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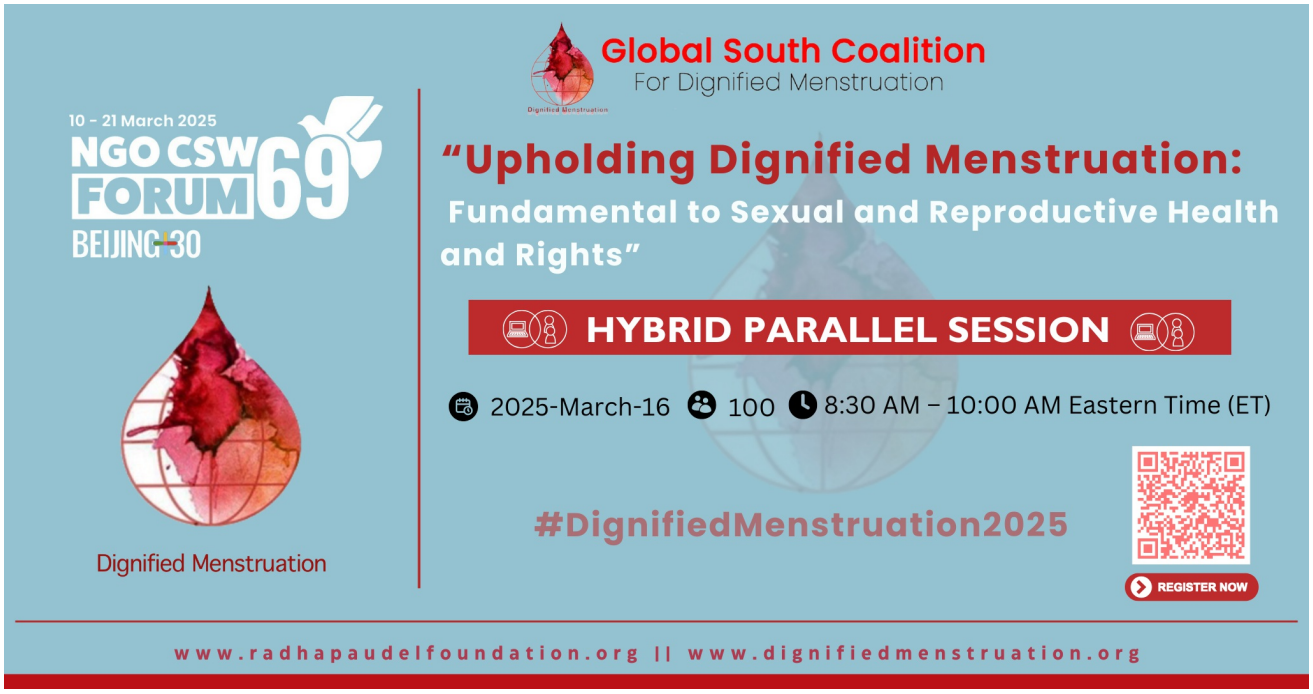
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**Mon, Mar 10: Waiting in line for grounds pass**

It took 1-1/2 hours to get the grounds pass. I waited in line with **Ana Lejava,** Policy Associate, Georgetown University. She's originally from the country of Georgia & is now a U.S. citizen. Used to work in the Georgian Embassy to the UN. Charming young woman, got married last fall. (all563@goergetown.edu, 205-515-7525) Her husband works for the State Department.

While we were waiting, Rudie Hurwitz came by, and we all talked for about ½ hour!

**"Upholding Dignified Menstruation: Fundamental to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights"**
Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation
(virtual session)




Program Abstract:
Menstrual discriminatory perceptions and practices has consistently been neglected as fundamental barrier to achieving SRHR in all international and national policies and programming. Menstrual discriminatory perceptions and practices are both a form of Gender Based Violence and Human Rights violation and a cause for all other forms of GBV and human rights violation. By incorporating dignity at the center of all advocacy polices and programming we can address root causes and create sustainable transformations which uphold our right to a dignified life.

(Came in late) Many/All from India

Amplify their voices, don't just speak on behalf of others.

Woman working on this: ten years ago, we thought the problems would be solved and our organization could self-destruct soon. But I'm working harder now than ever before.

A man's Message to "non-menstruators" from Andi Rabiaj (YVNO)
Promote national message of equality
Chair (Mili Adhikari): This message can save lives.

Other comment: Better Supplies needed.

Chair: This is a global SRHR issue. Challenge [the status quo]

Several organizations working together.
GSCDM

**Declare December 8 as Menstrual [Dignity] Day**.

**Equal Rights Amendment: Driving U.S. Action on the Beijing Platform for Action**

Intro

ERA was proposed 100 years ago.

ERA now has been ratified by 38 states.

85 countries have some form of constitutional equality protection for women, incl Iran.

ERA could protect against roll-back. Beijing gave the blueprint, ERA gives us the tool.

Bettina Hager, Chief negotiator ERA coalition

Biden's declaration hasn't yet been "published."

Panelists:
Aleta Sprague
Tin-ting Chen
Michelle Thorne - Illinois attorney: On Jan. 27, 2020 (final state ratified it), ERA became law of the land.

Ting-ting Chen: It is the 28th amendment. But the courts must validate it, in order for it to take effect. Executive orders don't create legal precedents. American Bar Assn has recognized it as

the 28th amendment. “We are in a moment of constitutional politics.” Can’t rely on the courts.

What are the legal challenges?

Michelle: ABA’s ERA Committee was formed____. Hillary Clinton was the first [head of it]. The committee reviewed evidence to support claim that there is no time limit on the amending process. (Article 5 specifies how to amend the constitution) .... “Resolution 601"

What is the importance of **constitutional equality**?

Aleta Sprague: She works at the World Policy Analysis Center. Internationally three features of constitutional rights provisions in the 85 countries: 1) .... Overturn laws banning women from certain professions etc 2) Provide a foundation for new legislation, e.g., marital rape in Nepal; 3) Help to create and reinforce certain values: e.g., in S. Africa when president in 2006 made derogatory comments about same-sex marriage, he was reminded that discrimination on the basis of sex is unconstitutional.

Trends over time. Since adoption of CEDAW.... “Global consensus matters.” Other countries with old constitutions have taken action to fill in gaps: Belgium, Netherlands.

[New qn]

Ting-ting: **State constitutions are unique, and states have their own courts. “Federal constitution provides the floor, and States’ constitutions, the ceiling.” They are amended more frequently. They can be “self-executing.”** Can apply to private actors – pvt businesses etc. (Fed, apply only to state actors.) **State judges are mostly elected, and have term limits**, except in Rhode Island.

Many state ERA’s exist. Since Dobbs, they have been more “broadly worded,” and may include expanded dfn of sex, provisions to protect disabled people’s rts,.... More states are now taking more intersectional approaches.

Some states protecting against federal over-reach.

We have issued a **legislative road map for state legislators**. Distribution of actual resources. Banning abortion but providing Medicaid for all possible male reproductive issues!, e.g. This is sex discrimination.

What happens next, now that Biden’s resolution has been taken down?

Michelle Thorne: The ERA is almost certain to get to the Supreme Court at some point.

Other legal groups besides the ABA have weighed in on this. We need more lawyers and legal groups to get involved.

And historians have a compelling story to tell.

We need to engage the pubic at large, the media, women’s groups, ....

**There was no “deadline”** in 1982. You can’t add a deadline without re-writing the amendment.

But misinformation spread because women didn't have power. The Federalist Society....[?] Hooray for League of Women Voters. The 27th amendment took 200 years, by the way.

Ting-ting is right in a way (that the courts will consider it), but we *don't* have to wait for the courts to do anything. [?]

**Once a state ratifies, they can't take it back.**

Ting-ting Cheng: We need to counter misinformation with *facts*. Court precedents, e.g. We need to be more creative.

Q: Women's access to health care...

Ting-ting: Dobbs left the states alone, free to set their own laws.
"We need to **create meaning around what the ERA actually is**," give it a more modern meaning, a feminist meaning. The **"reshaping of the dialogue" will happen at the state level**. By the time it gets to the Supreme Court, it will need to consider this [narrative]. Think about what "equality" means.

(Another question)

Aleta: BPfA can/does support care-giving for children, paid leave. Some other countries have ....S. Africa court advanced gender equality by [extending parental leave. In [another country] single parents' (who are mostly women) should get parental leave support....
Another area: Child marriage. In some U.S. states it is okay.
A Zimbabwe case related to child marriage.
RE: reproductive rights, many countries – esp L. Amer. – are strengthening laws. Mexico ruling.

How can ERA be made effective?

Aleta: Meaning-making, as Ting-ting said. And Strategic litigation – the right cases at the right time.

Ting-ting: We need to get behind the idea of the "government serving the people." **ERA is the right call to action** for this: norms upholding democracy must be upheld. Create new legislation and policies: get rid to discriminatory measures. Funding also needed

Michelle: Section 2 of the ERA grants congress the right to pass laws. This would include state gvts too. Think about culture: the ERA is .... **There are powerful religious organizations in the U.S. that are against equality for women.**

Q&A

How do we make information about these rights accessible?

*Is the U.S. still a global norm-setter?*

Michelle: In the 1970s we tried to step up. Two Republican women nominated by Nixon drafted CEDAW.

We're not willing to be judged. We're not in the "playground." **We're way behind in norm-setting.**

*What could the ERA do to combat DEI roll-backs by companies and the government?*

Ting-ting: If we had the ERA now many of those executive orders would have been invalidated.

Comment: Interpretations of DEI usually are thought of as concerning race, not women. Anti-DEI is blatantly racist. We should go out of here with a rallying cry!

*Is there a pending state-level ERA case that could be brought to the Supreme Court?*

Ting-ting: No, but there is one case of a trans-man asserting that his 20th amendment rights were violated because his health insurance wouldn't cover all of his surgery. It has gotten to federal courts.

***What legal authority says that states can't revoke ratification?***

Michelle: It happened at the constitutional convention. (Madison....)

Ting-ting: Once states ratify, they can't undo it. Can't un-ratify the Second Amendment, e.g.

Concluding remarks by Michelle and Ting-ting: The Supreme Court has defeated affirmative action and Roe v. Wade. May try to use 14th amendment instead of ERA, but it's weaker.

**Abandoning "DEI" means refusing to recognize that there is any problem needing to be solved.**

**Suzanne's Summary/Thoughts**

The ERA has met the requirements, but it has not yet been "published." It is certainly going to be challenged in court.

The arguments against it are, that (a) it has passed its time limit; and (b) some states wish to withdraw their ratifications, are not valid. No time limit was written into the [1982] amendment; and states cannot rescind ratifications. c) Amendment 14 is enough.

States have a big role to play. State constitutions are amended more frequently. State judges are elected and (except in Rhode Island) have term limits. States will reshape the dialogue, and by the time the ERA gets to the Supreme Court, this will matter for their decision. ABA has created

a “legislative road map” for state legislators.

The current U.S. decisions against affirmative action are based on an idea that there is no problem that needs solving.

85 other countries have constitutional protections for women. U.S. is behind, *not* a norm-setter.

The ERA discussion/debate can be a unifying force for us now. A good rallying call for the idea that “government is here to serve the people.”

KEYWORDS: ERA constitution constitutions affirmative action religion religious legislators legislative

**Tues., March 11, 2025**

**CSW69 Political Declaration**

https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/statement/2025/03/as-the-69th-commission-on-the-status-of-women-opens-member-states-adopt-strong-political-declaration-committing-to-respect-protect-and-promote-rights-equality-and-empowerment-for-all-women-and-girls

11 March 2025 **- UN Women announcement**

As the world marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, governments have adopted by consensus a powerful Political Declaration to respect, protect, and champion the rights, equality, and empowerment of women and girls.

Welcoming its adoption, Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women said: “Rising to the challenges and opportunities of gender equality requires collective, decisive action across Member States, now more than ever. At a time when hard-fought gains for gender equality are under attack the global community has come together in a show of unity for all women and girls, everywhere”.

The Political Declaration reaffirms the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, originally adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, stressing the need to uphold all human rights and fundamental freedoms for every woman and girl, without exception. It reinforces commitments to women, peace, and security, emphasizing the need to integrate women’s voices and leadership into all stages of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. It underscores the importance of eradicating poverty in all its forms, including through ensuring women’s and girls’ right to education, particularly in STEM fields, and by increasing public investments in care systems. Recognizing the vast potential of technology, it highlights the necessity of closing the gender digital divide and calls for renewed investment in gender statistics and data to drive informed policymaking.

The Declaration recommits Member States to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, including emerging forms such as digital violence, online harassment, and cyberbullying. Further, it acknowledges that achieving progress in these areas requires substantial resources and financing. It calls for strengthened national systems, women's machineries, and international mechanisms, including a revitalized Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), to accelerate gender equality efforts globally.

UN Women Executive Director Bahous added: "No nation has yet fully achieved gender equality. This bold Declaration makes clear that the world's governments recognize 2025 as a pivotal moment, where promises made 30 years ago can no longer be deferred. It is a springboard to ensure that we live up to our commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment for all women and girls, everywhere, and that we do so together".

The U.S. Does Not Sign On

Message from Pam Perraud to USWC:

Dear Friends,

FYI. In case you have not already seen it, the US Mission has rejected the CSW69 declaration that was negotiated for months. Below you can read the reasons the US has rejected it. Here is the link to the US Mission statement and the full text of the statement is listed below.
https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-position-on-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women-csw-political-declaration-location-of-remarks/

While the current US administration claims that it "strongly supports protecting women and girls, defending their rights and promoting their empowerment"; "supports equal pay for equal work," and that they will "prevent and respond to violence against women, " the administration refuses to endorse or join CEDAW; they reject the UN's 2030 Agenda as well as the SDG's which they consider to be "adverse to the rights and interests of Americans" and they refuse to endorse anything related to climate change,
[Also felt biological sex distinctions weren't sufficiently emphasized - SH note]
Attached is a copy of the official CSW69 declaration which was adopted by other countries.

Explanation of Position on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Political Declaration
New York, New York
March 10, 2025

[The U.S. Statement] AS PREPARED

The United States thanks the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and co-facilitators Cabo Verde and Costa Rica, as well as all participating delegations and civil society partners, for their efforts in developing the Political Declaration.

While we are not a CSW member this year, we engaged in negotiations because the United States strongly supports protecting women and girls, defending their rights, and promoting their

empowerment.

We are pleased the Declaration focuses on respecting, protecting, and promoting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls. In signing Executive Orders to defend Americans from unhealthy and extremist gender ideology, President Trump has made clear his Administration "will defend women's rights and protect freedom of conscience by using clear and accurate language and policies that recognize women are biologically female, and men are biologically male."

We also appreciate that the text addresses the need to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls. The Administration of President Trump has committed to protecting women by, among other things, curbing mass migration and securing borders. Violence against women and girls is rampant on migratory routes. Further, as we have seen in many tragic cases in the United States, women and girls are victimized by foreign criminals operating individually or in gangs. We must work against the open-borders ideology that tolerate such assaults on the rights of women.

However, several aspects of the text make it impossible for the United States to support the Declaration. These include, but are not limited to:

Language to Protect Women and Girls

It is the policy of the United States to use clear and accurate language that recognizes women are biologically female and men are biologically male. It is important to acknowledge the biological reality of sex to support the needs and perspectives of women and girls. We are disappointed the Political Declaration did not focus on the needs and perspectives of women and girls through precise terminology.

The United States supports the elimination of discrimination on the basis of all protected classes, including race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, and genetic information. We note the United States is not a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and interpret references to CEDAW as relevant to States Parties and the implementation of their obligations. The United States emphasizes that non-binding declarations such as this Political Declaration do not change the current state of conventional or customary international law or imply that States must join or implement obligations under international instruments to which they are not a party.

Freedom of Opinion and Expression

With regard to paragraph 15(j), we note that in recent years **governments have censored speech on online platforms, often by exerting substantial coercive pressure on third parties, such as social media companies, to moderate, deplatform, or otherwise suppress speech.** Under the guise of combatting "misinformation," "disinformation," and "malinformation," governments

infringed on the constitutionally protected speech rights of Americans. Government censorship of speech is intolerable in a free society.

Right to Development

We regret the Political Declaration includes language on the purported "right to development," as this term does not have an internationally agreed meaning. **We cannot accept references to this as a "right."**

The 2030 Agenda

Another concern we have about this resolution is its reaffirmation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although framed in neutral language, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs advance a program of soft global governance that is inconsistent with U.S. sovereignty and adverse to the rights and interests of Americans.

In the last U.S. election, the mandate from the American people was clear: the government of the United States must refocus on the interests of Americans. We must care first and foremost for our own – that is our moral and civic duty. **President Trump also set a clear and overdue course correction on "gender" and climate ideology, which pervade the SDGs.**

Put simply, **globalist endeavors like the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs lost at the ballot box.** Therefore, the United States rejects and denounces the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, and we will no longer reaffirm them as a matter of course.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

The United States understands the intention of the inclusion of "equal pay for work of equal value" to promote pay equality between men and women, and accepts the formulation on that basis. The United States works to achieve pay equality by observing the principle of "equal pay for equal work."

Temporary Special Measures

With respect to so-called "temporary special measures," and other measures intended to achieve parity for women and girls, the United States opposes the use of quotas, targets, or goals for participation based on sex. It is the policy of the United States to protect the civil rights of all Americans and to promote individual initiative, excellence, and hard work. Every citizen, including women and girls, should have an equal right and opportunities, without discrimination, to take part in the conduct of public affairs.

