women having access to the Internet. Closing this digital divide is a matter of empowerment, but it also makes economic sense.

Multiple barriers - Access, usage and educational gaps

While exact estimates vary, connecting more women could boost global GDP by billions and billions of dollars. But connecting women to the Internet is not enough. There is a 'usage gap', compounded by other barriers that are facing women and girls from a digital skills deficit, affordability challenges, that smartphone is too expensive or the cost of service is too expensive, to unsafe online environments, to an underrepresentation in **STEM education**, just to name a few. The impact of these barriers is clear. If we look at computer science studies alone, the proportion of female graduates back when computer science came on the scene in the 80s was about 30 percent. Today, it's about the same. We have not been able to attract more women and girls into STEM fields. Beyond education, women are underrepresented in the tech force, around 30 percent. Noteworthy is also the fact that just two percent of all start-up funding goes to women-led tech ventures. In the **AI** sphere, the numbers are not much better, with women representing some 30 percent of the workforce when it comes to AI. And when it comes to women in leadership in government positions, when it comes to tech, it's about 20 percent.

Designing a digital transformation that empowers women and girls

Women's unique perspective is absolutely vital if digital policy and tech innovation is to truly benefit all. When this happens, the results are inspiring. Look no further than 'Not a Woman's Job', which is a photo exhibition that was on display first here at UNOG and now is being hosted by the ITU, celebrating 100 incredible scientist, engineers, and technologists who just happen to be women. One of them is 22-year-old Mary from Uganda, who wants to become a great engineer to help other girls turn their dreams into reality. Another is Aniri. She's a single mother learning digital skills at a STEM centre in South Sudan. Our **ITU-led AI Skills Coalition** is designed to help women such as Mary and Aniri access training opportunities at a time when 40 percent of global employment is exposed to artificial intelligence.



As the UNSG mentioned this morning, let us continue leveraging the Global Digital Compact and the Pact of the Future, where member states reaffirm their commitment to the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. ITU is firmly committed to continuing its role as a founding partner of the Equals Global Partnership, as an International Gender Champion, as a co-lead of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation, as a promoter of ITU's [Girls in ICT Day](#), and on World Telecommunications and Information Society Day on 17th May this year, when the ITU turns 160 years old. Our anniversary theme, as agreed by our Member States, is how digital transformation can empower women and girls like Rebecca, Mary, and Aniri.

So much is possible when we work together. In fact, the only way to fully realise the promise of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to eliminate all divides and the digital divide, once and for all, is by working together on behalf of women and girls everywhere.

Ms. Rebecca GRYNSPAN, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Thirty years ago in Beijing, some 30,000 women were able to put together the most comprehensive policy agenda ever created for achieving gender equality. Whatever we have achieved was not made by the invisible hand. It was made by the voice, by the work, by the leadership of all those women that paved the way for us to be here today. We have to honour them. This affected all of us. I was Vice-President of Costa Rica in 1995, so I know firsthand how Beijing affected us in our policies, in what we did.

Beijing's gender mainstreaming policy revolution

Thanks to Beijing, Costa Rica already in 1995 had a law for the equality of men and women. Beijing really pushed our agenda much farther. First of all, it inspired us to put together the first plan to mainstream women perspective across all sectors of government. Suddenly, it became a mainstream challenge for all the sectors of government. After Beijing, we established and implemented our first across-all-sectors-of-government strategy to be implemented by everybody. Thanks to Beijing, we clearly widened the perspective of policies across the board to look at women equality in political, in social, in economy, in cultural rights.

Beijing's data revolution making women 'visible' in a gender-blind economy

Beijing was the first time where it was established that the economy and the global economy were not gender neutral. Quite the opposite, the economy and the global economy were gender-blind, but not gender neutral. From there, we started looking at the different impacts of policies on women and men, because policies have different impact. As we had never studied it before, we did not have the data to establish the facts. The data revolution was initiated to make women visible, to count women, to disaggregate data. Through it, we were able to establish research and programmes in the universities to establish the facts, not precluding what we will find, but at least having the possibility to understand the reality on the ground. This was essential to be able to establish the differentiated impact of shocks on women and girls and on all of us.

Beijing clearly established the need to include [women's studies in research programmes](#) to better understand the discrimination mechanisms and the different realities on the ground. In Beijing, it was also understood that the word 'women' does not say all about all women, as there



were different realities and agendas that had to be conceived bottom-up, not top-down. Research and data disaggregation made it possible to design the right policies to meet the challenges on the ground. Beijing put at the very centre gender violence in all the different realms - in conflict, in society, in our homes.

Beijing's legal revolution and its far-reaching legacy

Beyond the data and policy revolution, Beijing also marked a legal revolution. In many parts of the world still then, domestic violence was a private issue, not a public issue. As Beijing had far-reaching impacts on us, Costa Rica was aware of the necessary mechanisms for the training and follow-up within the legal and judicial system in order to legally tackle violence against women. Then training and institutional development took off. Institutional and legal mechanisms were a considerable change instilled by Beijing.

To conclude, Beijing was an **agenda against discrimination**. It was not an agenda for discrimination. Eliminating discrimination against women is key, but we are not there yet. Today, 30 years later, in developed and developing countries, we continue to have unacceptable discriminatory laws. 2.4 billion women do not have the same economic rights than men across 178 countries. Let us recall that Beijing gave us a **foundation of rights**. We must continue building upon it. The Human Rights Council must move from the Declaration to its implementation, from promises to practice, to build a world where women's rights - all rights - are truly universal, indivisible, and inalienable.

