



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
December 2024

Original: Language

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-ninth session

10-21 March 2025

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by the International Council of Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

Statement

Statement of the International Council of Women for the UN CSW 69th Session

The International Council of Women – ICW-CIF, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, has been committed to advancing equal rights and the empowerment of women since its inception in 1888. ICW-CIF strongly holds that the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women are critical to facilitating progress toward sustainable development for the world.

The International Council of Women is pleased to join UN-Women and the global community in marking the 30th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We commend the United Nations and its Member States for their efforts in undertaking national and regional reviews of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration. These reviews and appraisals are indispensable tools for the assessment of current challenges that affect the achievement of gender equality. A deep analysis of the 12 critical areas of concern will help governments and civil society organizations to understand where we stand, and in what ways we can conceptualize the role of women in decision-making spaces.

Since the Beijing Conference in 1995, women around the globe have become more and more aware of their rights, and of equal opportunities in all spheres of life. They have

learned to draw on strategies developed in diverse areas such as: feminization of poverty, promoting education for the girl-child, involvement in conflict resolution and peace-building, finding ways to collaborate with governments and international agencies in the creation of gender-sensitive policies and legislation, reducing discrimination, combatting domestic violence, and in ways to share power.

The 2024 Global Gender Gap Index published last June by the World Economic Forum, benchmarks the evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions: Economic participation and opportunity; Educational attainment; Health and survival; and Political empowerment. These dimensions should be a “radar” for all our actions as concerned activists, keeping in mind the analysis of gender parity developments across 146 countries which shows that the Gender gap in 2024 stands at 68.5%. Based then on current data, the Report points out that it will take 134 years to reach full parity – some five generations beyond the 2030 target for the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Thirty years after Beijing, we are at the moment when, despite the progress made, we must remember that there is still a serious need for affirmative and strong action in all related spheres, and for the recognition by all concerned that women have a crucial role to play in the overall advancement of society. Unfortunately, serious consideration and more work must be done, in many parts of the world, on several areas of concern of the Platform for Action. For example, violence against women and girls remains a pervasive human rights violation and is exacerbated by situations of conflict and crisis. Also, women clearly continue to

encounter significant gender discrimination in power and decision-making, and in the economy; 70% of the poorest of the poor around the globe are women. Furthermore, basic rights to education and various freedoms of women and girls have regressed, substantially hindering their capacities for empowerment in certain countries such as, Iran, Afghanistan, Chad, Sudan, and Pakistan.

More than ever, women organizations need to come together as a community of advocates to ensure the centrality of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the enjoyment of their full human rights in the next framework. This is a MUST for all stakeholders.

ICW-CIF strongly reaffirms the importance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to empower women and to further the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals target by 2030. Despite all efforts, the scale and speed of progress are still insufficient. It is crucial to avoid the rollback of hard-earned progress, and to ensure that pathways to growth and sustainability are leveling for all, including women and girls. We must proactively deal with the interconnected constraints and challenges posed by political, economic and financial crises, as too by the impact of climate change, of technological transition (e.g. AI), and the impact of traditional, cultural and harmful practices.

Towards this end, the International Council of Women calls on all stakeholders to join hands in developing a global vision of gender parity and sustainable development in five dimensions: political, economic, social, technological and environmental.

The International Council of Women looks forward to cooperating closely with the United Nations specialized agencies and ICW-CIF affiliates around the world in adopting/adapting best practices, and in identifying obstacles, thereby focusing further on initiatives needed to fully implement the Beijing Platform for Action, which is recognized by all as the start of an important era in the fight for women's rights. Our common target thus stays: voice, participation and leadership.