Climate Change

**The United States does not support the inclusion of references to climate change in this declaration**

U.S. National Statement Delivered at the 69th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

**Women from Mali**

Walking from Grand Central to the UN, I met a group of women from Mali who were on their way to meet their Minister. They were all dressed in similar cloth. I rode back with them on the bus at the end of the day too. One friendly woman was named Espa.

This was the second group of women I saw who were dressed alike: one group yesterday wore colorful flower head-dresses and red clothes. I don't know where they were from.

In front of the UN a beautiful woman from an indigenous group of southern China (Guangxi Province) was attracting much attention.

**Town Hall with Secretary General Guterres**

There are more than 600 NGOs registered for this CSW69 meeting.

His statement:

**Civil society is on the front lines.** Women face an appalling array of wrongs. The worst is Afghanistan. Harrassment, threats, violence, even murder. Around the world a ferocious backlash is occurring against women's human rights. "Do not sacrifice equality for false experience."

Inequality is a question of power. **"Power is never given. It must be taken."**
The global feminist movement must push governments to .... close the gender digital divide, invest in women's rights,.... The UN system is working on multiple fronts.
A glaring gap is in engineering and digital technology. We must push. Compel all parties to include women, promote women's leadership in government and businesses.

**"Civil society is the driver that makes the difference."** We share a common vision. Let's make this vision a reality.

<u>Comments and Questions from Civil Society Representatives</u>

Girls are underpaid and overworked. Fear keeps us in a box. But even a blooming flower grows at night. We deserve to be heard. We live in a world so beautiful. But everything falls apart.

How beautiful can this world be without change? (A young poet, Olivia)

A youth leader: half of the world's populaton is under age 30. Our voices must be recognized. Reorganize CSW to make sessions more accessible, include youth leadership

Support youth

In conflict situations, include us in peace-making.

We stand ready to co-create the future we deserve.

Response from Sec-Gen:

-Poetry can be a weapon, one that can change hearts.

-The second speaker presented a complete plan of action, and asked a question about how the UN can guarantee movement in a positive direction. What we are trying to do: review our UN plan of action on gender equality. See how our different agencies can help to accelerate the pace. A large percentage of UN funding goes to .... but it's not enough. **A central problem we face is the decline in funds from the US for international aid.**

-The last was a precise and strong message.

Canadian Federation of University Women rep (Linda): **When will civil society reps be integrated into CSW negotiations?**

Mariah Reeves (an educator from Iowa), asks about how rural women's access to educational opportunitis can be increased.

European .... [Inter-sex] issues. Engage with us and our families.

Response from Sec-Gen:

-In some coutries there are institutional mechanisms that include women in discussions of sustainable development & women's rights. But not in all. **Remember: power needs to be taken.** Women's movements should **mobilize** as much as possible, **use social media, organize, shout out.** Make sure the shouting is loud, and that your gvts will pay a price if they don't listen to you.

-In the areas of science technology especially, make sure the numbers of women involved are the same as the numbers of men. **In Rural areas, pressure your state governments. Make sure they suffer if they do not recognize you.**

-I totally support whatever initiatives on behalf of the last speaker's community.

Grace Forest, founder of an anti-slavery group: 50 million people live in modern slavery. How can international orgs help?

-We have never been able to get governments to pressure gangs and be active on drugs and human trafficking. Funds have been cut....

Grace Hawlett, Canadian Universty Women (again): We work in Canada and internationally, esp in Nepal. How can we promote the equality of <u>all</u> women and girls?

Good Neighbors International: We work in 50 countries on menstrual hygiene and mentrual health. How can the UN integrate our valuable data from grassroots organizations?

-Sec. Gen: How to incorporate data from grassroots organizations? We are not now effective at this, but are working on a strategy for the future.

New Mexico woman representing indigenous people globally: create "actionable data" on the missing indigenous women and girls. (Dr Carmela)

-Sec Gen: **Indigenous people play a significant part in sustaining our climate and societies. We have suddenly discovered the effectiveness of indigenous practices. But their regions attract investors. And we are seeing more and varied forms of violence against them.**

The SDG's have produced gains, but rights are eroding now. How can we make more progress for young women?

-Sec. Gen: We are witnessing a push-back in relation to women's rights. The only solution to this is to **"push back against the push-back."** Young people have a major role to play. I was born in a dictatorship. There was a coup d'etat. But mobilization by young people across the country was more effective.

Member of Sociologists for Women in Society: Voices a demand -- When are we going to have a woman Secretary General. (Huge cheers from the crowd.)

-Sec. Gen: "I cannot apologize for not being a woman." But I have tried to promote a gender equality agenda in the UN. We now have 63% women in senior management, up from <40% when we started. Seeking gender parity in UN staff and country [reps]. Goal: reach by 2028. Regional offices – There are problems in places like Afghanistan and DRC. But in other places we are on track to reach the goal. **I hope the next Sec Gen will be a wise person.**

Moderator (UN Women): I thank our "feminist in chief" on your behalf.

<u>Suzanne Thoughts/Summ.</u>

He's supportive of civil society, but civil society is on its own to struggle with nation states. Encouraging words, but no capacity to give much support, especially now with U.S. international aid cut-off. Wisdom is a more important quality for the next Secretary General than gender.

**11 Mar Session on Celebrating International Feminist Leadership**

Intro, ECOSOC President: Feminization of poverty.... intersectional approach.

Sima Bahous: Thirty years ago, women's rights are human rights was declared. But there has been push-back. Since 1995 the proportions of women in parliaments has doubled. Parental leave, climate change resolutions, others have resulted. Intersectionality is "a call to action." Consider the full complexity of people's lives and struggles. In this moment of democratic backsliding, women's leadership is essential. **Diversity is the "blueprint for justice."**

Panelists:

Michelle Bachelet
Vulnerable populations – women and LGBTQ – are overlooked by policies. People need to be included "considering their particularities." It's not enough to eliminate barriers. We need to dismantle [the systems that create them]. Not all women have the same problems.

Fernando____, Minister of Cape Verde: Laws about GBV. Funding for gender equality. Government, academics, all must commit themselves to achieve these goals.

Next speaker [an organization]: Identity politics.... **Creating alternatives to traditional cultures is basic to feminism.** Recognition of interconnectedness of diverse identities. Help to heal potential divisions. We write thematic reports to the Human Rights Commission. We have influenced the language of their resolutions.

Dr Malina [Maltha?] Khan, Women Deliver: The reason why intersectional (code for multiple marginalizations) people .... The only way we can change the patriarchy is for [multipally marginlized] people to take on leadership positions. Others may be sympathetic, but they can't envision the alternatives.

**Anti-rights actors recognize that the best thing is to attack those with the most capacity to break down barriers.** I am a queer Pakistani woman with the courage to sit here. Fascist powers recognize that **by attacking such leaders, they can subjugate all**.

The world is diverse. The fascists want only certain ones to have power. Allow those with diverse viewpoints to have some power.

ECOSOC President: The reason why our organization was created was, to include the voices of [others]

Questions from audience

What if we could physically defend ourselves?
Women in the workplace?
How should we "intersectional" women....?
Canadian labor congress: Organize! Q: What are some ways that governments can incorporate intersectional perspectives?

Responses:

Michelle Bachelet - **I don't agree that people in power are always against change.** When I was in government I always worked to bring together the multiple factors. Know how you create culture change, change mentality/practices from an early stage of life. (I am a pediatrician.) Books featuring queens, not just kings, e.g.

In the workplace, you want an environment that celebrates all your capacities. Some who are "different" are inhibited, though. It's not only the right thing to do, It's the smart thing to do.

I always thought that "loyalty" includes speaking the truth to superiors.

About FGM and child marriage, we worked with priests, having them talk with child brides, asking them if it is okay with them. Re: FGM, changing practices takes a lot of time.

Organization member: Laws are needed re: workplace. Don't just rely on good will. About FGM, working groups in the concerned culture need to learn about universal human rights. Local efforts have the best effects.

More questions:
-Woman from Mexico: I am studying. What is the best way we can promote women in Latin America, which has a very macho culture?
-You say is education important. What are some concrete steps?
-Gender equality is an economic issue, not just a cultural one. What about capitalism?
-What about dictatorships, or countries ruled by one person for a long time.

Malina: We've found over and over that just keeping a girl in school has a positive effect. Focusing on adolescent girls' health and education, offer sex education, we can leap-frog. The world would be transformed.

Fernando (Cape Verde): Investment in health, strong education on equality, bodily autonomy. Mainstreaming these in all policies and services creates equality.

Michelle Bachelet [photo]: **I think the main problems are political parties. They haven't managed to include consideration of women in leadership.** Be clear about what the obstacles are. **Don't give up. Have faith in yourself.** This is a very difficult task.

ECOSOC Pres: The economic question isn't just about capitalism. It's about the [balance] between public and private....Fully gvt-owned services aren't [good enough]. Governments, however, must set minimum standards. Unions have a big role to play in ensuring workplace safety. Public opinion, unions, and good laws. If you don't have a state with this capacity, you have discrimination in the workplace. This is what the UN & ILO are all about. Diversity in participation.

More comments:
-Woman from Chad:
-The U.S. is eliminating the word "gender" from gvt texts. What are we doing here? How can we hold that government accountable?

-Actionable steps?

Final Comments from Panelists

Dr Malina Khan: Recognize key frameworks: not only universal declarations, there also is the **contract between the state and its citizens. The citizens have the right to the state's services. If you are being attacked by your fascist government, you're probably doing the right thing.** Not everyone can fight, though. Combination of fighting and negotiation will affect change. Gramsci talked about the time between the old world order and the new. I hope we're in such a situation now.

Woman from Organization: **CEDAW is the second most widely ratified, but also the least widely adhered to!**

ECOSOC Pres: "Gender Parity" - Use the word! It isn't about whether we can use the words, it's about whether women have rights. Orwell's book 1984 was not a guidebook. It was a warning. Dignity is a real thing. About AI: Is it public or private?

**Tues, Mar. 11 - Women in Gaza Fight for Their Dignity and Rights**

There was an [Arab women's declaration of rights], but Gaza women have none. We call on the interational community to support us, and UNRWA.

Rep of UN Women: Population of Gaza has declined from 2.3 million to 2.1 million. More than half of those killed are women and children. UN Women has issued reports documenting. Women have a key role to play in rebuilding.

The **Arab Women Mediators Network** is working on this.

We've been reviewing Resolution 1325. Women must be active in negotiations for peace.

Minister of Women in Palestine [photo]: All aid into Gaza stopped on Oct 7. Israel is practicing collective punishment. Sustainable development is impossible under these circumstances.

Film shown.

South Africa representative [photo]: (Introduced by Moderator, who mentions the case brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC). We also have experienced apartheid.) No people should live under oppression. **S. Africa's support for Palestine is "unwavering."** Peace can only be achieved with the recognition of Palestinians' human rights. We are especially supportive of youth. A lasting peace must be founded on respect for international law and human rights.

Algerian representative, (Intro: Algeria is a non-permanent member of the Security Council.) Palestinian women, especially in Gaza, are living in catastrophic circumstances. The

international community has failed to recognize the position of Palestinian women – their suffering of displacement and having no services. The world is watching as Palestinian is subjected to a genocidal war.

Moderator: Some European states have supported the formation of a state of Palestine.

Norway representative: In this war women and girls are especially vulnerable. Norway has participated in both Res. 1325 & _____ resolutions regarding the women of Palestine. Promoting women and women's organizations in peace-making. Supporting Palestinian Authority's efforts to do this.

We are witnessing a regression, a backlash against hard-won progress. Norway will support women's and girls' rights everywhere.

Qatar rep from Ministry of ...Family Affairs: The Israeli attacks have a devastating effect. In Gaza – orphans, health services, 100,000+ deaths.

We have achieved a cease-fire, and we continue to support the needs of Gaza citizens. We were the fourth largest donor to UNRWA in 2024.

UNRWA Rep in New York, [Egrina Wulitzer]: UNRWA reports directly to the General Assembly. We are primarily a human development agency. Staff is 30,000. 13,000 in Gaza. Constantly challenged financially. Current situation is dire. **A full-force disinformation campaign portraying UNRWA as a terrorist organization has had a devastating effect.**

UNRWA schools have maintained gender parity since the 1970s. Engage women socially and [economically].

Jordan rep: We support the Palestinians and UNRWA. The cease-fire should respond to women's needs.Women are suffering psychologically and morally.

Medicin Sans Frontiers rep for MENA: Gaza's health system hasn't collapsed just as a side-effect of the war. It has been directly attacked by the Israelis. Results: 1) Not enough maternity care, or even emergency care, gyn check-ups, neonatal care. 2) Hygiene: menstrual hygiene is escalating into a crisis. Soap and clean water are scarce, making people vulnerable to infection. Lack of clean water and sanitation. Newborns are exposed to life-threatening conditions.

(Two more country reps.)

Cuba: Condemns "in the strongest terms" the attack on Palestinian people and infrastructure. Multilateralism and humanitarian laws are being disregarded. Our Palestinian sisters can always count on Cuba for support.

Pakistan: Expresses its enduring devotion to Gaza. And solidarity. Anniversary of 1325. Support a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Saudi Arabia: supportive statement

KEYWORDS: Palestine Palestinian Gaza UNRWA Arab women

**11 March Session - Intergenerational Dialogue: Building a Culture of Peace**

Panelists:
Anwarul K Chowdhury, Ambassador from Bangladesh
Sylvie Ndongmo, President, WILPF Cameroon
Shirine Jurdi, WILPF Lebanon
Emma Grzechnik Mork, World YWCA (Sweden)
Miyuki Kawaoka (Japan)
Ased Ibrahim, NGO-CSW/NY, Global Youth Fellow (Jordan)

Bangladesh Ambassador Chowdhury (since 1996): Security Council resolutions are [binding]. This is the 25th anniversary of Resolution [1325], as well as 30th anniv of BPfA. SDG #5 talks about empowering women and girls, because discrimination starts early.

Sylvie Ndongmo: A **culture of peace** means, trying to understand.... How do we recruit young people and ensure a culture of civility? By education. Make sure younger people will assume leadership and make recommendations of their own eventually. You also have to do something for economic stability, because people torn apart by conflict cannot.... Economic and social development are critical.

Many people are fleeing to safer zones. We work on women's economic empowerment, so they can participate in [our peace-building efforts.]

[Who?] ... Shirine will show some slides.

Shirine: Working before, during, and after conflict. She asked some refugees what they thought was a **"culture of peace."** One girl said she felt hope when she saw signs about "women, peace, and secuity." (Photo of a poster with bombs, birds, flowers)

In the post-war world, reconstruction has to be done with a "gender-sensitive" approach.

Emma Grzechnik Mork: I am fortunate to have been born and raised in a peaceful place, Sweden. But the 200-year peace has been affected by the war in Ukraine.

The YWCA works with grassroots groups in many countries. Working with city gvts in Grece, e.g., on GBV.

Miyuki Kawaoka: For many women and girl, **"peace" is not an abstract concept.** I has much to do with their personal situations: a safe home & workplace.

Ascel Ibrahim: Under Israeli colonization, ....”Culture of peace” [is both national and personal]. She works on MHM too. Women in poverty and displaced women don’t have access to menstrual products.

Amb. Chowdhury: 2001-2010 was the Decade for Culture of Peace and Nonviolence. Actors: member states, civil society (these CSW meetings are “the largest gathering of women activists in the world”), media, _____, & UN as a whole.

**The culture of peace is not just the end of war. It’s end of violence etc. Without those you don’t have peace. Culture of peace is a long-term movement, not a quick-fix.** That is why **it has to be an inter-generational movement. Start with children.**

KEYWORDS: culture of peace Chowdhury SDG5 SDG

**11 March, Financing Fascism & Fundamentalism**

The power of fascist and fundamentalist actors is on the rise, gravely threatening feminist movements, our capacity to organize, and a wide range of rights - including rights related to gender and sexuality. Fueling this process, anti-rights and anti-democratic actors are engaged in an ongoing process of capital accumulation. In this event, we will present initial findings of joint research on how corporations - particularly Big Tech - finance the far right. Join us for a discussion on the ways in which the far right monetizes hatred online, turning divisive rhetoric into a source of income and power, and its impact on movements.

Our expert panel will uncover the hidden financial flows fueling fascist and fundamentalist forces and, most importantly, how we can fight back. It's our pleasure to introduce you to our moderator and speakers for the event:

- Bhumika Saraswati, Dalit organiser and photographer

- Lulu Barrera, Numun Fund

- Bhumika Muchhala, Third World Network

- Sofía Scasserra, Transnational Institute [Argentina]

- Naureen Shameem, Noor

- Maher Sattar, The Fuller Project (Bangladeshi journalist)

Moderated by Mona Eltawahy, Egyptian-American journalist and social commentator, and advisory board member of The Institute for Journalism and Social Change (IJSC).

Sofia: **Digital capitalism** is like any other business. Start with raw materials, work to “add

value," and so on. The raw material for this is data.

**Hate speech sells well, so they provide it.**

**The "architecture" of the system** is rules/laws. Many nation-states are signing agreements that they won't hold owners of platforms (Meta etc) responsible for consequences of the content posted. These agreements supercede national (state-level) laws. **It's an "architecture of impunity."** (Example of a girl who committed suicide in UK. [Facebook] was not held accountable.)

Next speaker [Bhumia Muchhala?]: Our organization puts groups together. We work on privacy, immunity, rights.

There's a direct relationship between the way that fiscal systems are owned/managed and .... Understanding issues and sharing solutions is what we do.