Ms. Nahla HAIDAR, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee)

As a landmark agreement that has been instrumental in advancing women's and girls' rights since 1995, the comprehensive approach of the Beijing Platform for Action addresses 12 critical areas of concern guiding policies and programmes worldwide. Significant progress has been witnessed in areas such as institutional mechanisms, gender parity in primary schools, among others.

Amidst progress, old and emerging challenges

However, challenges persist, and even worse, the backlash against the rights are worrying as well as the underrepresentation of women in decision-making, new forms of violence and misinformation. As we reflect on the past three decades, we must renew our commitments to gender equality, combat these challenges, and explore emerging issues such as online violence to ensure that the Beijing Platform for Action remains a relevant and effective tool for future generations. While acknowledging progress made since its creation, we must confront the evolving challenges, and at the same time as those new forms of **online and technology-facilitated violence**, while seizing the opportunities new technology can offer women as stated by ITU's Secretary-General. We urgently have to turn our attention to all these issues, as emerging technology, including AI algorithms, could lead to setbacks or discrimination, but there are also opportunities for positive change.



Beijing and CEDAW joining forces

The Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW have worked in tandem for the past 30 years. CEDAW ‘predated’ the Beijing Platform for Action, in the sense that it used the latter to provide a comprehensive framework, as the CEDAW’s legally binding force make of it the strongest mechanism for the protection, promotion, and fulfilment of women’s rights. CEDAW can not only hold State Parties accountable, but also accompany the State Party to measure progress made and reinforce its commitments. Through constructive dialogues and recommendations, the CEDAW Committee is the voice for millions of women. Its general recommendations, which are soft law tools, cover all the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action such as women’s political participation, poverty, education, healthcare, GBV, and situations of armed conflict. Crucially, CEDAW addresses emerging issues like amplified stereotypes in the technological sphere, so that the Beijing Platform for Action remains relevant. I stated technology was cited, but we were not aware of where we are going to be 30 years after that. I wanted to highlight how much it is important when we look at women living in poverty or at the role of women in economic development, to also pay attention to those General Recommendations (GR) crafted by CEDAW over the years - 40 GR in total.

The relevance of CEDAW’s General Recommendations in an ever-changing world

I want to quote here on women in poverty, in particular GR 34 on rural women, and GR 29 on the economic consequences of marriage, which further solidify the connection that the Beijing Platform for Action has alluded to. On education, GR 36, where the whole issue of minimal number of girls in STEMS - a trend which we have not been able to reverse until now - yet we have some guidance offered to State Party on how to address this challenge as their own soft law tool. With regards to health, as we are not any more satisfied with our GR 24, because jurisprudence has evolved much beyond that on the bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights are under threat, CEDAW is very concerned and is considering to update GR 24 to take into account all these developments. The same applies to violence, which is the fourth area of the Beijing Platform for Action, and there again, two general recommendations that are landmarks, 19 and 35 also alluding to femicide and related developments. On women and armed conflict, GR 30 is the first on this issue, and if we recall the preamble of CEDAW stressing the role of women in peace, it seems we have departed from that for many years.

Bringing back the centrality of all of this, the same applies to women in leadership and decision making, and many of you have been witness of the launch of GR40 last year on parity and the importance for all of us to continue addressing the challenge on women political representation. On institutional mechanism and for the advancement of women, the dialogue with State Parties show how important it is to accompany them in their efforts to move from the legal framework to the implementation - from *de iure* to *de facto* equality. This area, the ninth one of the Beijing Platform for Action, we believe that CEDAW is at its very core.

‘Women as drivers of progress’ for reconciling the human rights and the development pillars

CEDAW has sensitised and echoed crucial instrument and milestone, notably the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993, which reaffirmed that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights, emphasising that women’s rights are human rights as a core belief and a driver for achieving



progress. In this area, we have a human rights pillar and a development pillar as a treaty, and the reconciliation of these two pillars is crucial. On women and media, I want to announce the new GR 41 on stereotypes we are embarking on. To conclude, we need to make sure that the promise of the Beijing Plan for Action is not just upheld, but fully realised. Let us push it forward with renewed determination, knowing that the legacy we build today will determine the future of the generations of women and girls to come.

Ms. Ms. Liu YANG, the first Chinese female astronaut in space and a crew member of the space mission Shenzhou 9 and Shenzhou 14

30 years ago, the fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, sending a strong message and calling for action for the advancement of women. The Beijing Declaration proclaimed with a strong voice that women's rights are human rights. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action as the outcome of this conference has not only laid a solid foundation for the advancement of women globally, but also provided clear guidance for all countries in promoting gender equality and empowerment through science and technology.

A spacecraft powered by hundreds of millions of Chinese women

In 2012, I had the honour of representing hundreds of millions of Chinese women in space for the first time. When the engine of the Shenzhou spacecraft was ignited, I felt not only the shock of 600 tonnes of thrust, but also the power of hundreds of millions of Chinese women backing up. In 2022, when I was looking at the blue planet from the Chinese space station located 400 kilometres away from the Earth, I was full of pride. I firmly believed that gender has never been a barrier for human exploration, and civilisation and science and technology could always break down prejudices. The penholders of the Beijing Declaration 30 years back would be pleased to know that today, Chinese women are able to conduct the cell experiments on the space station, use quantum computers to analyse the genetic code and send aircraft into sky.

