

# CSW 69 PRESS RELEASE

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## ***CSW69: One Step Forward, Multiple Steps Back— The Resolve for Gender Equality Continues!***

**11 March 2025**

New York, USA –The 69th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the main intergovernmental body dedicated to gender equality commenced on 10th March 2025 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA.

Following intensive intergovernmental negotiations, Member States of the United Nations adopted the Political Declaration on the thirtieth anniversary of the fourth world conference on Women on 10th March 2025. This reaffirms their dedication to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls worldwide.

The Women’s Rights Caucus (WRC)—a global intersectional feminist coalition of more than 700 members working to advance women’s human rights internationally, regionally, nationally, and locally—welcomes the adoption of the political declaration.

Against a backdrop of significant disinvestment in gender equality by traditional allies, alongside rising conservative and anti-rights movements that actively threaten to undermine progress and deprioritize the human rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people globally, we find encouragement in the explicit commitment to upholding and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in all their diversity, as articulated in this year’s political declaration. While recognizing this positive affirmation, we remain vigilant and call for strengthened action and resourcing to counteract persistent threats and safeguard hard-won gains in gender equality.

We welcome the commitment by member states to reaffirm the mandate of the CSW and to actively explore innovative approaches aimed at revitalizing and strengthening its role. Given the current global climate characterized by shrinking civic space, growing pushback against gender equality and increasing threats to the human rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people, reinforcing the CSW's capacity to effectively advocate for, monitor, and advance gender equality commitments is more critical than ever.

Revitalizing CSW presents an opportunity to enhance accountability mechanisms, improve civil society engagement, and ensure the meaningful participation of women, girls, and gender-diverse people, especially those most marginalized and historically excluded from the CSW. We urge member states to undertake this revitalization process with urgency, transparency, and inclusivity, to position CSW as a robust, responsive, and impactful platform capable of effectively addressing emerging challenges and sustaining progress towards gender equality globally.

We strongly support the inclusion of text on care systems and are pleased to see that the language from the 5R framework of the International Labor Organization is reflected in the Political Declaration, notably recognition, representation, remuneration, reward and redistribution of care. We are also pleased to celebrate the first reference to gender-based violence in a CSW Political Declaration. This is a crucial language change that recognizes intersectional forms of violence faced by women, girls, and gender-diverse people more comprehensively.

We also appreciate member states' recognition of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and the importance of safeguarding human rights across both online and offline contexts. Emerging threats include heightened online harassment, gender-based cyberviolence, digital surveillance, misinformation campaigns targeting marginalized communities, and coordinated anti-rights movements using digital platforms to systematically roll back gains in gender equality and the human rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

Such threats not only undermine safety and freedom of expression but also restrict civic engagement, perpetuate inequalities, and pose significant barriers to full participation in public life. As digital spaces become central arenas for activism and advocacy, addressing these emerging challenges proactively is crucial to protect and advance human rights in alignment with commitments under international frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action.

We express deep disappointment that the Political Declaration fails to explicitly reference sexual and reproductive health and rights, which are clearly articulated in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action's health pillar. The omission of these critical elements signals a troubling regression in commitments to gender equality, reflecting the broader global pushback against bodily autonomy. The absence of these references not only undermines previously secured advancements but also emboldens anti-rights movements seeking to reverse hard-won gains. It represents a dangerous retreat from accountability, failing to protect and uphold the full spectrum of the human rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

We further regret the omission of explicit recognition of the right of children, particularly girls and adolescents, to actively participate in decisions affecting their lives, including within humanitarian contexts and matters relating to peace and security. Ensuring meaningful participation of girls not only upholds their fundamental rights but also ensures that policies and interventions genuinely reflect their lived realities, priorities, and needs. The failure to acknowledge this critical right represents a missed opportunity to strengthen commitments to intergenerational equity, justice and sustainable progress on gender equality and meaningful youth participation in shaping sustainable and peaceful societies.

Lastly, we are disappointed that even when women and girls bear the brunt of the increasing effects of climate change and environmental degradation, the Political Declaration did not advance language on this front, instead reverting to the same language agreed to in the 2020 declaration. We cannot afford to be in this position of resorting to language from five years ago, especially regarding the climate crisis.

As we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to gender equality, women's autonomy, and human rights for all women and girls, in all their diversity. While we acknowledge the positive elements captured in this year's political declaration, we remain deeply concerned by significant gaps and omissions that risk undermining decades of progress.

The escalating global resistance, coupled with rising threats both online and offline, demands renewed determination, urgency, and solidarity from governments, civil society, and the global community. Moving forward, we call upon all stakeholders to translate political commitments into bold, concrete actions backed by adequate resourcing, accountability, and meaningful participation from women and girls themselves. The advancement of gender equality is not only essential, it is non-negotiable.

*\* The WRC is a global coalition of over 700 members working to advance women's human rights internationally, regionally, nationally, and locally.*

**For inquiries, contact:**

**Michelle Anzaya - [m.anzaya@femnet.or.ke](mailto:m.anzaya@femnet.or.ke)**

**Andrea Vega Troncoso - [AVega@fosfeminista.org](mailto:AVega@fosfeminista.org)**