**The anti-democratic groups work globally.** We're working to understand

-The specific actors and algorithms
-How mechanisms work online
-Consequences of publishing misinformation

Maher Sattar: Then-Facebook was approaching national leaders in Myanmar and elsewhere, offering to partner with them – i.e., to use Facebook to promote their messages and images.

One-by-one **spaces in the public square have been ceded to private corporations: postal services to ___[?], libraries to information databases, discussion spacesto X and Tik-Tok.**

When he worked on garment workers in Bangladesh, the buyers didn't want to spend money on workers' safety or security.

**Neocolonial, neoliberal logic has become dominant, and its penalties normalized. States are propped up to support the corporate and global financial sector.**

This system of "Intellectual monopoly capitalism" defines "intellectual property" rights in a way that excludes access to the global South. The "extractive" approach creates "export dependency" and debt that make financial resources flow from the South to the North.

**The past continually reappears, now in more technocratic forms.** Social contracts are dismantled. **Mechanisms have changed, but the economic colonial logic remains.**

Mona Eltawahy: I will name some white Christian nationalist fascists now. Donald Trump, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk.

Maher Sahar: The right wing is active on social media. Relationship to it has always been strong. **One popular theme/focus is growth**: economic, but even genetic.

Sofia Scasserra: **Community connection is *not* part of this. They want you to raise your voice *individually*. It's easier to control opponents if they're not in groups.**

**Crypto-currency** is important in this context. In Argentina they are building a financial system outside of the state that prints money for the society as a whole. **Money itself is being privatized.**

They are trying to destroy every *collective* action. Millei wants to wipe out the collective voice, to deal only with individuals. Wants to destroy labor unions.

Feminists have a lot to offer to this conversation.

Lulu Barrera: We need to **understand the specific actors in each country** and how they use specific media outlets. **See how they align with power.** Three examples –

-**During negotiations between Colombia government and FARC**, input was sought from women's organizations regarding access to land, leadership, how to support those organization during implementation, and excluding sexual conflict from the amnesty provision. **The right wing groups started complaining about "gender ideology" in media channels that they controlled.** The negotiations went on for four years. In Chile during approval of a new constitution after the left took power, similar things happened.

-A Mexican influencer traveled to El Salvador to set up an information campaign supporting the regime, reaching out to a "very young population."

-**Robots** are being made **in Mexico to spread right-wing ideas to children--** There are only two genders, for example. So they are targeting children, as well as the adult voters.

Remember **that technology is designed by the powerful. We need to protest, but also to create alternatives.**

[Who?]: Debt crisis, chronic in the global South, is the way rich countries stay rich and poor countries poor. Low value-added supply chains are based in the history of colonialism. "Deep colonial logics."

Neoliberal capitalism used covid well to reproduce debt and accelerate globalization. 25% of wealth in the global South goes to servicing debt. [29] banks have consolidated into seven. The ways that high finance and ___ succeed are:

-Disciplinary threat of market access

-Macro-economic policies, global bond markets, credit-rating agencies (that degrade credit ratings when an entity violates their rules.

Many countries prioritize access to capital over welfare of their citizens.

**Neoclassical economics dominates. It is the only economics taught in universities. "Let's promote alternatives points of view." Look at history. De-link from the traps.**

<u>Suzanne's Summary/Thoughts</u>

The focus of this session was on digital technology, which is controlled by big money and used largely to disseminate right-wing political messages and hurt opponents. Also can be used to prop up goverments, which, according to one speaker, are propped up to support the global financial system. Information campaigns target very young children as well as adults. (Examples: Mexico, El Salvador)

Individualism vs collectivities: the system encourages individualism, because it's easier to control individuals than groups.

Crypto-currency: is a form of privatization of money.

KEYWORDS: fascism fascist crypto-currency digital capitalism tehnology right-wing economics sexual conflict neocolonial neoliberal

**Wed. Mar 12, Iranian Women at FWCW**

(In Persian. Transcript to be shared later.)

**12 Mar, Tomorrow's Women: Palestinian and Israelis**

Stories from three young women

Yaara, lived on a kibbutz. (She's now in a city.) Parents didn't understand what was happening at first, so didn't go into their safe room. They eventually fled. My life was changed on Oct. 7. She knew many who were killed. Now plays **soccer** with Palestinian & Israeli girls.

Merna Abu Hana: Palestinian girl living in Israel. A Christian Arab. Medical student Her settlement is surrounded by Israeli kibbutzim. Before the war she had Jewish friends, ate in Jewish restaurants. Since the war, everything has changed. **She has seen people punished for speaking out, so she stays silent.**

She's now in medical school in Tel Aviv. Peace is about understanding. This starts with listening.

Mona TW: She's in the U.S. in second year of university. (Speaking without disclosing her identity or showing her face.) She's from the West Bank, where life has become unbearable. Collective punishment. Her father's salary depends on Israeli whims. **Feeling of helplessness. The only Israelis in her life were in uniforms or settlers. Too many have been killed just because they're Palestinians.** (Talked about traveling out of the country, how "we have no airports," and Israelis kept her waiting for hours after taking her passport.)

But then she met Yaara.

Q&A

Alana Grimstad: You're all becoming activists. Explain this.

Merna: Medicine is a form of activism. I believe that a doctor can do change. A doctor wants to help others.

Yaara (a professional athlete, now working with children): **Creating opportunities for kids to meet others whom they would normally not meet.** They are afraid to meet the others at first, but eventually they start to think more about what sports team they're in than what their ethnicity is. "Even the smallest change can create a difference in their life as adults."

Mona: Youth dialogue can make a difference. I'm looking forward to working in humanitarian fields to make a better future for us.

**Alana: How do you grow your peacemaking mentality?**

**Yaara: To be fair, it's almost impossible right now** because of the trauma that people feel now makes them reluctant to even try. But if we just sit on the side and give up, nothing will happen. "That's why I'm here tonight."

Mona: It's scary. Thinking about the destruction in Gaza, even being here. **I don't see how a dialogue is going to happen**. I come from a family that is completely pro-peace, but even they say it would be like betraying the 50,000 who were killed to do it. This is not something I should be talking about.

Asks Merna: What were the conversations with Israelis after Oct. 7. Her answer: The way people describe their pain and share it in ways that do not hurt others. (From 2021) When the dialogue ended, we left as "sisters," whether we're Arabs or Jewish. We all understood each other befoe the war. Now it's harder to express.

Merna: The most important thing for me ....

Alana: How would you engage now with young people?

Yaara: **It's hard to talk to people right now**. I would probably ask if they are happy with the current situation. No one is. Then I would suggest that they go and talk with others.

Maybe what you saw, I would say, is not the whole picture. You don't have to "weigh the sides," but it's important to **be aware and listen to others**.

Alana: Asks Mona, How has being part of Tomorow's Women affectwd your life?

Mona: A donor sponsored my education for four years, then gave me a job when I finished. Then I got a Fulbright. And a scholarship, so I got my master's. I'm here today because **"We don't see Israelis," except for the ones we hate**. I would like to ask Yaara: Part of my family is in Jaffa. It's easier for me to convince someone who is already living with Israelis. Not everybody is the same. If Yaara was hostile to me, I wouldn't be here today.

Alana: How are your Palestinian friends back home looking at the future?

Mona: It's hard. Everyone wants a better income, to move ahead. After Oct. 7, Israel cut off income. Many don't get their salaries. Any young woman is wondering how she is going to get a better future on the inside. They don't even have a place in their own home territory.

Alana: What about the role of the creative arts?

Holly Morris: We **use art as a form of therapy** in our "leadership camps." This year we will do them in Switzerland.

Alana: How has the organization been affected by USAID cuts?

Holly: We're taking donations. We lost a substantial amount of grant funding from USAID. It would have paid for our 700 alumni in Israel/Palestine to get leadership training etc. holly@tomorrowswomen.org

Alana: And what comes next for these three women?

Holly: Doing **teen leadership** in Switzerland. Alumni summit in New Mexico in the U.S. And going on a speaking tour. This spring on the west coast: San Diego, Seattle, L.A. Alana is running the tour.

Q to Merna: Are friendships formed before Oct 7 still possible?

Merna: **We can't talk as freely as we did in the past**, but people still keep in touch and have hope that their dream will be fulfilled. I still have Jewish friends, and I try to keep in touch with them. But it's really hard these days.

Q to Yaara: There's a lot of talk about "women, peace, and security."

Yaara: Women are generally more open to listening. There is only one woman in the cabinet now, and she's not doing anything. There are good examples in other countries. We should give it a chance. Put more women in important roles.

And I want to say hello to people who are here, people I knew As a teenager.

(Photo: Alana in foreground, Yaara & Holly behind her)

Holly: We seek a "peaceful path forward."

SH Thoughts/Summary - I get the impression that if Tomorrow's Women were not on the job, these girls would not be speaking to each other right now.

KEYWORDS: USAID cuts Palestinian Israeli Israelis sports art therapy

**Thurs, 13 March**

**Working Women's Forum & the Cooperative Network for Women**

Nandini Azad: Our organization is accredited at the UN.

We are key players among the "global high dreamers."

This movement is 45 years old, so clearly "sustainable."

This started with workshops against the money-lenders. Now moving on to digital literacy. Part of ICNW.

This is the **international year of cooperatives**.

Boards, staff, all are women. Good collaboration. Incomes have increased. Moving women from the informal to the formal sector. Some daughters going to medical school.

ICNW has been a key advocate. Ensured that women have a place at the policy table.

Worked on combatting gender violence and involvement of men/boys.

CSW69 Notes (26)

We were at the G20 social summit.

We are on the global board of the [India cooperatives....]

Andreas Kappes (Germany): Cooperatives became legal in Germany in 1857. We are addressing the lesser involvement of women. Our global movement is far from perfect. We strive to involve more women at all levels. Nandini is the first woman on the EU Global Board.

Capacity building is central to this effort. Training programs, mentorship schemes. Our ambassador training program has inspired women.(Statement from a young woman)

Significance: community-led solutions, develop leadership. Amplify local voices. Make sure that women have the resources they need to succeed. Strength their partiipation in cooperative governance. During IYC 2025 make sure that women not only havw a seat at the table, but also can shape the future of the movement.

Video: Vegetable seller, got away from money-lenders' 10% loans, got fair loans from WWF. Another: a widow. Fish seller: I only pay 1.5% to WWF,

World Farmers' Organisation: **Indian Cooperative Network for Women** (ICNW) is part of our organization. Ensures sustainable livelihoods. We affirm that women are central to family farming, but they do not have access to enough training or leadership. Vulnerable to violence at multiple levels. Nandini's leadership....She was first elected to IRU board in ____. **Women's coops are powerful mechanisms for social transformation**. Women gain economic independence and become powerful drivers for change in their communities.

The International Year of Cooperatives....

Video: Women members. Took loans from WWF and thrived.

Mrs. Padmavathi, Tea Shop Owner, central Chennai.

Mrs. Renuka, Dry Flower Grinding business, north Chennai.

Vegetable seller. **'No loans, no lives'.**

Video: training methods for poor and illiterate entrepreneurs. Started in 1980. Use music, posters, role-play (money lenders, drunken husbands). Helped women to bring out their knowledge. Gave them confidence to speak. Many lived under difficult circumstances. For the first time, the universe was asking them what they thought. In class lectures were creative, not didactic.

Video: Oil press business woman, married very young and abandoned by her husband.

Sasikala, has an online usiness. Utilized digital training. Got a loan of Rs. 5500 to start her business.

Shanmuga Priya (age 26). Member of Fisherman caste. Married and in business with her husband. Exporting crabs to Singapore.

Monisha (age 24) - Her grandmother was a member of WWF

Vijayaakshmi (age 28), her mother-in-law was a WWF member. Silk weaver/seller.

Male youth forums against gender based violence started in Karnataka. With ICPRD, sister organization in Karnataka. Topics discussed: dowry, wife-beating, women in panchayats, others. Independent Commission for People's Rights in Development (ICPRD), also in Rajasthan.

Young men age 14-24 engage through cricket matches and .... Awareness created through mass campaigns. Various "trainings and inputs" **educate men about gender, patriarchy, GBV**. Engage with panchayats and police. As perceptions change, the youth take action to protect wonen's rights. Work to stop harassment of girls at bus stops and other places. Stop eve teasing.;

Promote girl child education (a girl talking about how her father reduced his drinking). Working against dowry (an example). Stopping female-feticide (boy explaining a situation–panchayat was approached. Family allowed their daughter-in-law to go ahead with her pregnancy).

Protest at liquor-selling houses. Police sub-inspector supporting ICPRD: crimes have come down.

**GBV is related to micro-finance**. Youth forums, women's self-help groups. "Fusion imagery." Working on health issues of adolescent girls. Statement from a teacher: boys have stopped teasing girls. Another: girls clubs formed.

One boy from the groups has become part of the staff in Bangalore.

Video: Digital training. Nandini opening remarks. Technology used for the poor. A breakthrough: women using digital techology during the pandemic. How to send money.

Statements from participants: how to use mobile devices, smart phones.learned about UPI codes, Transaction slips, managing in disasters.

Video: Giving prize to most successful co-ops.
...

Video: Testimonials from members. Day-laborers getting loans. One now has ten goats, set her daughter up in business too. One got a loan and started thee shops. Daughter educated as M.Phil and son as Master of Engineering. One Fisherman started with a smal tiffin shop, now owns a big store. Daughters educated as doctor and physiotherapist. One runs an electrical shop; married to an electrician, husband died suddenly. **A vegetable vendor thanks the "sangam."** Coconut seller and milk vendor: got a loan to buy a cow. One (Rathna, Vellore) makes floor cleaner. Former beedie maker, husband died. Son became an engineer. **One idli maker's house was flooded, and *Sangam* helped her.** Got her daughter married and purchased a house. Vijayalakshmi Govinaraj, tailor in Bengaluru.: married with two childen. First loan started her in blouse-stiching business. Got more materials, hired staff. Former day-laborer bought three buffaloes and sells milk (Andhra). ....

Link to video: i.k.lin@icdf.org.tw

Q&A

Man from Sri Lanka: retired from gvt service. Appreciates the work with men and boys.

Congratulates on the community development and microfinance approach. During covid and other crises.... Wants to visit the work sites to see how methods could be used in Sri Lanka.

Lisa Li: What is one action we could do to support your efforts?
Nandini: **We want to take this message to Latin American countries and parts of Africa. The time has come to give back.**
Lisa Li: 1M1B trains people. She also has connections in Zambia & Kenya.

–>[**What about our friend in Kenya?** Grace Mose][1]

Daya Goburdhun from Mauritius: What people can't do on their own, they can accomplish when they come together. The work on GBV is good.
Nandini: People didn't like to hear about "violence" in connection with money. But they are related.

Comment from a member: The loans have transformed our lives We want to ensure the future of our children. And we want to give jobs to other women. We identify issues and solve problems.

Another comment (Ms. Vasuki, CEO, ICNW & Ms.Narmada): Our success depends on being "on the spot," actually being in the areas, doing the training, preparing materials. Showing charts on the work of men and women. Started revolutionizing thinking about patriarchy 25 years ago.
**It takes a long time before poor women are prepared to take the loans.** We go and give our messages first.

Another: We tell them how to deal with destitute daughter or problem with another child. Everything is connected.

Whenever people go for a job, they ask for a background check.

Dr V. Balambal Ramaswamy: Sends warm greetings to all.

KEYWORDS: training cooperatives ICNW loans microfinance development SHG self-help groups poor women poverty alcohol drinking liquor education capacity building

**Iranian Women and Beijing+30**

Intro in program:
Thirty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the global movement for gender equality has brought significant progress, yet many challenges remain. In Iran, women continue to face legal, social, and economic barriers that limit their full participation

[1]Introduce Nandini to Grace Mose.

in society. These challenges are further compounded by geographical and social factors, which impact women in various communities across the country.

At a time when women's voices are being increasingly silenced, this session will explore the current realities of Iranian women, highlight their ongoing struggle for justice and equality, and examine how international mechanisms can support their efforts.

*Key Topics & Talk Highlights*
Women's Rights in Iran: Progress and Setbacks in the Beijing+30 Framework

Examining legal and institutional challenges that continue to limit women's rights.
Assessing Iran's compliance with international gender equality commitments.
Challenges in Access to Education, Employment, and Public Life

Barriers to education and professional opportunities, particularly in marginalized regions.
Economic challenges and gender-based labor discrimination.
The impact of restrictive laws and social norms on women's participation in decision-making.
The Role of Women Activists and the Repression of Feminist Movements

The contributions of women's rights defenders, including those from ethnic and national groups.
The risks of criminalization, imprisonment, and persecution faced by activists.
International Accountability and the Role of the Global Community

The role of UN mechanisms, international organizations, and advocacy networks.
Concrete strategies to promote meaningful policy changes and protections.
Keynote Speaker & Panelists
Keynote Introduction: [To be confirmed]

*Distinguished Panelists:*
UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (To be confirmed)
Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Member of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran (To be confirmed)
Iranian Women's Rights Activists (names to be announced)
Experts on Women's Rights in Iran
Women Activists Advocating for the Rights of Women from Ethnic and National Groups

*Call to Action*
This session is a call for stronger international engagement in addressing gender-based inequalities and ensuring that the voices of all Iranian women are heard. While women across Iran continue to push for their rights, they require greater global solidarity and action. This discussion will outline practical steps for:

Governments and UN bodies to hold Iran accountable for gender-based discrimination

and repression.