Education (em)powering women and girls

At this very moment, China's first ever female space flight engineer is looking down the Earth from the space station. I was born in 1978, a time that not all Chinese women and girls could have access to education. Today, in China, the net enrolment rate of girls in junior high schools reaches almost 100 percent, and the proportion of female students in higher education institutions is close to 50 percent. It is this kind of progress in education that makes me - the girl who loved the story of Altair and Vega on both sides of the Milky Way - could eventually fly up to the sky. Intellectual selection and training of Chinese astronauts, the same set of qualification standards applied to both men and women, be it the centrifuge exercise with eight times the gravity to Earth, or 72-hour confined environment adaptation training.

Scientific and technological advances powered by female actors

In the manual of space station, there's only one title of astronaut instead of male or female. This concept of no gender before standards reflects the core logic of women's cause in China, that is to institutionalise a fair and equitable competition environment for both women and men. This is also concrete realisation of the spirit of Beijing Declaration, that is when women enjoy equal educational resources and fair access, we would be able to make history. When I perform



extravehicular activity in space, the robotic arm I operated was as 0.1 millimetres. Behind this was the round-the-clock efforts of the team of female engineers. In the space, our space station orbits the earth every 90 minutes, where our witness the morning mist over the Amazon rainforest, the sunsets over the Sahara desert and snow lines of the Himalayas. This transcendent perspective has instilled in me a profound realisation. All humanity is one family and the advancement of women requires global collective efforts of us all. The truth tells us when scientific and technological developments are empowered with gender perspective, it unleashes the profound potential that could change the world.

Women's empowerment through technology and the 'spirit of Beijing'

China has always been a champion in the global cause of women. We are sharing with many countries the Chinese solution on maternal and child healthcare, helping reduce maternal mortality. The Luban workshops are organised in Africa to train tens of thousands of women with science and technology. The driving power behind is the global expression of Beijing Declaration spirit. We always remember the invaluable support provided by the UN agencies in areas such as poverty eradication, educational equity and health care. The spirit of moving forward hand-in-hand is the best footnote for building a community with shared future for mankind. Today, I honoured to speak before the Council not only as an astronaut, not only as a woman representative, but also a beneficiary and practitioner of the spirit of Beijing Declaration and as a witness of women's empowerment through technology.

30 years ago, Beijing bore witness to the world's women's determination to pursue equality. At the conference table, our predecessors laid out the blueprint for gender equality with pen and paper. In the upcoming 30 years, I believe that through our unremitting efforts and sincere cooperation will further promote gender equality and women's empowerment. More and more women will break boundaries of life, achieve comprehensive development and make greater contribution to the advancement of women's status worldwide and to the progress of human society.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In reply to the question raised by the UAE on women in conflict, **Ms. Nahla HAIDAR** explains that we can work very much on prevention with associations and the area of peacekeeping, including women also around the table, not only as a token representation but as a real contribution. In areas of acute conflicts, priority should be given to the most vulnerable women, an issue addressed by several UN Security Council. Responding to Nepal, Ms. Nahla Haidar agrees that women finding themselves alone to cater for their families is something that catapults them much further in the role they play as head of households. It creates a lot of pressure, and that is when the state should intervene to help these women by providing social support, benefits, provide opportunities for work. It's an opportunity for families when one of the partners emigrates. As we know, many women migrate in other countries to support their families. The question of migrant women also deserves to be taken into account by states.

In her concluding remarks on behalf of the ITU's SG, **Ms. Sylvia POLL, Senior Gender and Youth Advisor at the ITU** reminds that the world is moving too slowly towards gender parity in the internet use. Gender, geographic, and economic divides prevent equitable access to the internet. But gender equality can accelerate progress towards the UN SDGs. Achieving gender equality and digital transformation can advance multiple SDGs with increased access providing greater



educational employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. For this reason, I would like to invite you, as this is the 160th anniversary of ITU, on ITU's birthday, which is next 17th May 2025, which we will be celebrating the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day with a focus on gender equality in digital transformation.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

30 years on from the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile** restates his country's adamant commitment to gender equality and human rights for all women and girls. Multilateralism must be a driver for change towards gender equality in this context. Chile has actively included a gendered approach in its foreign policy and put in place specific initiatives such as strengthening the role of women in our diplomacy, the promotion of an economy of caring as a pillar of sustainable development, and the strengthening of women's political participation on an equal footing. The realisation of human rights of women and girls in all their diversity without any discrimination requires bold measures and commitments over time. Despite progress, structural barriers that prevent the full realisation of the rights of women and girls, for instance gender violence, the pay gap, the lack of fair access to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health rights. These continue to be structural barriers that we must tackle with determination and urgency. For these reasons, Chile launches an appeal to the international community to consolidate a multilateral system which guarantees the real equality and gender justice at all levels. This requires specific commitments and accountability mechanisms which ensure real and lasting progress. The Beijing+30 process is a historic opportunity to strengthen this accountability and to ensure that these commitments are translated into effective actions and policy. Gender equality is not an optional goal, it's an imperative, and we must bring about this lasting change.

By praising China's efforts in 1995 for bringing the rights of women to another level, **Belarus** further acknowledges China's key role, not just in strengthening international cooperation in the area of gender equality, but also in giving fresh impetus to practical measures for improving the situation of women in all countries. The key goals of the Beijing declaration gave clear guidance for governments in order to set them on a path for eradicating gender inequality. In 30 years, the global community has achieved significant success in promoting women in political, economic and social spheres. It is very important to build on the progress achieved. Gender equality is not just about women's rights, it is also a key part of sustainable and fair development.

Iceland and the Nordic-Baltic countries reaffirm their commitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration. Gender equality must remain a priority not just for long-term peace and economic well-being, but also to secure human rights of all. Despite important achievements, there is still a long way to reach its goals. It is imperative to tackle sexual and gender-based violence, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, to bridge the digital gender gap and to recognise the structural inequalities and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination women and girls face globally. Gender transformative policies are the foundation for inclusive and rights-based societies where everyone can prosper. True progress requires strong global partnerships and the involvement of all, including men and boys. Now is the time for decisive action to create lasting change.



Addressing a call to reinvigorate our efforts to realise the commitment made in 1995, the **Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa** stresses that his country is among the first countries whose constitution enshrines gender equality, making of women's empowerment and gender equality a national policy priority. South Africa submitted its Beijing+ state progress report to the United Nations in 2024. Despite progress in terms of substantive equality, gaps exist in areas such as gender-based violence, economic disparity, health inequities, and socio-political challenges poses significant hurdles. At the continental level, the African Union in 2020 extended a decade for African women with a focus for 2020-2030 on financial and economic inclusion. Furthermore, mid-February 2025, the African Heads of State and Government adopted a milestone convention on ending violence against women and girls.

The **Vice Minister of State for Equality of Spain** stresses his Government's firm belief that feminist policy is undeniably linked to public policy, which allowed Spain to make progress in promoting equality, in reducing the gender gap, in protecting sexual and reproductive rights, guaranteeing abortion, and combating gender-based violence. The Spanish Parliament has just approved the renewal of the compact against gender violence with broad consensus. Stressing the threat of regression in women's rights, millions of women throughout the world that have no access to education, to basic medical services, to economic independence or protection against violence. Equality is at stake, and our feminist policy continues to be key on the global stage for us.

The **Secretary of State for External Relations of Angola** stresses his country's significant progress such as the number and percentage of women holding high-level public positions having increased in some sectors, particularly amongst the magistracy and the executive. For the first time, women now that have very important positions in the public sector, such as the Vice Presidency, the Presidency of the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court and the Ombudsman's Office. Despite progress, we renew and restate our commitment to overcoming the challenges and obstacles that still exist and which prevent Angolan women from having a full and absolutely important role in our political and social life.

By recalling the leadership of the Mother of the Nation, Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, the **Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates** stresses her country's firm believe in the full, equal and meaningful participation of women as critical for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The world has made significant progress on advancing women's rights, but we continue to have a long way to go. First, all forms of violence against women must be prevented and eliminated. Last year, the UAE strengthened its law on the protection against domestic violence to ensure greater accountability and punishment towards its perpetrators. Second, women's full, equal and meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making roles must be ensured. In the UAE, women comprise one-third of ministerial positions and 50% of the seats in our parliament, the Federal National Council. Lastly, let us not forget the plight of millions of women and girls in war-torn regions around the world. Their suffering is an urgent call that requires our collective attention and action. Given the rise of armed conflicts and the disproportionate impact they have on women and girls, how can the international community safeguard their protection in conflict settings?



The **Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica** raised alarm at a global context marked by a threats to the rights of women and girls. He calls upon countries to make efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls; support multilateralism and institutions to defend and promote human rights in order to fully implement the 2030 Agenda, most notably SDG 5 on gender equality. Representation of women and their fair and significant participation in all decision-making is essential to guaranteeing the respect of human rights. Costa Rica has 48% of ambassadors who are women, and is currently leading the negotiations of the policy declaration for reviewing Beijing+30. Stressing Costa Rica's full commitment to gender equality and diplomacy, the intersection between gender equality and climate action is very important for Costa Rica because as cross-cutting policies also at the very core of its foreign policy.

Despite progress, the **Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal** explains that much remains to be done. Gender equality is still far-reaching a reality. Women continue to be disproportionately affected by sexual and domestic violence, subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in all spheres of life. Gender pay gaps persist. Portugal's national strategy for equality and non-discrimination has substantially increased women's participation in public and political life, improved their access to the labour market, and fostered fair working conditions. Furthermore, the Government has strengthened a support network for victims of violence, engages in public awareness campaigns, and fosters partnerships with civil society to eliminate domestic violence and raise awareness.

The **State Secretary of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men of Romania** emphasises that democracy cannot exist without gender equality, and women's rights cannot be fully realised outside democracies. We are living in difficult times and despite significant progress in advancing the rights of women and girls. Gender equality is a significant condition for sustainable development, peace, social well-being, and economic growth. Romania is in line with the EU's commitments to ensuring the full realisation of human rights for all women and girls free from all forms of discrimination and to promoting their empowerment. The Romanian Government has expressed its responsibility to mainstreaming the gender perspective in all policies through specific measures. Romania has made significant legislative and policy progress in advancing gender equality and in preventing and combating gender-based violence. Romania is implementing two national strategies focused on advancing women's rights and elaborated its first national action plan for economic and political empowerment of women. Romania is also undertaking a structural reform of support services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence. Romania remains a reliable partner in fulfilling the Beijing commitments.