NGOs and advocacy groups to strengthen networks supporting women activists.
The international community to ensure that the voices of all Iranian women—including those from ethnic and national groups—are amplified in global discussions on gender equality.
Join us as we rethink rights, justice, and equality and work toward a future where all women in Iran can fully enjoy their fundamental freedoms.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82743326034?pwd=amyR56qLcHg2PGx9oX0soZlqU9baVy.1

**Moderator (Nazanin Afshin-Jam**): The UN's periodic review ...

Viviana Krsticevic (Iranian Fact-finding Mission): Iran gvt participated in FWCW, but rejected key provisions.
**Instead of progress, Iran has intensified its oppression of women**. Women of minority groups (Kurds,...) especially. Government does gender-based persecution, e.g., of Women Life Freedom movement members. Murder, imprisonment, torture, and rape of women and LGBTQ people. Children have not been spared.

Some of the structural factors supporting this are laws, ppolicies, practices such as the manditory hijab laws, against participation in public life, against women in positions of power. Death penalty is used against protestors.

We recommend initiatives to improve accountability, mitigate harm to victim, make structural changes.

Marayam Namazie: Thirty years have gone by, but the situation is miserable. In Afghanistan also. Iranian gvt violates all the agreements: on education, everything. Merely being female is a crime in Iran. It's a system of "sex apartheid." Women's & girls' bodies are totally controlled by men. As with S. Africa's bantustans, "**Iranian women's hijab is an individual bantustan.**"

Fariba Borhanzahi (Baluch human rights activist): Baluch region suffers from chronic under-investment. Has the lowest human development index in the country. UNICEF reports highlight that more than 60% of females [drop out of school for marriage or because of poverty]. Iran Security Forces... enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests. Rights of all women are not upheld. I call for investment in health and education. And the international system must hold Iran accountable. Human rights organizations must amplify women's voices. Baluch women have been ignored for too long. Their rights must be protected.
Gender equality cannot be achieved without minority women.

Dr Tahirh T. Danesh: The [1980-91] *cultural* revolution in Iran has caused these problems. She is a Bahai [and of Kurdish background]. **Bahai women and girls are considered "unclean" biologically and culturally by the Islamists**.

**Gender apartheid has to do with *access to resources.*** From bedroom to board room, resources are controlled by men. We need to engage men and boys to make change.

Valda Dehghani (A survivor of political repression, escaped Iran as a refugee): I should have been dead, but I am here. They killed me twice, pulled the trigger against my head. But the bullet never came. **There is something worse than dying. Something inside of me has died. I am still running from the reality of these assaults, rape included. This wound is so deep, that not even life can find a way to reach it.** While being tortured, I [was determined not to die]... I am here to scream the voices of those who were silenced forever. We all had nightmares. Some never woke up. I survived, and now these wounds are my weapons – the truth that can no longer be hidden.

I stand here asking the world to listen, see, and believe. **What is happening in Iran is a crime against humanity, not just an internal Iranian problem.**[2]

Jaleh: Azerbaijani women face discrimination because of their gender and also their minority group. Education, access to health care, and other basic rights .... Access to justice.... employment...are limited. Child marriage... Women fight for dignity.

Maryam Banihashemu (a women's rights advocate)[photo]: Iranian women have never stopped resisting. **The regime is using women as a practical tool to survive**. The mandatory hijab law.... The new supposedly reformist government isn't doing much. Women have to pay fines after a new surveillance found them in violation. Elder women also face harsh punishment when found without hijab.

This isn't about clothing. It's about control. Silencing women, limiting their place in public life. Now financial punishment has been added.

**Iran is trying hard to regain membership of CSW** after having been expelled. We should make sure they do not succeed. Keep talking about the three women facing death penalty.

Iranian women have shown extraodinary bravery. But they can't do this alone.

Nahidmokri: **Kurdish women face multiple forms of discrimination**. The Iran judicial system restricts their personal rights in marriage. **Education in their language is denied them**. There is discrimation in employment. One woman was sentenced to [20 ] years in prison for teaching in their mother tongue. Kurdish regions have been excluded from industrial investment. Kurdish women too often need to work in the informal sector. **Kurdish social and political activists have been imprisoned and sentenced to death.** Iran's legal system restricts women's rights. Child marriage has increased. Women cannot travel without their husbands' permission.

The international community should take action. I call on the UN to document violence against women in Iran. I also call on nations worldwide to include the issue of Kurdish women's eonomic life. Demand an end to multidimensional oppression of Kurdish women in Iran.

Gissou Nia: **When Iran was removed from CSW, it was a first**. We had to create a process for that to happen. They can try, are trying, to get back on. Saudi Araconcebia is now the chair of CSW. They have made changes in their country, but aren't suitable to chair/lead. The U.S., formerly a leading voice in the ejection of Iran, isn't opposing Saudi chairmanship.

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[2] **Similar to March 21 message from Afghan women.**

A few practical steps – Tell us about any meetings Iran is holding in NY. (They only want to use CSW to reshape the narrative about women's rights.)

The numbers of executions are increasing They've started technical surveillance of hijab use.

**An anti-"gender" trend is taking place across the world**. Not only in the U.S., also I Netherlands (just stopped projects on gender)

If the Iran gvt does come back to CSW, they will celebrate this as a great win.

Aren Shams (Co-founder of Iranian queer association, a trans-woman): None of the rights activists in Iran have referred to LGBTQ issues. Gender apartheid concept changed that. Fighting patriarchy and mysogynism.... Women Life and Freedom Movement wanted to postpone inclusion out of fear of backlash from general society. But we didn't want to repeat our 1979 mistakes. We have repaired our break from civil society.

Queer people face the darkest consequences of gender apartheid. No rights to form a family. No protection against domestic or other violence. No support system to turn to.

"Gender apartheid" applies to gay men, trans people.

We do not believe in gender borders. Include more queer people regardless of their biological gender. This session requested women speakers.

Azadeh Afsahi (Psychotherapist and trauma expert): 51 yrs ago, in 1965, an Iranian princess was chair of this commission. I work with survivors of torture. The **mental health crisis** cannot be overlooked. According to WHO, Iran has fewer than two psychiatrists per 100,000 people. Suicide is increasing. Women are re-arrested, shamed by the society. There is no trust in the system. Trust is essential to mental health work toward healing. Women like Valda, who have experienced rape, cannot even seek medical care.

Moderator: We need to talk about solutions, but our time is up.
The battle is far from over. The Islamic Republic should not be granted any legitimacy until they dismantle the entire system. Uphold rights of minorities, combat violence against women (VAW).

What strategies can be used? Azadeh Afsahi: breaking the silence is #1. Maryam Namazie: We can learn a lot from the struggle to end apartheid in S. Africa. **Create solidarity groups abroad** to support us and spread the word. **This is a struggle against theocracy.**

Nazanin: See **endgenderapartheid website**. Zagross Center for Human Rights has organized this session.

KEYWORDS: LGBTQ theocracy trauma torture mental health CSW suicide Kurdish women Azerbaijani women Hijab law

**US Women's Caucus Session**

Pam Perraud intro - USWC is an alliance of various groups.... We in the US have made strides in the past 30 years, but we're faltering now.

Shaila Rao Mistry: Introduces the speakers – **Ms Eleanor Smeal**, co-founder and president of Women's Majority Foundation, publisher of *Ms Magazine*. Responsible for Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Freedom of Access to Clinical Spaces Act and others. Was the first to analyze women's voting patterns. Got Presidential Citizens Medal at the White House in Jan 2025, the highest civilian award in the U.S. Works on ERA.

Eleanor Smeal: The ERA *has* been ratified. We're intent on doing the rest of the work, for all the world's women, not just U.S. women. Afghan women situation especially bad. It's not their culture. ("Where *do* they get these ideas?")

Our influence worldwide is probably the reason **why it's so hard to pass the ERA. Money must be behind it.** Before Obama's health care act women were charged much more than men, for example.

The Dept of Education is enforcing Title IX. This is why the dept is being cancelled. Title IX changed everything. It's being cancelled because "it opens doors."

Discrimination benefits some people. We need to strategize more, because "they're afraid of the women's vote." Women vote differently because their experience is different from men's.

**Ms Magazine is doing its own polling now**. Women are overwhelmingly with us. We are in the 70th percentile now. **The problem is our power.** N.A.M. and Chamber of Commerce are against us. Chamber of Commerce is one of the biggest lobbyists. They are even representing Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Shaila: Asks, What are the strategies we now need to implement? Eleanor: There is no one strategy. There are many. It's a day-in and day-out effort: make sure young people are voting. The right wing is trying to close down women's studies, black studies, LGBTQ studies. Why? Because knowledge is power.

**Read Project 2025. It tells exactly what they are going to do.**

Rep. Caroline Maloney. Introduced by USWC sec: From 1992-2014 she was s rep from New York. Worked hard to get the ERA signed and done. Reduce credit card fees. Medicare for people affected by 9/11. The W. Smith Act - for processing rape kits. Legislation against human trafficking. Was the first pregnant person on the City Council.

Caroline Maloney: A federal judge just now ruled to reinstate federal workers discharged by Elon Musk.

She appreciates the UN's leadership on women's rights. Also its strong support for the NGO community.

Violence Against Women (VAW) is a crime now in the U.S. We are now facing a backlash, though. The Dobbs decision took away 50 years of precedent. If we get women firmly into the constitution, we can move forward. **Who would have thought our daughters would have fewer rights than we did?** We all need to work together on the ERA, which was introduced 101 years ago by ___ Maloney.

**The excuses of opponents are, (a) the timeline has expired, so we have to go back and start over again. And (b) the 14th amendment is sufficient.** But Dobbs decision

eliminated ____[?].

**The Chevron Decision** is as bad as Dobbs. Gives the courts the power to overrule any law, including any passed by congress. Says that such rules are not laws, so can be overruled. Though Biden signed an abortion rights law, the Supreme Court negated it because women were not in the constitution.

Since leaving congress, she's working at Eleanor Roosevelt's house on the ERA. Schumer held a hearing on it. The Republicans invoked cloture....

Her students started a nationwide petition. **sign4ERA.org** is a tool to force passage.

**Some action ideas**: sign the petition. Join and support a feminist organization. Write to your member of congress and tell them to support the ERA. Go to places where women are; acknowledge women's history. Hakeem Jeffries is starting a "Tell Your Story" project. We're doing pop-ups. There's one Saturday at 11a.m. at Foley Square near City Hall.

She got a motion passed to build **a women's museum** *on the Mall*. The senate took out the part about its being on the Mall, but signed it. We need to change that.

Diana Wynn, Head of LWV is here today. The power of women's votes. **We are in a fight for the survival of democracy.** They're coming for our votes. Look at the **Save Act**, which is coming up for a vote in April.

Why is this room almost completely filled with white people? Make sure that every voice is included.

The **Save Act** purports to be a bill to prevent non-citizens from voting. But it requires multiple forms of matching identification. The name you use must be the same as that on your birth certificate. Allows politicians to throw out votes. The **John Lewis Voting Act**....

Sally [Chevalier] from FAWCO - Overseas US women are not covered by ___. Can't register to vote in person.

Eleanor Smeal: **Project 2025 talks about revoking the 19th amendment.**

Solanji [Samores], a professor of women's studies. Brazilian. My students are shocked that the U.S. doesn't have an ERA. US ranks below countries of the global South, #43.... We need to learn from them, how to do things differently.

Eleanor Smeal: We need to form relationhips with women in other countries. Work with them as we work with each other. Free Afghan Women.

Shaila: And build relationships with our own government. Smeal: Meet with decision-makers. Don't be too "modest." We also should take on some of these big corporations. We've fought with on on Afghan issues. The Affordable Care Act now says it is illegal to discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity.

One younger woman says: Many young people have lost confidence in voting. I voted third party in the last election. The democratic party is forgetting about the women of Gaza. Caroline Maloney: You should run for office, join the city council as I did. We're in a frightening situation

with Dobbs and Chevron decisions. More young people need to run for office. Eleanor Smeal: The Feminist Majority organizes women on campuses.

Smeal: A *lot* of money is going into electing right-wingers. We need to address money issues. Caroline: **Citizens United** made that possible. The Democrats have a bill ready to repeal it.

A young woman, a state legislator from Kansas, asks: What can we do about ERA at state level. Maloney: State-level ERA's are being passed (22 states have them now), but they're not as powerful as the national one. Smeal: Referendums in 23-24 states.

Omoka, a youth delegate from Japan: Asks about Title IX. Wants to set up anti-harassment training. Maloney: Title VII (Equality of treatment in job applications) & IX (in education) were game-changers. Men are very worried about sports. This drives them crazy - **women in sports**. Women learn about leadershp and team-work.

A woman teacher who lived abroad for 12 years is surprised by the amount of **apathy about voting** among young people. Maloney: We need to find people who believe in what we want to do and work with them.

Smeal: **I've heard too many times: the best woman is sports is worse than the worst man**. And the present gvt is against women in the military too. Maloney: In women's soccer, the women were winning but paid only half of what the men were paid. Men were losing.

USWC: Our summary sheet (distributed today).... Shadow Reports with facts. We also disseminated a possible declaration your city council might pass.[3] [**–>Give to Pasadena CSW**]

KEYWORDS: ERA LGBTQ Abortion Project 2025 The Save Act Vote Voting Votes

**Panel on Cuba**

Osmida Hernandez, Head of FMC's International Section

Cuba has been facing a transition. US sanctions, the pandemic. We have to resisit, buit also .... Many processes .... We chose some advances to help women to survive in our society. Cuba has a strong framework, in its constitution, to protect women from various forms of discrimination against women. Women have been killed only for being women.

We've started working with teenagers and with domestic workers.
We now have six provincial governors who are women. Now they are [48% of the functionaries.] Political participation achievement.

The national program is implemented by the president and the vice-minsters.

We still have some challenges.

[3]Follow up in Pasadena

Nataka Moore

Black women in the U.S. (Bad statistics, indigenous women similarly) are dying at very high rates of preventable causes. The system does not understand the phenomenon of "weathering," effects like high blood pressure.... Dorothy Rogers has written about this. Eugenics movement gave up on structural issues, couldn't do anything about them. We need to look at "action items of women and health." The birthing process etc. **We need to look at other countries, such as Cuba, that are implementin g the Beijing platform**. Cuba has a similar history to the U.S. We both had slavery.

Zanaida Mendez, Manhattan Neighborhood Studios, Dominican Women's Caucus.

It is essential to see that **domestic violence is not only destroying women's lives but also affecting children**. About 158 childere were orphaned.... El Salvador has the worst statistics in Latin America, with 88 femicide reports. It happens almost daily. Every candidate for president.... We have made suggestions on how to eliminate violence. People now see what's going on in the Dominican Republic, the lack of willingness of the government to ..___[?]

Lianys Torres Rivera, Cuban Ambassador to the U.S.

The persistent barriers that Cuban women face. Cuba has placed women's equality at its core. CEDAW.... conscious commitment to protection against gender violence. Universal health care. Women hold 53% of parliamentary seats. Machismo and other forms of discrimation continue. But despite our gains, US sanctions reduce our access to medicines and other resouces. We ask the international community for support.

Natasha Bannan: We are facing a very complicated time in the U.S. now. Cuba is affected -- Both private and public sectors. We need to advocate with othrs in ____.

We need to deal with congress. Also with .... A media campaign from this administration.... can be used to prepare emails about bills we should propose or object to. We need top have a voice. Those of us who are American citizens .... support .... fight misinformation. Advocate in congress. Respect the humanity and digniy of the Cuban people.

Cindy Domingo, WILPF rep for Cuba: The Cuban constitution is relatively new. The U.S. is the main impediment to the advancement of women and girls in Cuba. Think about what you can do to end the blockade against Cuba. Many here know nothing about the role that the **Cuban Federation of Women** has done to advance our position.

We are promoting two projects. (1) Work in congress. Many know nothing about the advancement of women in Cuba. We want your help with organizing a DC education and advocacy movement. Educate people about the Platform for Action, and what women's equality looks like. Show Cuba's commitment to advancing that platform. (2) Go to Cuba, and see how they are advancing the Platform.

Lobby your congressional reps to **get Cuba off the list of state sponsors of terrorism**. Stop **the FORCE act** from taking place.

Talk with Cuban women and girls about how the blockade is affecting their lives.

Www.women.cuba.org. Cuban lesbians will have a webinar next week.

womenandcuba@gmail.com

KEYWORDS: Cuba the FORCE Act U.S. US Sanctions

**Friday, 14 March**

**Women's Labor Rights (International Trade Union Confederation, ILO,...)**

Intro: Sioban Vipond (Canada). Unionization is key to promoting human rights. Decent pay, freedom from GBVand harrassment, .... Implementing the BpfA.... **"Women's human labor rights"**

Emmanuela Pozan (ILO) — Moderator's Q: What are the ILO priorities? Emmanuela P: The **political declaration** published on Monday has a lot on labor rights, international labor standards. This will affect G20.

ILO is looking forward to 2026, to see if international labor standards are supported. There also will be a discussion of the Transformative Agenda for ...gender equality next year, incl labor mvt.

ILO priorities: social protection, full package of decent work, dismantling discrimination based on pregnancy, right to collective bargaining, equal pay for equal work.

The **political declaration** also refers to women's leadership and climate change. And AI.

Azimi Sweta [photo]: There is a lot going on in my country (Afghanistan). An awful experience each and every day. In October labor unions were banned by the Taliban. Women workers in Afghanistan now "live in a cage," have no wings to fly, are deprived of education. What future can girls have without education?