Alongside **Belgium and Luxembourg, the Netherlands** emphasize the importance of keeping gender equality high on the global agenda has become even more pertinent since hard won gains are questioned or in certain situations even lost. In recent years, progress has stagnated and regressed, notably with regard to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls. The latter also continue to be underrepresented in all spheres of decision and face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as sexual and gender-based violence, while gender stereotypes and negative social norms continue to prevail. It is imperative to push back against those who would reverse collective normative achievements and work together to



accelerate progress. The role of civil society, human rights defenders, and notably women human rights defenders, as well as critical voices to this end, cannot be overstated.

Over the past three decades, **Ghana and the countries composing the African group** have remained steadfast in efforts to advance these global goals under the auspices of the African Union. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa call on all states parties to eliminate every discrimination against women and ensure the protection of their rights as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. In spite of the progress registered so far, the African group is cognisant of the tremendous challenges that continue to hinder progress toward the full empowerment of women on our continent. To address this, the Maputo Protocol urges African nations to, among others, include in their national constitutions the principles of gender equality and ensure its effective application and integrate a gender perspective in all their policy decisions, development plans and programmes. The African group reaffirms its unwavering commitment to gender equality, recognising that empowerment of women and girls is not only a moral imperative but also a driving force for sustainable development and global prosperity.

The **Bahamas jointly with the CARICOM states** have developed the CARICOM regional gender equality strategy seeks to provide a comprehensive framework to advance gender responsive policies, strengthen institutional capacity, and promote women's economic empowerment. Legislative reforms in CARICOM have also strengthened protections against gender-based violence, improved access to education, and enhanced women's participation in political and economic spheres. Yet for CARICOM, unique and specific challenges persist. The climate crisis and the effects of COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affect women, while economic vulnerabilities heighten gender disparities, particularly those who head single-parent households. Women and girls are also disproportionately affected by crime and violence. As we look to the future, CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to accelerating the implementation of BDPA as a foundation for building inclusive and resilient societies.

Mexico and the group of countries with a feminist foreign policy (Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, and Mexico) express satisfaction at progress and important achievements in the reaffirmation of gender equality, health and sexual reproductive rights, as well as the bodily autonomy, all of which are human rights. The group expresses concern about attempts to challenge these human rights, which continue to be restricted and denied to millions, thereby hampering peaceful, inclusive and sustainable development of our societies, beyond running counter to the principle of non-regression. Committed to a feminist foreign policy, the group energetically reaffirms its collective responsibility to respect, protect and guarantee these rights for all women and girls, including the women and girls who are most marginalised because of multiple intersexual forms of discrimination which they are victims of.

Thirty years after Beijing, **Switzerland** expresses concern at the persisting violations of women's and girls, gender-based violence, ongoing economic and political inequalities. Global transitions and challenges affect disproportionately women and girls. Switzerland is committed to respecting the rights of all women and girls. Without gender equality, there can be neither lasting peace nor true security. Switzerland therefore actively supports the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, as it did during its mandate in the Security Council.



Switzerland actively is working on its fifth national plan of action. Still nationally, recent achievements attest to our determination to really make a reality the rights embodied in our constitutional laws, namely the first national strategy for equality, which was set up.

While celebrating the progress made, **Canada** is dismayed by attempts by some to roll back the rights of women and girls. These actions run counter to the commitments we all made and threaten the progress we have achieved. Canada places gender equality and the promotion of the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity at the heart of our domestic and international efforts and we have built a framework to turn that pledge into action. Canada has set up a law on gender-sensitive budgetization, a framework wherein decisions are taken into account the impacts of policies on all Canadians, especially women, girls and marginalised persons. This law forces the Ministry of Finance of Canada to report to the Parliament on the gender impacts and diversity of all budgetary measures. By recognising the fact that people experience policies differently, we are able to shed light on disparities and steer resources in a way that promotes equality and equity. It must be ensured that every woman and girl can exercise her rights to health and bodily autonomy, free from discrimination and violence.

The dedication of the **United Kingdom's** Government to advancing gender equality at home has led to a narrowing of the gender pay gap. More women on the boards of the largest companies than ever before, and stronger action to protect women and girls from violence and abuse. The UK has put women and girls at the heart of its international work - from its diplomacy to its development spending. While acknowledging progress made, quite clearly no country - the UK included - has achieved or even got close to achieving gender equality. The world is seeing a growing international trend of efforts to undermine and roll back the rights of women, girls and other marginalised groups. This rollback must be resisted and concerted action taken to build on the progress we have made both at home and overseas. That is why the UK Government is putting women's voices at the heart of everything it do, making the changes needed so that gender equality can, at last, become a reality.

Reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the full realisation of the BDPA, **Germany** has deepened our domestic efforts to strengthen protections against gender-based violence, to expand equal opportunities, to bolster reproductive health, and to ensure that gender equality is a lived reality. Internationally, Germany has worked to systematically enhance the rights, representation and resources of women and marginalised communities. Yet today, global support for gender equality is increasingly fragile. Hard-won rights are being systematically dismantled. Across regions, legal protections are being rolled back. Access to essential health care is being restricted and voices advocating for gender equality are being silenced. Scientific evidence is falsified or negated. Germany categorically rejects this regression and calls upon all fellow member states to take decisive action against such policies.

Japan considers policies focused on gender equality based on human rights to be among the most important for realising a society where all people can feel that their purpose in life and their individuality and diversity are respected. Despite significant progress achieved over the past 30 years, the world is confronted by ongoing and newly emerging challenges to gender equality caused by various drivers, including armed conflict, natural disasters, social inequality and pushback against promoting and protecting women's rights in normative discussions. Besides Beijing+30, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution



1325 on the WPS agenda. Jointly with Norway, Japan is co-chairing the WPS focal points network for 2025. As part of this commitment, Japan convened a capital level meeting in Tokyo earlier this month. Ensuring the meaningful participation of women in decision-making in line with the WPS agenda is an integral part of protecting human rights for all and achieving lasting peace. Furthermore, it is important to note that when gender-based discrimination intersects with discrimination related to disability, age or sexual orientation, this disproportionately exacerbates the vulnerable situation of women and girls. Gender transformative steps must be taken to eliminate such violence by adopting a survivor-centred approach and engaging in advocacy for preventive norms.

Morocco continues to make significant commitments in promoting women's rights. Among the most important initiatives, the new development model places women at the heart of national development, aiming at the generalisation of social protection and the increase of women's employment rate to 45 percent by 2035. The third governmental plan for equity has as a first objective the programme for women's economic empowerment and leadership that supports women's access to the job market, encourages female entrepreneurship and strengthens the role of rural women in the economy by 2030. The revision of the family code launched in September 2023 reaffirms Morocco's determination to ensure more effective gender equality as enshrined in its constitution and in line with our national and international commitments to human rights. Thanks to the various national efforts, all of the 12 Moroccan regions have seen remarkable dynamism in terms of progress and concrete achievements. At the multilateral level and during the current session of the Human Rights Council, Morocco jointly with a cross-regional core group, is introducing a **resolution titled 'Women, Diplomacy and Human Rights'** aimed at reaffirming the priority given to women's empowerment and calling for greater international cooperation to accelerate progress on women's rights.

Nepal has made significant progress in protecting and promoting rights of women in civil, political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. Thirty years later, the Beijing Declaration continues to guide Nepal's actions to achieve gender parity. Today, Nepal ranks first in South Asia in terms of representation of women in legislative parliament, which is about 34 percent in federal parliament, above 36 percent in provincial assemblies, and over 40 percent in the municipal council. However, a large number of Nepali youths, particularly men, are out of the country for foreign employment, and a sizable number of Nepali households are led by women in the absence of men. This is a new dynamic in Nepali society. Based on the panellists' expertise and global experience, what will be its impact on women empowerment in the long run, and how to utilise this unique situation for dimensional and sustainable women empowerment?

India has made a paradigm shift in our approach from women's development to women-led development. Women are not passive beneficiaries of the development process, but active architects of our development trajectory and equal partners in India's growth story. India celebrates its two decades of gender budgeting this month. With a focus on key areas like employment, education, health and well-being, safety and security of women, the national budget this year has earmarked US\$52 billion towards gender budgeting. Under one of the largest financial inclusion programmes in the world, more than 280 million bank accounts have been opened for women in the last decade. India's self-help group movement successfully demonstrates community-led development, with millions of women accessing credit to pursue



and lead remunerative initiatives. India's passage of the landmark Women's Reservation Bill, which reserves 33 percent of seats in the national state legislatures for women, reflects our commitment to enhancing women's political participation. India firmly believes that only when women rise do societies prosper, and the progress of humanity is incomplete without the empowerment of women. Advancing women-led development is India's way of ensuring a prosperous and inclusive future for all.

Albania has made significant efforts to advance policies and measures in all areas of the BDPA, including on gender equality and women empowerment, by increasing women's participation in the decision-making process and politics, adopting gender-responsive budgeting, and risk protection against gender-based violence. Albania has undertaken several measures for digitalisation of public services and to ensure progress towards inclusive development and decent work. The Youth Guarantee Programme aimed at the inclusion of young people in the labour market, the reduction of the gender wage gap, engagement on the global accelerator for decent work, and social protection for just transition, job creation, and skill development are some of these measures. To address remaining challenges, Albania is working to increase employment, support startups and women-led businesses, improve health care, and reduce gender gaps in the digital sphere. Digital violence, harassment, and sexual violence remain a challenge. In this regard, we are strengthening our efforts to find appropriate ways to ensure the necessary and adequate protection. In these turbulent times, Albania is working closely with partners, civil society, and international organisations to ensure the promotion and protection of women's rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment in Albania and worldwide.

Appreciating global efforts to promote women's rights and recognising the true value and dignity of women in society and family, the **Islamic Republic of Iran** has reached considerable achievements in the field of women's rights and social justice. Iran considers women as intellectual and professional capital of society who play a key role in the growth and development of community and the realisation of sustainable development. The Iran seeks to ensure the full and effective participation of women at all levels of decision making and is adamantly committed to creating equal opportunities for women in political, economic, and social spheres. In this regard, numerous programmes have been implemented to support women's employment and provide them with access to loans and economic credits. Today, women in Iran constitute 56 percent of the students in free and government-supported public universities, 40 percent of university faculty members, 60 percent of the teaching community, and 24 percent of country's investors. They constitute approximately 45 percent of public sector employees, over 74 percent of private sector employees, more than 31 percent of professionals in the field of information technology, and 24 percent of managers in strategic technology laboratories.