All Afghan women and girls need your support. Reach out to me. We haven't stopped the work. But **"a female cat has more rights than a female person" in Afghanistan.** Must give birth at home.

CSW has enormous potential to help. Single mothers now have trouble feeding....What we can do from this room: highlight women's struggle, stay updated. Provide safe public spaces.

I am asking ILO Afghanistan how we can engage. **"Put Afghanistan back on the map." Give us some attention.**

Moderator: Trump's cutting DEI and so on... What is the AFL-CIO doing?
Laura Gutierrez (AFL-CIO): **Trump has rolled back decades of work done by the labor movement. Many executive orders push an archaic view. Meant to confuse and overwhelm us. It's all part of a plan to isolate us from one another, from building solidarity.**

The AFL-CIO is taking a targeted approach, one that unites all workers. Building new alliances Campaign: 1-In the courts (got an order to reinstate federal workers); 2-In congress (vs

tax cuts for the rich) and town halls etc 3-Training people on issues such as immigration, to reduce attacks on immigrant workers.

We also have an "offensive" strategy. Organizing is the only way we will grow our labor movement. We have momentum in the U.S. VW, Whole Foods, Starbucks.... Bring people in and "bring back our democracy."

Second part of the session

EPIC (Equal Pay International)

Policies of Chilean government: In this moment of backlash, we need to defend our rights. **Chile has a "feminist foreign policy." We've made progress – care policies, social protection. Ensure that "care policies" are sound.**

Equal pay for work of equal value too. Actively trying to close the gap, like ILO is. A bill under discussion in our congress. International standards, such as **#100**. Government working closely with trade union leaders on all of this. "Strengthening legal rights through social dialogue."

Domestic workers union (International Domestic Workers Organization) rep – Migrant domestic workers from Asia and Africa do most of this work. [Afala system] ties them to employers.

Immigration issues are related to the care economy. Need to make domestic workers of what their rights are and also how to fight for them.

Recognizing care as a public good. Ensuring compliance with ILO 189. We don't have "freedom of association" in the MENA region, so we're not allowed to organize. We work in the country of destination (where they have no rights), but also in the countries of origin.

We need your report to sustain our movement.

Christina [Makeny] - Part of Public Services International, representing 30 million workers across the world. Two ways care can be recognized: American courts & _____. Care should be seen as a fundamental right. If it isn't, staff who provide care aren't recognized by companies that employ them. The skills people bring to that job are valuable, but not recognized or valued. They may or may not be paid. They are subject to violence.

In UK the employer is the sponsor. "Living expenses" are deducted from their pay, so workers get very little money. We want care work to be seen as a public service, and for care workers' rights to be respected.

[Marine Garibolu]: Care is for workers, and for future generations. Distribution of time (work, leisure, sleep) makes care invisible. Gender stereotypes put burden of care on women and exclude them from labor market and from getting pensions later in life.

We are working for European... access to health care, low paid family care, pension schemes. And an EU strategy for older workers.

Next theme: GBV in world of work

A man speaks, a life-long trade unionist (UK): The new gvt recognizes the critical role of trade unions. Without unions, we cannot address the issue of **GBV in workplace**. I have seen the personal and economic costs of GBV. Thus we support the **ILO workplace harassment convention**.

**Locally-led approaches** are being used. In Pakistan. In Ethiopia, with CARE, working on GBV in manufacturing sector.

This week there are a number of trade union meetings, where the voice of women is being heard loud and clear.

Another speaker (from Jamaica): Education. GBV in schools starts in homes. We work with teachers and children. Women and girls more significantly affected. The new context is ICT – online space. Our membership connects from multiple countries. Talk about how we communicate with each other. One webinar had suvivors come together and talk about how they can overcome. In Jamaica, we have an **online counseling service**. We collect data from multiple countries. It shows that women are more adversely affected by GBV. We need a "safe space for women and girls." (Our website has a lot of info)

Jessica___ (International Transport Workers Federation): Exclusion, isolation, and discrimination are regularly experienced by women in transport sector. These are forms of GBV.

We work to create safer work spaces and provide support for workers. Raise awareness in India, Nepal, Brazil.

Domestic violence can affect women's ability to do their jobs. Working with network and governments to assess the impact of domes violence in the workplace.

Supporting the implementation, wide acceptance of ILO Convention 190.

Men are allies.

**These are fundamental issues of "workplace equality," not just "individual rights."**

Q&A

Is the administration complying with orders from the judiciary? AFL-CIO: Not yet. We're following it closely.

Closing remarks: UN Women [Jemima____, economic empowerment specialist] & _____ (ILO)

Jemima [photo]: **We in the labor rights movement are feeling like Sisyphus these days. But "we need to feel hope"** that we can get to a world of work that works for women. The **political declaration** published on Monday was very good news.

**UN Women launched an economic empowerment strategy last year at CSW meetings**. Transforming care system and Women in the world of work were two key themes. Eliminating discrimination is key. Working with ILO.

-Connecting women with services (in 70 countries) to improve their businesses

-Working to strengthen institutions that can support equal pay

-Global alliance on care

We know the economic system doesn't work for women. Market and financial systems need to be reshaped so they will. In Africa, where she's from, women are [doing all kinds of work]...
**You've got to stop trying to fix women. Fix the system!**

**Despite all this push-back, we are not backing off from the work we do.**
**If the work were not important, there would be no push-back.**

Man from ILO: The b...[?] including these labor issues is very important. The care economy and role of women workers in it. Pensions.

In 2025. SDG5 and SDG8 will be reviewed.

BpfA remains a blueprint for standards including in the world of work.

Q&A

How can UN Women influence a country like Afghanistan? Jemima: Even when the conflict started, **UN Women never left Afghanistan**. Working with women business owners to open up opportunities.

Moderator's concluding remarks: "All women are working women."

KEYWORDS: Labor BPFA SDG8 ILO AFL-CIO Care economy Equal pay

**Beijing Platform and Framework for Action: Is it Enough for Women in the Global South?**
(Jordanian Women's Association)

First speaker Nadia Shamroukh (Jordanian woman): I was at Beijing in 1995. But the previous conferences, in Mexico and Nairobi, were more relevant to us.

We need international law to be implemented in our region (ME): Gaza situation shows this. Why should we travel 14 hours to come to New York? We tried to enter an Israeli room when we came, to give our manifest, they made their session a closed session.

We have our own agenda, which reflects our concerns. (Reads their statement.) Solutions that do not address the local context are [inadequate]. "Gender" concept itself is defined in/by the North.

Other speakers:
Afaf Al-jaberi
Salma Al-Nims

Salma Al-Nims: I was in government for eight yrs. Worked in UN too. Last year I joined the EU.

Governments rush to do these [proclamations] every few years. Our report looks at women's human rights globally and makes recommendations. Voices of the global South have been "hijacked." This amazing coalition of governments and others should.... CSW has become the mechanism. **In the beginning voices of the South were heard**. That's how 1975 got to be delared as for women and CEDAW got written.

But implementation of these and all declarations has been [inadequate]. Member states have control over the negotiation and final [wording].

By 1985 (Nairobi) influence of western, white feminist became stronger.

1975 statement had strong language against colonialism. [Also had something about Zionism]

We want more attention to issues of critical importance to women of the south: poverty,....

**Women's struggle for rights is/was related to the broader struggle against colonialism.** Palestinian issues.

**By 1985** US had entered the stage of global politics. Practical implementation and monitoring mechanisms were addressed. Governments' role. VAW, economic discrimination were addressed too. Nonetheless, the **Palestinian and South African issues were [less emphasized]**

Because of Camp David and other events, the language about colonialism and Palestinian rts was eroded. Language changed to broader, more general "human rights." At the Population Conference....voices of women, especially in colonial contexts,....[?]

**1995** Beijing document was important. Addressed international cooperation, financing, education, and women's economic empowerment, and needs of marginalized women. *But*– There were clear gaps in implementation. And it was ambiguous about ... **Colonialism, Zionism, and ___ were all erased, as were resource extraction. It was "depoliticized." It reflected a neoliberal agenda. Structural factors were under-emphasized.** Intersectionality inadequately covered.

Clinton was president in 1995. Hillary was at Beijing. Needs of women of the south were de-emphasized. The **context of power relations was removed.** The Beijing declaration ad platform now have become the global agenda for women, with no more conferences needed.

Violence against women migrants, weakening of unions, consumerism, climate challenges: all of these are missing. It's the private sector shaping how the climate crisis will be addressed. Government had the last word.

Governments cherry-pick which issues (and the related SDG's) they are working best on in their reports. Shadow reports are not on the website. **We were not invited to present our shadow report to the U.N.**

The **political declaration** for CSW69 is also **a de-politicized statement**[4]. It **doesn't mention settler colonialism**, foreign oppression, militarization, structural violence, or other

[4]https://womendeliver.org/press/csw69-political-declaration-a-hard-fought-victory-but-gaps-remain/ ... & https://docs.un.org/en/E/CN.6/2025/L.1

structural issues. It uses neoliberal economic framework, doesn't question the capitalist system. **Civil society participation is an illusion**.

Afaf Al-jaberi They wanted us to shout that "we are all together," but we weren't.

[Daremba Sen-ora], from Jerusalem: We need to reclaim our right to the feminist agenda.

**The August report[5] [**??] addresses the Zionist-colonialist regime. **We need to talk more about collective rights than individual rights.** Highlight the relationships between power relationships, control over decision-making, and rights.

The current environment might not allow for a change in the discourse, but **we want a fifth women's conference** to try. Since the war on Gaza, Palestinian women are in a position to effect this change.

Q&A

Support your report.

Elahe Amani (Women's Intercultural Network) - Has downloaded the report. It's not just about the global South. Extremist right wing has taken over in the U.S.

A British woman: Went to all four women's conferences. She's disgusted with what she's hearing here. It's all so boring! Why are people clapping! They're talking as if we are in the same place were in last year. But we're not. The word is being run by the most disgusting men possible.

KEYWORDS: Colonialism A Fifth Women's Conference Individual Individualism Collective Population Conference Cairo Settler colonialism Neoliberal

**Monday, March 17**

**Weaving Stories from the Margins: Women's Movements Against Violence**
(They have a website, going live today: www.weave-collective.org)

Raquel Lagunas (UNDP) Intro. "This is an exercise of hope." Backlash is nothing new.

Dr Mary Ellsberg: Women Engaged Against Violence Everywhere (WEAVE) was formed.... The countries with autonomous women's movements – Nicaragua, Australia, South Africa, India. They do reports, but also quilts, art work, to express women's resistance around the world.

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[5]Jordanian Women's Union report: https://jwu.org.jo/sites/default/files/2025-01/The%20Beijing%20%2B30%20-report-last%20version.pdf

[photos of quilts]

Dr Emma Fulu: We did research that showed that

-Feminist movements do make a difference.

-The relationship is very "complicated." They do their work often "very much *despite* the role of the state."

-Work is done in multiple ways. [slide of warp and weft] with a sense of strength and courage. Mutual care is always a part of the work.

-Strategies continually evolve. We've gone from discussing Women's rights are human rights –> Intersectionality –> Colonialism.... Progress is always being made even if you can't see it.

(Video - Imagine a world where every woman and girl is free from violence.)

*Specific country discussions*

Kalyani Menon-Sen, India: **The history of the women's movement in India is continuous engagement (collaboration or confrontation) with the state**. During the last 50-60 years, many diverse movements (academic, activist, ...) have come together. They don't necessarily agree on every strategy. The United Front has been visible. FWCW was the moment of [beginning/unification]. Democracy has been shrinking, state is [now repressive]. Dialogue has helped all to come together. (Sex workers are part of this)

Caste is one of the divisions that are always there. But we have created across the "chasm of caste."

**We are now in a situation of resistance on many fronts in the face of a hostile state.** Women lawyers, strong feminst activists, are **challenging the legal framework**. Many have no previous connection with the feminist movement.

We are shaking the citadels, but none has yet crumbled.

Dr Shanaaz Mathews (Univ. of Capetown) S. Africa: At first the women's mvt was about dismantling apartheid. The trauma of GBV was on the back burner. Women were sidelined. In 1991-92 they came together to demand a place at the table [during the formation of the new state] and have a role in framing the new constitution.

In the rule of law women's rights exist, but **feminist activists faced severe backlash** (in the case of a woman raped by Jacob Zuma).

Students have become active. **We now have a national plan on gender and violence.** Implementation of existing laws is problematic. Funding was through USAID, and we don't have resources we need.

**Nicaragua:** Ana Lucia Alvarez (Independent WHRD): [photo of her(rt) and Kalyani Menon-Sen(l)]

Ability of resistance – feminists have been involved in shaping broader struggles (larger social and environmental movements). Conversations about justice, reparation, memory and

truth. Using underground organizations [?] **Younger women are challenging conventional modes of organization that characterized the earlier feminist movement.**

Community-based activism is important. Territorial activism. "Resistance." Operate outside of formal institutions. Network. International advocacy.

Australia, Indigenous Women: Dr Chay Brown and Kayla Glynn-Braun: (Chay Starts with acknowledgement of the indigenous people who used to have this land.) We've been mapping two movements and their [connection]. The indigenous rights movement was all about indigenous *men's* rights. Women's rights movements centered on the rights of *white* women. Indigenous women didn't get the right to vote until the 1960s.

The two women's movements they've been studying are collections [of groups]. Struggles for rights of "first nations women" shape their strategies.

**A referendum came up to give indigenous people in parliament, and the Australian people overwhelmingly voted *against* it.** Change is hard-fought and fragile, but we will prevail. We have "hope."

Kayla Glynn-Braun: We've had **a lot of racial backlash**. "But change is happening, and we will get there." [photo] We have a triple burden: our communities' nourishment and survival, negotiations with government (dependent on them for funding). Reliable drinking water is not as available as it should be in the 9th richest country in the world.

Chay Brown: **The entire colonial project of Australia is called into question by these failings.**

Concluding Remarks: Tesmerelna Atsbeha (Wellspring Philanthropic Fund)

The foundation has had a GBV portfolio for [15/19?] years now. Support for research to prove that **GBV can be prevented**. **Longitudinal study** in Nicaragua. Decided to fund these case sudies. Me Too and all of the other movements have shaped our understanding of GBV and effective interventions. Unless there's funding, it won't work. **Reaching marginalized people** doesn't happen in large-scale policy forums. **It's not just the right thing to do, it's the effective thing to do.**

There's so much "beauty" in this project!

Q&A
Netherlands Women's org president: Health care? Women over age 50?
Nigeria org rep: How can we make sure that survivors aren't punished for speaking up?

**About older women, Kalyani: The age issue is less important than exclusions based on caste and religion in India. Economically privileged women do work for menopause, osteoporosis and other elder women's health issues.**

**S. Africa speaker:** poverty intersects with other issues. **Older women sometimes are seen as witches.** ...There's been a "professionalization of the gender sector" in S. Africa. Important to acknowledge women in communities, for our policies to address the situation.

CSW69 Notes (45)

Keywords: Indigenous Nicaragua S. Africa India Australia Older women

**Afghan Women**

Intro: Over 4 million women now barred from school/university. ___% of women in poverty. **Online learning & underground schools** being used. **International community should mobilize.** It's an economic necessity for women to work, learn and lead.

[Musa Mahmodi]: Interviewed 89 individuals and reviewed reports since 2021. Since Sept 2021 Taliban has been restricting women at all levels above grade 6, including language and computer courses. Prevented women from getting scholarships to study abroad.

**Reasons they give**: their interpretation of **Sharia Law**. Also, following **rural traditions** of Afghanistan. Third, women's education would challenge Taliban's power.

It's challenging to find statistics, but abt [22 million in grades 1-6]. Before takeover, ... females in [universities]; now 3%.

**Deprivation from cultural rights [meaning?] makes women vulnerable to early marriage.** Also will increase illiteracy. Literacy now has receded to 30%.

"Gender apartheid" intensifies poverty and makes it hard for Afghanistan to reach its sustainability goals.

**Forced and under-age marriage.** [child marriage] 40% to Taliban soldiers.

High absentee and drop-out rates, and little motivation for families to send childen to school. Even boys are less interested in schooling now.

Women with disabilities face "compounded discrimination." There is no primary education for disabed girls.

**School curricula have been changed**. Human rights, women's rights, peace, democracy, etc removed. Social studies, civics, ....too

New subjects introduced: Emirate Studies. Celebration of the achievements of Taliban's founder. And the claim that **women's liberation is one of the most impoortant anti-Islamic weapons of the colonial west.**

**New Madrasas** have been created. Majority of the government budget is for expansion of **religious-jihadi madrasas**. (Chart shows formation of 106 regular schools and 21,000+ madrasas.)

Girls are enrolled in madrasas. Encouraged to marry Taliban members and agree to **polygamy**.

Recommendations
-Arrest warrants
-File a case about violation of CEDAW
-Support scholarships
...
-Raise awareness in media, cso's, and human rights organizations.

Panel Discussion

Nilam Nematullah: moderator

Panelists:
Negina Yari,
Zarqa Aftali, Director of Civil Service Organization
Dr Islami, founder of Medical Women of Afghanistan International
Nargis Zadran, women and girls
Nazila Jamshidi, human rights advocate

Q: Best solutions? Negina Yari: **Law has limited women's options. No matter how well educated, they only get low-paid jobs.** Requiring male guardian.... **Many women have moved to the informal economy**, many working in unlicensed small & medium enterprises.