[Views Expressed by Intergovernmental Organizations](#)

H.E. Mr. Alain Berset, **Secretary-General of the Council of Europe**, describes the BDPA as a forward-thinking achievement, addressing issues that are still central for achieving gender equality. Beijing Conference was a turning point in putting on the agenda the centrality of women's rights for the realisation of sustainable development. New challenges, such as AI or technology facilitating violence, add even more depth to this necessity. Since 1995, gender equality and women's rights have been high on the Council of Europe agenda. In 2011, our member states adopted the Istanbul Convention to Prevent Violence Against Women and



Domestic Violence, the Global Golden Standard, which has now 39 parties and is open to all countries. It also developed the first international definition of sexism, setting a benchmark in its standards. Ensuring protection of human rights of all women and girls, in particular those in the most vulnerable situation, requires a resolute dedication to fully realising the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action. In the face of interlinked political, social, economic, and environmental challenges, the Council of Europe remains committed to integrating a gender equality perspective across all policies and programmes.

While recognizing important progress, the **European Union (EU)** recognizes there is still a long way to go. This reality where half of the world's population are denied the full enjoyment of all human rights is not acceptable. The European Union is committed to the full realisation of all human rights for all women and girls and their empowerment free from all forms of discrimination, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Given how fragile progress can be, hard-won gains have faced backlash and some even have been reversed. An ambitious and transformative approach to address the root causes of gender inequality, discrimination, and sexual and GBV must be adopted. The EU continues to advance these priorities both internally and through our international partnerships. Lasting change requires the involvement of men and boys as active allies and beneficiaries of equality, challenging gender stereotypes and fostering a culture of gender equality, respect, and inclusion.

The **Executive Director of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** reiterates her support for efforts and initiatives aimed at empowering women. The Commission affirms that the right of women and girls to access all levels of education is a fundamental right that must be respected and it continues to work to raise awareness and promote the implementation of laws to protect women and girls. The OIC has adopted the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights including specific actions on women's rights, calling for the protection of women from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse, and harmful traditional practises. The OIC Jeddah Document and Declaration on Women Rights in Islam also urges member states to reconsider ancient practises and traditions that are wrongfully attributed to Islam. The Commission pledges to continue to collaborate with international organisations, civil society, and government to support women's empowerment initiatives. In this regard, the Commission urges governments to integrate digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence, to transform access to education, health care, and economic opportunities for women who face society, the geographic and financial barriers.

UNFPA firmly believes that human rights are the bedrock upon which we build a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled. This belief is the driving force behind the vision of the ICBD programme of action and the SDGs. But let's be clear, this vision is under threat. From persisting inequalities to the impact of climate change and humanitarian crisis, to the rising tide of resistance against hard-won gains, particularly in sexual and reproductive health and rights. The ICBD+30 celebrations last year have provided us with a call to action and the Beijing+30 review is a critical opportunity to renew commitments to gender equality and accelerate action.

Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions



The **National Human Rights Council (NHRC) of the Kingdom of Morocco** notes progress made in terms of women's rights, specifically when it comes to constitutional legislative progress and when it comes to positions of responsibility. The NHRC has a bottom-up, participative, consultative approach in drafting the reform to the Code of the Family, which will allow for better protection of family rights. However, the NHRC continues to be concerned at ongoing challenges, notably child marriage as well as persistence of gender-based violence, which are mainly due to how difficult it is to report such violence. We have the burden of proof which is on the shoulders of women survivors of such violence, which is a barrier to reporting. The NHRC reiterates its recommendations, particularly the need to adopt a gendered approach in all public policy, to strengthen protection mechanisms for women and to intensify actions to combat sexist stereotypes, to ensure equal participation in decision-making. Furthermore, the NHRC is concerned by **violations of women's rights in armed conflict**. It also stresses the imminent threat posed to progress on the BDPA by rising global militarism, the erosion of the rule of law and securitisation which have contributed to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda's focus on security at the expense of a holistic approach capable of preventing conflict. Unchecked corporate greed in military sectors and the absence of rule of law has fuelled an arms trade that enables the perpetration of international human rights violations and international crimes with impunity. Ineffective or selective accountability mechanisms embolden perpetrators. The consequences in targeted sexual and reproductive health rights violations and in gender apartheid are visible. The NHRC on all states to build on the vision, expertise and strategies of feminist peace movements to collectively challenge militaristic trends, and urges states to uphold their Beijing commitments and invest in human rights, not arms.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women** explains that the sad realities of pushback against women's human rights and gender equality cannot be discounted. The increasing shift to right-wing, non-democratic and restrictive governance in the region has resulted in regressive policies, increased discrimination and violence, disproportionate impacts of climate crisis and curbed access to basic human rights and systems of social protection, like education and comprehensive health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly for women and girls in all their diversities. In a context of severe backlog in achieving gender equality in the region, states must urgently accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, grounding equality, justice, non-discrimination, human rights and sustainability in the lived realities of women and girls in all their diversities and struggles; strengthen health systems, ensuring universal access to quality sexual and reproductive health and rights services; promote meaningful and inclusive leadership of all women and girls in decision-making and policy making; and ensure sustainable, flexible, accessible and gender transformative funding.