Access to information is restricted, info about markets..... Support to women-owned businesses is limited.

We deserve to have a say in shaping the future of our country.

Q: Situation of women and girls today?
Zarqa Aftali: 1.5 million women and girls are now deprived of education. Forced marriage. Rates of domestic violence are increasing.

A Taliban edict banned women from [jobs] – Some, the sole supporters of their families. Lots of husbands were killed in the long wars.

Access to justice is also banned. There is no law protecting them from violence.

Because of all of these edicts etc, we call the situation "gender apartheid."

We are requesting the international community to provide scholarships and opportunities for online learning. Not to support the "alternative education" madrasa model. Global awareness of these crimes against humanity needs to be spread. "We want action, support."

Q: How can medical professionals improve health care for Afghan women?
Mahboba Islami: I decided to study peace and conflict resolution, as well as medicine. How to strengthen women's agency. **The Taliban are *misinterpreting* our religion, abusing it**.

About health care, .... It's related to education. An unhealthy woman cannot contribute to the household and society. Uneducated people ae prone to depression and anxiety.

In Afghanistan now, both men and women are less healthy than they should be.

Focus on education, especially for women.

The health system always was fragile. Now we lack medical professionals, because women like me have been forced to leave.

Exclusion of women and girls from the job market has cost the Afghan GDP more than $1 billion, a huge amount there. We lost....

The Taliban are hypocrites. Do not believe their promises of change. Rather than engaging with them, ....
We are working on telemedicine. Doing online courses for medical students too. Dealing with mental health problems. We need more .... As with covid19 outbreak in the west, **suicide and depression are skyrocketing** permanently.

Q: What practical strategies are most effective for Afghan girls?
Nargis Zadran: These problems are rising in other parts of the world as well. We need to stand up and prevent the spread.

There are incredible, grassroots "community education" programs now. They are developed considering the needs of individual comunities. (UNICEF...) There should be a system to recognize student achievements and accredit these programs. Especially in the neighboring countries. Student visas in them.

Multiple models are being used. Quality of content needs to be strengthed. There is a national curriculum, but it's not enough.

We need to create safe educational spaces. Make sure that identities of students are not disclosed.

Expand "virtual certification" programs.

Diplomacy goes hand-in-hand with all these effort. Turkey, Qatar, other countries should pressure Afghanistan to provide good education to girls.

Q: How has the idea of **"gender apartheid"** shaped international discourse?
Nazila Jamshidi: I have spent my life fighting GBV across the world. Apartheid term means **"it's very intentional."** Take away women's voices. Marginalize them. **We want this defined as a "crime against humanity."**

This would establish a legal application enabling the world to act collectively and cohesively. We need a legal mechanism to bring together mutiple actors.

There is much controversy around the "gender apartheid campaign." Afghan women have put every resource they have into this beautiful movement. We are ready to do whatever it takes to get this done. It won't abolish the Taliban regime overnight. But it can stimulated action.

**We are not a charity case. Consider us as a strategic [partner].... In order to preserve and protect human rights of women, we need law, and more than law, we need your support.**

_____[man, a physician] (Afghan Underground Help, The American Medical Women's Association): By all measures gender apartheid has harmed Afghan public health.

Supporting this effort is essential. Afghan Permanent Mission has been supportive to the *people* of Afghanistan. We applaud him: **Mr Faiq**.[6]

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[6]The Taliban has tried to get a different person in to head up the UN Mission: Suhail Shaheen. But the Credentials Committee hasn't approved him. So Faiq, who represented the former government, is still in the position. He was appointed as Charge d'Affaires in Dec 2021.

Mr. Md. Naseer Faiq (the Afghan Ambassador to the UN) concluding remarks: **We send a strong message to the Taliban: "You cannot silence us.**"

Opinion Article in Passblue about Afghanistan at the UN
https://www.passblue.com/2025/03/11/afghan-women-want-the-csw-to-help-them-fight-for-equality/?highlight=Afghanistan

*Afghan Women Want the CSW to Help Them Fight for Equality*
Opinion by Habiba Sarabi, Fawzia Koofi and Farkhondeh Akbari
• March 11, 2025

....As members of the Women's Forum on Afghanistan, we believe that a unified international stance on holding the Taliban accountable can pressure the group to either evolve as an extreme organization in power or to shift power from the current hardliners and open Afghanistan to a necessary political process for a meaningful, inclusive and endurable peace."

KEYWORDS: School Schools Disabled Madrasas Polygamy

**Feminist Approaches to Justice: Violence Against Women and Girls in War and Peace**
(International Sociological Association)

(Came in ½ hr late)
Jelena Pia-Comella: States have an obligation to respect women's rights in both peace and war, but violations in war tend to be "under-prosecuted."

[41?] could be a game-changer.

A new treaty on crimes against humanity is now being negotiated at the UN. It's time to make sure that rape etc during war are included in that. It will be finalized in [2029]

Anouk Noelle Nicklas (young lawyer, trained at Univ of Heidelberg), "**Conflict-related sexual violence** as an agravation of peacetime discrimination"

Effectiveness of preventive measures: **research topic**. ... Need to figure out **why it happens in some conflict situations but not in others**. She did some case studies in DRC (and Uganda) for her doctorate.

Testimonials from ICC trials & Humboldt University of Berlin, FRPI – Testimony of a woman they used as a sex slave for the whole troop. UPC – a girl raped, was told she should tell everyone she was his wife. The LRA – For years the LRA abducted civilian women and distributd them to their male members. Women were subject to the authority of the men to whom they were "distributed."

From the moment of their abduction, the women were stripped of their identity, were considered just as service providers for the men. This was a "perfect patriarchy."

Findings of the study

CRSV (conlict related sexual violence)....More research needed. Better funded ICC. Better implemention –> prevention, not just reaction. And "We need to end patriarchy!"

The UN has called for action over and over again. We don't need moe words. Contact her on linkedin.

Q&A
A woman from Sudan speaks up. This is exactly what's happening to women in Sudan. We hope for some attention to what is going on from the UN.

Comment from Jelena: As we lurch from one crisis to another, we need some systems to treat all crises with the same [tools] CSW offers a great opportunity to "knock on the doors" of the delegates across the street (inside the UN).

[Ambassador Chowdhury from Bangladesh]: These challenges are facing all the countries of the world. We gave UNICEF, UN Women, and the Secretary General...[?] There is every reason for us to be disappointed. These serious crimes against humanity: **we are spending our time in useless "facades." There is no accountability.** Governments now are saying, "my way or the highway."

It is very important to get the word over to the other side of the street.

**We don't work with civil society, either nationally or internationally.** I join with you in solidarity.

Woman from Nigeria: We have Boko Haram. What about prevention?

Jelena: There are two NGO working groups on security and [?GBV?] . These may link to some Nigeria NGOs.

Another Nigerian woman: One thing I am looking for is, How can we change the reporting process in Nigeria? How to get attention to our reports?

African woman: Works with student groups. Asks, How can we ensure....?

Anouk: Make sure that people know that there are many forms of violence against women.

Another Nigerian woman: Implementation is a problem because according to our culture, "the man is in charge," and we don't challenge that. How can we change *that*?

A Bangladeshi woman, one with Rohingya, Bangladeshi, and [Thai] clients: How do we locate our clients and bring them to a place where we can [help them]?

Man from Nigeria asks about the problem of "systemic oppresssion."

Anouk: About culture, change takes time. It has to do with education: telling school

children before they are fully socialized.

Jelena: **Stigma is everywhere. No country is immune. In western countries, women also are discouraged from speaking up.** There is a network of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Survivors helping other survivors: not a top-down approach. (SEMA) Ambassador Chowdhury: All these comments and questions are about how to overcome. **"Domestic violence happens in silence"** and keeps on happening, with a debilitating effect on growing children. In the initiative to pass **Resolution 1325, the point was not only protection, but also *participation*.** Equality of participation in decision-making at all levels is necessary to reduce GBV. Police, governments, lawyers, judges – all sectors need more women, or we won't move forward. Family also has a key role to play.

**Tuesday, March 18**

**Health Care in the U.S. - A Dangerous Situation**

Graciela Soto (author of USWC shadow rpt on health): This is the most critical area of concern for women and girls in the U.S.

Paulina Briggs (abortion provider, Duluth, Minnesota; director of [We Help/Health]). Do tele-health and section abortions, other service. In operation for over 40 years. An independent provider, not affiliated with PP. The scarcity of abortion providers has been a problem for a long time. This is the only ab provider in NE Minn. (Independent abortion providers tend to stay in the state when PP is

Medical skills are being lost. Most med students are not trained to do section abortions, so we do training. Medication is being challenged at the federal level. Medicaid patients don't get reimbursed, so every abortion is a net loss for us.

There is much stigma around abortion care. So **we work to normalize abortion.** There are anti-abortion protesters outside our clinic. It is disruptive and creates stress.

"Crisis pregnancy centers" – there's one across the street. If people go there, they don't tell them that they're in the wrong place. Staff aren't well trained. Do ultrasounds, but make mistakes; may miss crisis signs.

There are myriad threats now to medication abortion. **Comstock Act** used.
We're keeping an eye on that.

Ifeoma Udoh, Black Women's Health Imperative: We're concerned about women traveling across state lines, and not feeling safe telling a provider back home that they've had an abortion. Someone says: Just tell them you've had a miscarriage.

Gabriela: About the training issue– the only ones trained are physicians being trained for ob-gyn.
Pauline: The procedure can be provided without sedation or anesthesia.

Ifeoma C. Udoh, PhD (**medical anthropologist**), Black Women's Health Imperative:
Black Women's Health Imperative (she's exec VP) – Advocates for Black women in healthcare

systems. Have a doula training program. Help women seeking pre- and post-partum care.

**Five policy pillars:** (listed on slide) access to quality and affordable halth care, equitable goverance and relationships, employment; Education justice and equity, ....)

**Reproductive justice** is the right to:
-Have a child
-Not have a child
-Raise and nurture children in a healthy environment

Maternal mortality is a dire problem, and a solvable one. The stories are shocking. Erica Garner, Serena Williams.

Black women are 3- to 12-times more likely to die of perinatal complications than white women. 22% more likely to die from heart disease. 71%....

Understand the key drivers: racial inequity, fragmented coverage, lack of providers, lack of post-partum care. (Map of "maternity deserts," worst in midwestern U.S. & Alaska)

"It's not race, it's systemic racism." Educated (1.6x more likely to die of perinatal complications, college grads (5.2x)....

Recommendations: Improving cross-cultural patient-provider communication; reforms to **postpartum care**; Ongoing reflection among providers to understand their own assumptions.

We need to reshape the narrative that Black women aren't able to take care of themselves.

HEDIS measures...[?] – There is only one for maternal health, that a woman should be seen between .. & 64 days after giving birth.

Solutions: Invest resources in underserved communities, training and education for health professionals to combat racial biases, expansion of pre- and post-partum care souces as a reimbursable cost.

Q&A
Shaila Rao Mistry: How are Black women treated when they do go for care? What data are there?
Dr Udoh: there are more Black women under- and un-insured than white women in the U.S. Black women more likely to report disrespectful treatment. More likely to miss appointments.
Susan Lee: What kind of training helps to improve the doctor-patient relationships? Dr Udoh: It's actually a life-long training. D Alicia Swartz has done a training package in California for nurses.

Dr Udoh: We partner with NAACP, which does a lot of work on [maternal health].

Kiara M. Tanta-Qideon, MPH - Current Challenges and Factors Related to Access to Reproductive... Care: Centering the Voices of Indigenous and other Historically Marginalized Communities.

There are a great many reproductive and maternity care access challenges. E.g., chronic under-funding of government services (Indian Health Services, Medicaid) ; lack of access to facilities and telehealth services.

Underfunding: The IHS under-funding is chronic. About half of the funding give to federal prisoners. Medicaid and others, such as CHIP, are under attack by the current administration: about 55 million people of color are covered by them.

Cuts are likely to cause increases in all sorts of morbidity and mortality.

Indian Health Service. There are more than 570 recognized tribes. Providing health care is a treaty obligation.

**Risks of tele-health being cut**. Indigenous people make much use of medicare tele-health services. Unless congress acts to extend it, it will expire at the end of this month.

**Lack of trust in the health care system** and providers. In the 20th century thousands of indigenous and Black women were sterilized without their knowledge or consent. **Almost 50 percent of Native American women were sterilized between 1970 and 1976**. Provider biases persist.

Our research project produced a "Call to Action"

-Invest in culturally competent training

-Promote acceptance and inclusion of traditional healing. Shift the narrative. Respecting culture can lead to positive health outcomes.

The **Sunrise Healing Community** (@sunrisehealigcommunity on Instagram) - working to bring together the culture and the professional community. We'll be at the next Connecticut powwow.

kmtantaquidgeon@gmail.com

Q&A

Pam: What is being done for the older generation? Kiara: I grew up hearing horror stories about doctors' offices and IHS. Youth are now taking the lead, helping elders to get to their appointments. Urging them to get their check-ups and prevention screenings.

Kiara: I have a Blue Cross Blue Shield card. Gvt contracts out in some places instead of having the IHS do the care.

Susan Lee:

Are there indigenous care-givers, or nurses, to do post-partum health care? Kiara: It varies from tribe to tribe. Some are trying to bring this back into hands of the community rather than forcing people to travel far for post-partum care.

Other qn:

Opportunities for solidarity?

Udoh: There's a **Black Mamas Alliance**. Taking intersectional approaches. Community-level programs (doulas) in place.

SH: These aren't ordinary times. We are in an emergency now.
Kiara: We depend on federal funding sources.
Dr Udoh: **Community-level structures may get us through.** Advocating at the federal level is important. Some states have enacted their own protections. **Story-telling** and our own knowledge. We should be writing, documenting what's happening with actual families. It's happening on Instagram and other social media.

Gabriela: We do need to think about what are the best practices to cope right now.

Shaila: Funding for good health care in all commnuties for people of all backgrounds. How can we influence the flow of funds. How do we influence decision-makers?

Dr Udoh: We need to think about the flow of funding and the intersectional issues that affect it. Do advocacy at different levels: state is most important. Pharmaceutical companies, health insurance providers. 340B legislation says that pharmaceutial companies can provide discounts, but they never make it back into the clinical setting.

Kiara: Money for our people should be coming from the federal government. It's a treaty obligation. Education is needed – some don't know we're still here.

Post-meeting discussion

Leslie Wright: Maybe we should prepare a "Call to Action" from this event.

This is a time of **threats and challenges**. How do you provide advocacy when you are under threat? Trump's "brown shirts" might come for you, those Jan 6 people he pardoned.

Pam: Some people were afraid to speak today. Pauline was taking a chance, having her name out there.

Susan: Huge populations depend on Medicaid. Graciela: The Bronx, where I work, is one of the poorest counties in the country, large population of indigenous, Hawaiian, Black, etc. Medicaid used. We have community outreach programs. Trying to plan to provide care when funding declines.

KEYWORDS: Reproductive justice Abortion Maternal mortality Fundng Post-partum care

**Wed, March 19**

**NGO Briefing**

**Regional Commissions New York Office**, part of the Secretariat: coordinates **five commissions** – Europe & Central Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Asia & the Pacific. [Arab region too?].

What they do to **prepare for the CSW activities and cso engagement**. – Since 2022, regional conference on women organized with the L.Amer & Caribbean area. In 2024 more than [200] cso's participated in the regional declaration. Europe & Central Asia: discusses recommendations to be incorporated into the [regional statement]. Africa region: Africa Ministerial Conference mobilizes cso's thru **Feminet**. Provides them an opportunity to present their own reports to their respective ministers. Arab region high level meetings in which cso's had a "safe space" in which cso's could connect directly with governments.

Structured consultations, round tables and dialogue: ways they organize the formulation of gender policies.

Ivy Koek introduces [Mambu DelSalba], Mayor of a region in South Africa. [photo]

**Local governments** are closest to the people. We are working to mainstream women and other vulnerable groups (disabled). Build local leadership. Reform of the global financial system [needed] to strengthen role of local government, increase women's role in climate negotiations, ....

United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) gather every year at CSW.

Oxfam: Leah ____. As we discuss women, peace, and security during this **25th anniversity of 1325**, we are engaging on gender and human rights issues. Palestinians & Gaza. Best practices. The work of cso's has been undermined at times by governments and international organizations. [UNGA] We should do something about this. In future consultations. Many are left out because they are not aware of these conversations, or do not know where to start.

[Rebecca Lela-ulu] [flower in her hair]: [Pacifica], a New Zealand women's organization with ECOSOC status. Pacific women have unique challenges. Integrate global [principles] into local actions by work with [a larger coalition]. Concerned about GBV, climate justice, and economic empowerment. Empowering women and youth: getting young Pacific women involved in shapig the future agenda. (Group here sings a song. [short video of last few seconds])

Head of CSW for L. Amer and Caribbean: It took us a while to decide to engage with the UN, because we are not a governmental group. We are 300 organizations. Now we have a paper, that we will bring to our countries make Beijing+30 a reality for all of our countries.

Announcement, NGO-CSW: CSW revitalization meeting in CCUN Chapel, Friday afternoon. Will share recommendations. Advocacy and Research Group. We have submitted **nine recommendations**.

**Indigenous and Dalit Perspective**

Speakers:

Hon. Kiran Kumar Sah (Nepal)
Dr Diana Fox
Ms Patricia Cortes
Dr Bishnu Maya Pariyar
Ms Yasso Kanti Bhattachan
Ms Pamela Morgan, Chair of NGO-CSW

Discussion question #1 - How has Beijing BpfA affected your life?