Alliance Defending Freedom explains that progress in advancing the human rights of women and girls is faltering, threatened not only by unsteady commitment but also by an escalating and deeply alarming misdirection. Today we heard repeated warnings about the pushback against gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, but is it not striking that none highlighted the greatest pushback of all, the erasure of womanhood itself? What could be more alarming than a world where being a woman is reduced to a feeling where her body and the



children she can carry are commodified. What can states and the broader international community, in particular the UN system, do to avoid entrenching divides, steer clear of ideological controversy in their work, and finally realign the shared foundations that underpin the adoption of the BDPA 30 years ago?

On behalf of 75 feminist organisations, **Ilca World** explains that 30 years later, the Beijing promise, albeit progress, remains largely unfulfilled for women and girls, in particular those who are marginalised due to intersecting forms of discrimination, including LGBTI women and gender diverse persons, those with disabilities and indigenous women and girls, people of colour, migrants and refugees, people living on unceded and occupied land, in conflict, and so many others. Today more than ever, Ilca World recalls that the commitment to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all women and girls need to be upheld by this very Council and UN Member States.

Action Canada for Population and Development emphasizes the vital work of civil society in providing credibility to BPFA processes, most notably by drawing attention to and addressing the gaps in states' implementation. Yet, activists must fight for space in decision-making processes. When budgets need trimming and processes are reviewed for efficiency, the first set of actors that are sacrificed are civil society. The systematic exclusion of civil society is both political and financial. Policy decisions, such as charging NGOs for online platforms for remote participation or interpretation booths during side events, and structural barriers, such as racist and classist visa regimes, create deliberate obstacles. The result? Seats in UN decision-making spaces are all too often empty when they should be filled by those whose lives are most impacted by the decisions taken here. NGOs cannot be turned into customers or revenue streams. States must provide the mandate to make remote participation possible. If the UN cannot guarantee the access and participation of activists from the majority world, then it must move these processes to places where real participation is possible, equitable, and just. A human rights-based system cannot function while excluding the very people it claims to represent.

The **Shaanxi Provincial Patriotic Volunteers Association** argues that the foundation of human rights is the nation's right to development. We hope the Human Rights Council will pay attention to the International Patriotism Convention Organisation, promote the improvement of the International Patriotism Convention, and ultimately facilitate its adoption by all countries. In the context of globalisation, the destinies of all countries are closely interconnected, and the fate of individuals are inseparable from that of their nations. The development of any country should not harm the interests of others. The mainstreaming of human rights requires joint efforts from the international community. The Association is willing to collaborate with the UN agencies to advance the mainstreaming of human rights and contribute to building a just, harmonious, and secure international environment.

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) expresses concern over the BDPA's limitation by its failure to challenge the dominant economic paradigm. From privatisation of natural resources and basic services to the increase of public and private partnership, feminist activists have time and time again highlighted how these four solutions, in fact, erode gender equality, exacerbate poverty, and solidify wealth for the economic elite. Debt burdens, authority measures, structural adjustment programmes, and low conditionalities imposed by international financial institutions have limited the capacity of states, particularly in the global south, to ensure



women have access to and control over resources, public goods, and services. From racist anti-migrant laws and policies across Europe and North America, criminalisation of sexuality, and the push for punitive frameworks against sex work, with the dominance of ethno-nationalist and nationalist politics around the world, the Beijing Platform for Action must address racism, patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism to remain relevant. While the Beijing Platform for Action acknowledges race and class as structural barriers to gender equality, it fails to take on a thorough intersectional analysis, neglecting how race, class, and gender co-constitute and shape people's lives, experiences, and opportunities. As such, it also lacks explicit recognition of the rights of sex workers and queer people. These gaps must be tackled if the Beijing Platform for Action is to be pursued.

On behalf of 114 NGOs, **Women Deliver** stresses that human rights standards on gender equality have advanced significantly, thanks to this Council, the mobilisation of feminist movements, human rights defenders in civil society, and the tireless work of treaty bodies, special procedures, and UN agencies. As a fundamental principle of international human rights law, there should be no retrogression. Current estimates suggest that by 2030, the world will be less gender equal than 2015. They jointly call on all states to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all women and girls, honouring the commitments made both at and since Beijing. They also call on the UNHRC to prioritise and protect space for civil society and human rights defenders. Feminists have fought for the progress achieved over the last 30 years, and this coalition of NGOs will continue to fight until gender equality is a reality for everyone.

Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety describes women's rights in Azerbaijan as 'under serious threat'. Female journalists, activists, and human rights defenders face systematic repression, including harassment, arbitrary detention, and violence. Additionally, restrictive laws and judicial persecution are used to silence those advocating for equality and justice. Female journalists have been imprisoned simply for doing their jobs. Reports indicate that they face ill-treatment in detention and suffer from a lack of proper medical care. Gender-based violence remains widespread and is often met with impunity. The Institute calls for immediate release of these journalists and urges like-minded states to fully implement the commitments of the BDPA by ensuring genuine commitment and accountability, to avoid that the promise of Beijing will remain unfulfilled.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

25 State Delegations

- Including 8 high-level dignitaries

4 Inter-Governmental Organizations

- Including 2 high-level dignitaries

1 National Human Rights Institution

8 Non-Governmental Organizations