Yasso Kanti Bhattachan - **Dalits, Muslims, and Indigenous people are missing from BpfA**. We also are missing from government policies. **"Women" are not a homogeneous group.** Now, the **CEDAW committee has recognized our rights. We hope that the government will act too.**

**World Conferences** on Women took place in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing. **There was nothing for indigenous women**. We demand that B+30 include us. No one should be left behind.

Presentation by Diana Fox (an anthropologist): working with **ADWAN**, Friends of ADWAN (Bishnu's organization).

In university she's working as a "feminist scholar activist." Using feminism as a platform for ollaboration. De-colonizing the university. Visited Nepal.

She founded the ***Journal of International Women's Studies*** **- has done a lot on Dalit women.** (Open-access journal)[7]
The UN conferences on women gave power of many organizations to have their own world conferences. "It's all about building connections...finding ways of working together to have impact."

Mithila art: Used as a tool of communication [photo] – example, a mother encouraging her child to go to school instead of getting married as a child.

ADWAN's programs focus on women in power and decision-making. Bringing their own crops to market. Inolving men.

Bishnu Pariyar: Started ADWAN in 1998. At age 8-9 couldn't enter a temple. Her father told her about the caste system, and that she should challenge it. But get an education first. She walked 2-1/2 hrs to school six days/week. Teased by other students and some teachers too. But never gave up. Got a college scholarship.

She has a board of directors. Almost 20,000 women in her organization. Provide uniforms for students. The Dept of Education is using our stories in their curriulum.

Patricia Cortes
(from Colombia)
Indigenous women have all rights. Land, language, and territory. And our body is our territory –

[7] –> Look at this journal.

rights over our health, our sexuality etc.... We know our healers are effective. We want to participate in leadership. The Colombia delegate to the UN is an indigenous woman.

Safety and security are essential to development. When indigenous people do not feel respected, do not have equal opportunities, they cannot move ahead. Many experience violence. **We have to work with our men**, make them conscious of equality and champions of women's security.

Sustainable practices: **access to land is a priority**. Ability to decide how we use the profit from it. Women drive local economies. Find ways to survive.

Your culture, language, and community....

Pamela Morgan: News – This year is esppecially important. These are "perilous times" for women's rights. Spread the world: **We're not going back!**

Calls the New Zealand woman to speak about the importance of indigenous women collaboratng and supporting each other... My traditional outfit "is my business card."

The New Zealand government is doing some of the things the U.S. gvt is doing. Trying to dismantle the department of women's affairs.

Next discussion question

Ms. Yasso - Meaningful implementation of LGBTQ and disabled people, expand the idea of "gender justice." Network and collaborate with each other. Transfer knowledge to the younger generation.

Bishnu: If we want to see change, we have to start with ourselves. There are many policies: if we don't implement them, they are just pieces of paper. How many at the grassroots level know about CEDAW? Almost no one.

Patricia Cortes: **We are in a fragile world.** Embrace our cultures, teach them to children. We will come out stronger.

Diana Fox: There is always a need for new ideas. In the Caribbean, she worked at a Jamaican istitue for gender and development. **We need to extend the concept of GBV to peace and security.** Work at multiple levels. Spread information in ways that people can understand it: community radio (Cultural Survival is doing this). Women running for office.

Use language that technocrats can understand. Talk about "indigenous science."

Hon. Kiran Kumar Sah: BPFA gave us an "agenda for equality." He is president of the Nepal [women's affairs committee]. **CEDAW general recommendation #___ recognizes the double trouble faced by indigenous and tribal women and girls.** National Plan on 1325, for women in conflict-affected areas. In his province he sees Dalit people who are living in poverty. We should give money to groups like ADWAN, to provide clean water....

He believes **Dalit and indigenous women should lead, not just follow.**
Get Dalit girls to school.

Let us hold the UN and leaders to their words. Keep their promises.

**The Long Shadow of the Catholic Church at Beijing**

Intro: Barb Kozee
(In an organization for ordination of women)
There's a conservative feminism derived from conventional sex-role ideas. It was represented at Beijing. "New feminism"....

Panelists
-Woman anthropoloigist - Maria Consuela Mejia, Mexico. Participated in the Catholics for Choice and the Sea Change campaign. Worked at National Institute of Women.
-Cynthia Rothschild: teacher and advocate. Consultant on women's and LGBTQ rights, and HIV/AIDS
-Regina [Franken Windenstor]: Member of the Board, Catholic Womens Council
-Frances Kissling: started Catholics for Choice - Has worked extensively in Mexico

Dr Maria Mejia - The Vatican has always been good at influencing policy. Has become "the spearhead" of the [anti-choice] movement in the US and elsewhere. Supports the attendane of anti-rights groups at internatinonal gatherings.

**The Sea Change campaign**'s goal is to change the Vatican's status at the U.N. As it is not a state, it should not be here. Why only *this* church? The Vatican delegation invited people to a meeting; she joined.

Questions about the Vatican's position on family, girls, were answered evasively. They were upset when she asked about abortion as a matter of human rights, and why people of different gender were not recognized. Didn't answer her. Several of the women there, including some nuns, supported her.

Cynthia Rothschild: About the Vatican at the UN – Opposition is not "anti-religious." Its status has been similar to that of Palestine until recently. What is a state? Has a territory, a permanent "citizen" population, and ____. The Vatican does not meet these criteria. Follows a moral code, not a rule of law. The Sea Change campaign started with a big boat going up and down the East River.

The Holy See can be a signatory to treaties, and is signed on to the Convention on the Rights of the Child & Convention Against Torture. But won't allow itself to be reviewed and held responsible for long history of sexual abuse.

It's "tricky," the way they shift back and forth between moral and legal.

Vatican was also at the 1994 Cairo conf on Population and Development.[Population Conference] The Pope referred to it later as "the work of the devil."

In all these proceedings, the Church has taken an "anti-gender" position. Gender is an inclusive term relating to power, more than biology. Now there's talk about "gender ideology," **The U.S. gvt right now is in lock-step with the most conservative Catholic ideology.** Notion of sex as male an female is "reified." Anti-gender sentiment is absolutely connected to the present trend of anti-trans violence.

There's an economic rationale for some of this. The US gvt has just today taken $175 million from the Univ of Pennsylvania because of its work on [trans-gender, LGBTQ]. Higher education systems are being financially gutted, starting with two universities (Columbia and Penn).

The teachings supporting this and the disamantling of public education generally come from the Church and from right-wing NGO's.

The crusade against "Gender ideology" – that trans-gender people are coming for your children -- is "manipulative."

The Holy See ("the political folks across the street") functions at the UN by constraining rights, not expanding them. There are important differences between what Pope Francis says and what the bishops are doing and the UN reps are doing.

Regina [Franken Windenstor]: **A coalition of the Catholic Church and Muslim states lobbied at the UN against equal rights for women.**

The Church does a lot of "Yes-But" narrative. RE: GBV, ... Denying women their rights is the result. Use "religious freedom" to prevent women from exercising their rights. The education of women is good, but women need [special kinds of ed]. Women should not be oppressed by religious bodies, except for [ours]. "Paternalistic, oppressive care behavior."

The Vatican has created an international coalition that works at conferences to prevent implementation of laws. Includes Evangelical Christians and Muslims. **Justify the exclusion of women by referring to the need to protect them.**[8]

In 1995 we were wrong in thinking that the Church would support the FWCW agenda.

Frances Kissling: [photo] Starts with a joke: Don't you dare leave the room while I'm talking.

As a Catholic who has spent a very long time fighting the church, I have no fear. There isn't anything they can do to me.

The Church has had a lot of time to develop money, power, wardrobe (big robes), statehood.

There were been big shifts in the way the UN talked about things during decades of the 1970s and afterwards. Lots of international conferences. Abortion has been a key issue throughout. Portraying the NGOs as the "bad guys," using lay people. **Opus Dei**: Where did the money come from?

At Rio Conference on Environment: PR coming out of this said feminists and the Vatican were in bed together. Problem is that corporations are cutting down too many trees, said the Church reps, not the population problem, making themselves seem liberal.

Catholics for Choice was the only organization who directly confronted the Church. We

---

[8]Sounds like the Taliban to me!

were on our own.

Dealing with the institutional church, people think they need to be "nice." Their pomposity keeps them in their position. Pompous people get away with lot of crap. You have to burst the baloon of pomposity. I am the master of making fun of pompous people. Asked about a Pope, I once said, "He is one of the greatest minds of the fifth century."

People who do not deserve respect should not be respected! Be prepared to go out on the edge.

Discussion

Frances asks other speaker to mention an incident that struck you as important at one of these meetings. Maria: The discipline of the feminist movement, organizing all this. Regina: At the Beijing conference there were numerous African workshops. They were very much aware of religion-based sexism.

Q&A

Q: How to integrate young Catholic girl in this project?
Maria: In Mexico the organization **Catholics for the Right to Decide** include young people, both women and men. There is much communication on social media.

Q: Please tell more jokes making fun of the hierarchy, France.
Frances: Don't be afraid to be outrageous! Not rage or anger, something more creative. (Like our boat on the East River) Be creative in a way that isn't nasty. Nastiness never gets you anywhere.

**Keep your rosary off my ovaries.**

Regina: A German women's group just made a calendar using Church arguments, against the Church.

Frances: Stories are the main way to change people's minds. Better than facts. How priests treat nuns.... A story from Africa, where a priest was having an affair with a nun. He took her for an abortion, and she died. He officiated at her funeral.

Q: What are some of the theological arguments that can be used for good?

Barb Kozee: Young Catholic women can read the works of progressive Catholic women.

Maria: What the Catholic hierarchy says is only one interpretation of theology. We now have multiple interpretations, including feminist theology (we can have an abortion and still be Catholics). Large percentage do not agree with the Church's position on abortion.

One group says that Mary Magdalen was actually the person chosen by Christ to bu8ild the church.

Q: If you had a big megaphone, conveying a message from this panel, what would it be?

Regina: Women have always resisted throughout the centuries. There are plenty of books about this. Go ahead and read them.

Cynthia: Really think about, What is the real threat? When you hear something that insults the dignity of a group, what is behind it? Is there an economic imperative? An election going on? What's the "undercurrent"?

Frances: Think about what grabs people. Facts don't grab me, but I respond to values. And words have sounds. The word "rights" is harsh. It's part of the modern polarization we're dealing with now. But everybody loves: "freedom," "compassion," words that go to people's hearts rather than their minds.

**Thurs., Mar. 20**

**IWAC Session**

Annapurna Pandey:
Indigenous people's land, ample with resources, is being taken over. More **residential school**s,

Refers to "hope" theme.
Worked on Three groups of women - Dungorekanth - used 2006 Forest Rights Act to fight against.... Have been branded as Maoists, some disappeared. Their mountain will be taken over.
Another group fought an industrial projecet in thir villages. State has stopped their efforts, in order to promote their venture.
Third - Tengapali women – more successful. Women are major stakeholders, working harder with less in-group conflict than men. Majority are tribal women, but they **do not have the tribal status**. Work with Dalits and upper/other caste women to protect their forest.
How they ensure participation: **"We go by trust."**
They say that the lands and forest are their mother and father, without whom they would not exist.
**Women's voices should be taken into account in policy-making.**
In December, they discovered a traditionally sacred ___ tree cut into logs. A young forest ranger, also an Adivasi, .... The logs remained in the village.
The women are under pressure from the government, but they know the cost is too high.
Forest protection is inter-generational and transcends caste borders.

<u>Subhadra Channa</u>

An important issue plaguing India for several decades – "the missing women." **Female infanticide**. Despite all the publicity going into girls' education, save the daughter, and so on, primarily urban practice of female infanticide and sex-selective abortion....

The modern, neoliberal economy is affecting these choices. Sex-selective ab is directed at females. Not the choice of the mother. Urban families want all the best that the market can provide. So not having many children is necessary; one to two is the maximum.

Dalits, tribals, and rural people have a different perspective. Girls work in the fields, produce children. Are not such enthusiastic consumers. They are patriarchal, of course. Her personal experience, having two daughters, was to be pitied for what was missing in her life. **[mention woman I met on a train]**

If resources are constrained in middle-class or well educated families, they go to boy children. **Male children are "entitled."**

This kind of discrimination is fostered and nurtured, intensified by the consumer economy.

Yasuko Takezawa
Gender and Equity in Japan.
Japan's Gender Gap Index (GGI): 118th out of 146 countries. Education 70th. Health 58th (average longevity, 87 years, vs men, 81). **Political Participation 113th**.

M/F Wage gap was 75.2/100 in 2021.
53.5% in part-time or other "non-regular" employment. (Vs 22.7% of men)

Percentage of women in mangement or upper-level positions is **the worst in OECD countries.**
Low percentages of women in STEM – also worst among OECD.
College professors: women about 18% of researchers; vs men, 82%.
Newly employed, 25.5% females and 74.5% males.
Small percentage female full-professors.

Gender-based **Quotas** are legal, so far. 50/800 universities set quotas for women in entance exams. Kyoto U. setting quotas for women in....

Indigenous (Ainu) women: half educated up jr h.s level Buraku women discriminated against n marriage and employment.

Women more than men suffer from hate speech: esp Korean and Okinawan women say they are "scared" (36%) or "sad."

Hot debates: Use of maiden names. Sexual violence. 1.03 million tax threshold keeps many women's income low.

**Thanks to quotas, things are getting better**.

Q&A
Asking Yasuko: Have women ever resisted against

Bidyut Mohanty: Women are protecting forests in other parts of India. Chipko movement is well known. Annapurna: Prof Mohanty has created a journal on women and environment. Chipko has been a world-wide movement. Illiterate women in villages standing up to developers and political parties gives me hope. We should not consider ourselves "defeated beings."

Swarnamayee Tripathy

"Solidarity" comes from a concept of citizenship. Sense of equality brings us together.
We are all in women's studies, and some of us are also part of the women's movements.
The Chipko movement forced the state to withdraw its policy.

Self-help groups across the globe, and especially in developing countries.... Dalit women in 50 villages, 160 cells, formed a federation that became a registered body. Promoted their livelihood goals. Their method was to continue with traditional fishing and counter the impact of climate changes on the sea. Traditional practicds of fishing made it hard to catch small fish. Got involved with middle-men that were taking advantage of them. Got together and decided to counter the actions of the traders. This was in 1995, same year as FWCW.

1360 members at first. Now 6000. **Economic and social empowerment may lead to political empowerment.**

Purpose is to have inome during the "restriction period."

Aparamita Mishra
Women dealing with climate change in Odisha

Marginalized groups suffer more than others: deprivation & discrimination aggravate "unequal outcomes." Have less acess to resources and opportunities than those of higher classes/castes

Severe cyclonic storms, shoreline erosion. Droughts and untimely rain affecteing agriculture. Reduced productivity of crops. Reduction of biodiversity and forest coer.

**Because of out-migration, agriculture has been "feminized."**
Social inequalities and gendered vulnerabilities are perpetuated.
Women's over-all work burden has increased.

Innovative water-bodies. Doing more with home produced food items. Coastal commuities: SHG's.

Elizabeth Chen
"Through the Looking Class" Class and Sexual Identity in NYC and London

"Sapphic spaces" – Women are encouraged to take on masculine roles. Norms are different.

Opportunities (aesthetic) to explore alternative identities.
Women encouraged to become pursuers, rather than becoming pusued.
They are "political."

**Women's automy has always been political.**

Example: Man getting buried above Marilyn Monroe.

**A negotiation needed between safety and community.** Men are excluded. How do you decided to let in? Who is queer enough?

Lesbian imagery and iconography balances this negotiation. They want to find each other but avoid public scrutiny. Bar owners must think about patronage (economic viability) and the social purpose of community.
Sapphic Iconography
    Lesbian carabiners (large) [photo]
Pop Up Dyke events
    Informal groups of lesbians and trans-men. Started in 2023.

Disappearance of the lesbian bar in London. Prices were too high, so it was "classist."

New York has a variety of Sapphic spaces. Cubbyhole (no cover charge), Ginger's, Henrietta.

<u>Faye Harrison</u>
Shows a picture of Eva Friedlander. Took responsiblity for coordinating the plenary speeches.
She's assigned the book to one of her classes: Intellectual Africans in the foreground as activism.
Trying to find out what has happened with some ot them.
Eva affected her agenda as a researcher.

IWAC collaborated with IUAES in 1970s. Connie Sutton, Eva, others.
Relationship with the IUAES needs to be remembered. IWAC's efforts to connect with the larger global social sciences community.

Huairou and Beijing opened up possibilities for "universal struggles" for full humanization of women. IWAC and the Commission organized forums at FWCW.

"Unlearn business as usual..." We know what it means to work *with* other women rather than *on* others. Care, responsibility, .... Knowledge articulates ways of disobeying conventional norms of "objectivity."

We need to do ethnography and critiques of a world government that is "neoliberalized." Change notions of development....in ways that reflect the understandings of many of the world's people.

My Comments

Annapurna: Instead of meeting once a year, we should make these conversations more of an ongoing project.

BTW, the district where she works is known for the "maximum female feticide."

From the 1990s the jungles were neglected, and [mining] was spreading. Women growing vegetables had problems feeding their families.

During covid, by the way, they closed the village entiely and had no deaths from covid.

The Tengapalli women themselves came together. They're hiring people to help them.
But the forest department doesn't recognize them. They know that the state won't take are of them.

About **schools**, the tribal areas with all their natural resources are being taken over by leases given by the state to large companies.

How do they silence the tribals? Schools are closing down in tribal and rural areas. They are building **residential schools**. Parents are desperate, so they send their children to them.

Anthropologists could promote interdisciplinary approaches. In the name of "ethics of care." Think about how to do more collaboration.

Subhadra – About inheritance, more of the urban educated families are limiting their family size. At the bottom of sex-selective abortion and femicide, **poor people actually prefer to have daughters.** They're considered more reliable and helpful than boys in slums.

Inheritance: Is significant to the more affluent people. Giving wealth to daughters who marry into other patrilineages is considered a loss.

Yasuko - About how quotas got established. ...

In Japan urban areas girls also are preferred – but only by younger generations. I changed to my husband's name when I married. So my mother said I mattered less than my brothers because my name was different.

Quotas: Corporations need labor, but they know that women are under-searched. Attract talented women. Female students perform better than males. Espeially in the hard sciences.

She promoted quotas at her university. There is resistance.

Swarnamayee – RE: qn on How did the mobilization movements come about? Internal/External actors?

Traditional fishermen using traditional practictices

Swarnamayee - [Men supported women's efforts]

Aparamita --

Liz Chen – Class elements are too often excluded from discourse on gender.
London and New York queer people have many advantages of all sorts – access to care, e.g.

Ranju Hasini Sahoo: [photo] Long live women anthropologists! [She is also from Orissa.]

Annapurna: Asks Liz where the trans people stand in sapphic spaces.
Liz: Usually they're welcomed, unlike gay bars where they might be in danger. They have different problems from cis-women. So there's a "negotiation." Do you belong in this space? Discussion of women's bathrooms in the U.S. now, e.g.

**Bidyut** wants to join our group.
Some families don't want any girl children at all. The question of inheritance doesn't arise in urban areas, because people have jobs.

Shelah Harper - We've delineated problems quite well. What is our plan of action? Let's not wait until next year, *if* there is a CSW70. The U.S. gvt is talking about doing away with the U.N.

Maxine: The importance of local alliances, affiliations, movements that speak to the needs of local communities. Do we think about global/universal strategies or think about local ones and figure out what general approaches.

Liz: Money talks. Disruptive action is needed. Boycotts: McDonalds, Starbucks. Take direct action.

Maxine: What states do. Mayors. "Think in a decentralized way." What happens at the federal level is less relevant.

Shelah: Today is the opening discussion.

Maxine: Put Bidyut and Shelah on our list.
This has been an "energizing" experience.

**Session on Women Claiming Land Rights**
[no notes]

Issues discussed

Woman from Peru: indigenous women's rights to land not always recognized.
Liberia: marital status can affect [inheritance] rights. Those in civil marriages get more rights

than those in consensual unions.
Thailand and Nepali indigenous women's concerns. There are laws but not implemented by government.

Summary by Chair
Study compared 35 countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.
Making clear the nexus between allocation of rights to men/women.
Make sure that women's rights are protected.
The SDG goals won't be met in time.

**Bridging Generations (UNA)**

Chair: Lynn C. Thompson
Intro: Everyone needs mentoring. Mentorship is a catalyst for women's advancement! Women with strong mentorship networks are 25% more likely to [reach leadership positions].

*Engaged* mentorship is effective. But it's scarce. Women in STEM are 54% more likely to stay in their field if they are mentored.

"Girl Up" is a good mentoring organization.
The digital divide is widening in AI and odther STEM.

Delphine Schantz (UN Office on Drugs and Crime)

Collect info on all sorts of crime, including human trafficking, smuggling migrants, corruption. Provide guidance and training to member states. On 24 Dec member states adopted a convention on cyber-crime.

Recurring and enduring challenges in human trafficking – Data is essential to persuade politicians. Sexual exploitation and forced labor are main reasons for trafficking.

Local gangs at the Myanmar border are tied to very large crime groups, most in China. They kidnap people and take away their cell phones. [Get others to pay money for them.]

Most children in Africa and L. Amer are trafficked for forced labor.

N. American women: for sexual exploitation.
Main trafficking routes ... [related to drug routes?]... Fentanyl is very, very big in the U.S. Demand is constant. Access to treatment, however, is inadequate. Penalties....

85,000 women are killed by an intimate partner every year. That's one every 10 minutes. We need to understand. Very few (7%) of those killed have had restraining oders.

Non-consensual sharing of intimate images is another big issue. Consequences severe, esp for vulnerable people. We're calling for a convention on this. Also part of our work on cyber-crime: trying to find and take down these posts. CSO's should alert law enforcement when they see some of this content. Individuals do not get attention from police, or they have very long waits. Many countries do not have laws against this

Also working to enhance conditions for women in prisons.

Career training, mentoring, and coaching, especially in the Sahel, Africa. [For young

professonals]

Chair: We've worked on "digital exploitation" of youth. Cyber-bullying etc. It's huge.

Panelists
CeMar Peterson (MN)
Priestly Johnson
Hon. Kelly Door, Dir., Sierra Foundation
Catalina Cajas - Ecuador Women's Economic Forum
Dr Shabana Powell
Christian Eduardo - works on femicide in Mexico
Louise____, UNA-USA's National Counsel

Question #1 - Re economic justice and mentorhip
Priestly Johnson: the
African American population only got the right to vote in 1965, 45 years after the 19th amendment. American women could open their own bank accounts only in ____.

Catalina Cajas: Informal networks give women self-confidence.

Q to the whole group - What does economic justice look like in today's economy? One says, access to setting up in business. She has an agency matching up young talent with [jobs]. Many women can't envision a life without depending on a man for economic support.

How is it, being a woman in a team of men? Mentorship "enforces through experience." Gives *tangible* gains.

CeMar Peterson: Working in philanthropy for four years now (Minnesota). Formerly worked in trafficking.

Technology can be manipulated. Also can be a helpful way to circulate information about resources of help and identify violators. MN has an office of missing Black women and girls. "Data feeds awareness."

We must include young people in these conversations.

Chair asks Christian for his ideas: Most of the women he mentors are women. Most of the programs are focused on "mental regulation," *not* on preparing women for leadership roles.

His approach is to remind every woman that we are living in a patriarchal society, but she should never back down. Tha *she* is the expert. We do "safety planning" together. He's there to help her "build her path."

Chair: **We have two hands – One to hold on with, and one to pull up someone else.**
[photo]

Shabana Powell: Team are mostly survivors of violence. Work with suvivors. Her background is in social work and psychotherapy. If someone is being bullied on SnapChat, she may be reluctant to tell her mother. Once people come out of an epoited or trafficking situation, they are at a disadvantage of not having been in a mentorship network.

Mentorship should be part of any program for long-term economic advancement.

Louise : Mentorship and capacity building, men are seen more in leadership roles. Black women and others of color feel [left behind]. **"Mentorship" is important, but so is "sponsorship."** Sponsors open up opportunities for employent: recommend you for jobs.

Improving leadership skills is also esssential. [Global Health Corp] is good. [Women Lift Up]: in Africa and India.

Christian Fernando: recognize that not everyone will be open about their survivorship. Revelations about traumatic experiences depend on reolationships of *trust.* "Safety planning" very important to avoid [suicide etc]. We mentors should not consider ourselves as "gate-keepers." Maybe I opened the door, but these connections are now *yours.* You don't have to ask my permission to use te cotacts. These are some of the ways that we actually can work as mentors.

Chair: WhatsApp groups, LinkedIn, many opportunities exist for connections]

Priestly Johnson - Helping younger people grow into the leaders we need can mean pulling back, not holding their hands at every step.

Chair shares a story of a mentee in Kenya: She was age 13 and likely to be married off. She and her mother got money from me to make peanut brittle and sell in the market; and she went to college. Now has three masters degrees and is running the anti-corruption program for her country. Chair was there with the State Department. They wanted to pull her out because she wasn't safe.

Comment: Being "trauma-informed" must be part of effective mentorship.

**Friday, 21 March**

**The Municipal Movement: Women in Local Government**
(United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG)

Chair (Emilia Saiz): Enjoying the sense of rebellion at these CSW meetings.

Introductory comments from panelists about this year's CSW

Maria First intro: Talking about Brazil

Ana Moreno: She's in NY. This week is more "technical." Much on how we can deal with the backlash. Multi-stakeholder approach stronger here than in previous years.

Carole Gunnarsson: Yes, backlash against women's and girls' equality and____. According to gvt reps, everything is just fine. But you get a different perspective from women of those countries.
We must talk about **implementation. Local/Regional governments are an essential part of that**, but nation-state representatives at the UN don't recognize that fact.

Maite Rodriguez B. - Housing and land/ecosystem have been getting much attention this year. Indigenous and grassroots women. General resolution on CEDAW and indigenous women. Political participation of women in municipal assemblies. We are trying to open spaces, or enter even if not invited. Yesterday the political declaration adopted the "gender violence insight." Happened at the last minute. Female migration is increasing now; the care processes need more attention.

**These resolutions have been adopted by institutions.** UN Habitat....

Sri Sofjan (Malaysia) - Isn't at CSW this year. But, governments don't recognize importance of local gvts. There is too much of a disconnect between the women's ministries and other policy bodies dealing with housing or land, and so on. Digitalization and AI neither.

Aissata Ba - Today we're experiencing **negative reaction worldwide** to the rights of women and gender equality. We have to be careful, listen to what government reps are saying.
Chair: **I think that localizing the agenda can help us transform this.**

Ana Morena: Find the levers. We shojld not censor ourselves.

Chair: "They" – the conservative wave in Europe is pretending to be pro-equality, but criticizes immigrants for having the wrong values.

Olenka Ochoa – Representative of L. America FEP & Women Peacemaker Network from U. Of California at San Diego. We've invested 30 years building... in the Beijing effort. Wok precisely on all three levels - [local/regional, national, global].Global architecture is collapsing, as if in an earthquake, How do we sustain this architecture? There are always billionaires who want to take resources.... Look at the global economy. At the state level we have to rethinki what we are going to o, what model we are going to propose.Everything is up in the air due to strong pressure from political forces trying to destroy all of this.

Municipal policies favor women, but give less emphasis to gender equality.

Policies helping the poor, not "populism."...

In my country (Peru) we have a female president who is eliminating the Ministry of Women

Focus on multilateralism and also international architecture.

Cecile Roth -Gaps in the B+30 Political Declaration:

-Role of local and regional governments' role in care systems, housing and access to essential services. No refs to Right to the City and feminist urban planning.

Intersectional feminism and structural transformationw - no refs to LGBTQ rights reproductive justice, or "decolonial feminist perspective."

Multi-year program. Topics to focus on during next CSW's:

Access to justice, women's participation in decision-making (2026)
Accelerating 2030 agenda and climate change, disaster risk reduction (2027)
Women and girls in humanitarian systems.... (2028)

Chair: nothing on land or housing or other local themes.

Ana Moreno: In the ... Nothing in political declaration on care, unpaid care work.... Connected

How is CSW going to negotiate the declaration that was issued in Jan. & Feb.? How can we lobby for [more attention to the local level]?

Chair: There seems to be agreement on strengthening UN Women's accountability. There are few ways to follow up on implementation of CSW [resolutions] and CEDAW. Nothing on **decision-making** in the outcome document?

UN Women and Human Rights Council and ECOSOC [need to work together more].
Thinking about **care work**, we need to think about "what can replace family."

Chair: Participation of women in care work?

Olenka: In L america organized crime and armed violence are threatening women who are municipal authorities, business women and those in care services.

We need to propose one special regulartory framework to deal with organized crime.

Chair: Organized crime recruits boys and girls, abducts young people for "specific purposes." This is gaining importance/attention in the feminist movement.

Sri Sofjan: About future CSW's, housing & "feminist urban planning" – foundations of care -- are part of this. What abojt the next Habitat conference.

Chair: Look at the Women's Manifesto.[?] Municipal Movement [photo of slide]

Local Social Governance.

Maite Rodriguez B.: Financing for Development. **Another meeting in Washington is about feminist funding.** SDG5 is being "accelerated," but it has missing parts.

Chair: there isn't enough on land and housing in the call to action.
Spanish government is launching [feminist alliance].

We will go to Financing for Development meetings to talk about (1) access, (2) what do we invest in? (Present emphasis on equality or care is "very light" And (3) Development cooperation. (4) **Monitoring of development investments**, incl at local levcl.

We need to find the right allies. It needs to find its way to G77.

Certain concepts of development and development aid are promoted by European governments. Spain isn't influential in negotiations.

Institute for Local Self Government in India is part of this. India members are focused on local realities, numbers of representation more than empowerment issues.
(I suggested they contact Bidyut Mohanty.)

High Level Political Forum & review of SDG5

Ana Moreno: [Global Alliance for Care, in Sevilla. ]

"Local Social Governance" means – We want to protect the system but also change it, **introduce a local component into the multilateral system.** Structural dialogue.
We have had a process of town halls, through which we co-create [new concepts]

(UCLG Video) - sharing the link.
Safeguarding common goods (food system etc), not considering them as commodities. Include youth.

Further comments/questions
Economic returns on investment vs "social returns."

Maybe we need to expand info on UN Habitat.

Don't give up!

KEY WORDS: Care, Government, Municipal, monitoring, land, housing, equality,intersectional,intersectionality,flood, environment,policy,local,crime,violence, safe, safety,

**Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan**

Nazilla Jamshidi, Moderator: Meaning of G.A.: **Intentional effort to erase women from every part of public life**. Different from the violence and mysogyny of other countries.

Dr Ewelina U. Ochab [photo] [International Bar Assn/IBA]: Work of the International Criminal Court is limited, but it does (since 2003) have jusrisdiction to look into the situation in Afghanistan. In March 2020 prosecutor was authorized to look into the crimes of crimes against

humanity,....

Since the Taliban take-over, nothing has been done. ICC in 2022 was authorized to look into all crimes committed in Afghanistan. Several countries in ___ asked the ICC to look specifically into the crimes against women and girls. **Prioritizing gender persecution.** Two arrest warrantss have been issued – one for the Supreme Leader (Jan. 2025) & ....

Looking at intersectionality: situation of Hazara women, e.g., in trouble because of both ethnicity and gender.

Encouraging women to engage with the ICC. Doing **training** in London and online, about international standard. How to collect and present information. This should make their efforts effective.

Think about **gender persecution** as a crime against humanity. (Gender apartheid isn't yet part of the international criminal architecture.) Thinking about how to amend the Rome Statute.

Leaders, we hope, eventually will face justice. ICC going against only three now, but there are thousands of perpetrators.

Challenges: (a)_____ & (b) the **U.S. attacks on ICC** have implications for Afghanistan. U.S. trying to sanction people working with the ICC: travel bans prevent them from speaking in person at the UN. Freezing bank accounts is another measure. These will affect "how the ICC works oe doesn't work."

Elika Eftekhari: **CEDAW** is "an international bill of rights for women." Ratified by 189 countries. Some have signed with exceptions. In 2003 Afghanistan ratified it: the first Muslim country to do so without reservations. **It's in the Afghan constitution.** "It stands today."

The **Internatinonal Court of Justice** is about state-to-state disputes. Every state that is a member of the UN is obligated to accept its decisions. The Security Council has autority to enforce outcomes.The ICJ can issue provisional measures – severe situation equ8ein some action to stop *now.*

After Doha-III, the Afghan gvt published extreme proclamation. Germany, the Netherlands, Canada & Australia in September 2024 issued a statement demanding that Afghan gvt be [prosecuted], without formally acknowledging the Taliban's legitimacy as the government of Afghanistan. This 26-nation statement was the first step to punish Taliban for violating CEDAW.

Issue of "culture, tradition, religion." Article 5 of [CEDAW] says that culture is not an excuse.

It's likely that gender provision will be issued soon. Then it wil go to the Security Council.

Chair: We need law, but we also need law enforcement.

Gaisu Yari:
[photo of four panelists: L–>R, Gaisu, Elika, Ewelina, and Nazilla]

**Codifying Gender apartheid matters, so that it won't happen anywhere else in the world.** Impunity of the Taliban internationally is strengthened by... **Doha process. Normalization is**

**taking place. Codification would block such normalization in interntional law**.

In this polarized world, we need to put ourselves together. If you need training, we can help you.

–> VERY IMPORTANT POINT.

Nazilla: Yes, this isn't just an individual challenging case.

Question to panelists: Why should I get involved if I'm not an Afghan woman or affected by this?

Ewelina: Works with World Vision part-time. Seeing all the refugees coming in, we couldn't just sit on the side and do notheing. We provided a platform or Afghan women to testify. [An MP] heard this and communicated her stong feelings to the Minister.]

**It's not going to stop with Afghanistan. This kind of ideology speads very quickly.** Over the past three years we've been watching. And the Taliban keeps coming up with new ways to do it. Now it's beauty salons. Another, that you cannot take pictues of living beings. It's without parallel.

Elka: As an Afghan woman, this is horrible. They're taking lessons from Iran about how to become legitimized.

Resident of the U.S. ...

A woman here (in the audience) was intentionally blinded by the Taliban after having worked effectivey for a long time.

Gaisu: An imderground resistance is happening in Afghanistan now – schools,.... If civil society died, no one would resist. Donors need to know this.

Afghanistsn is not in the news now. Listen to those who are inside. **Don't take the Afghan women's agency away from them.**

I don't want women of other countries to go through what Afghan women are going through.

Next question: About youth empowerment.

Ewelina: What should the UK government call for? This is the first time we did this kind of enquiry. (Referring to the IBA report, the *Gender Apartheid: Parliamentry Advocacy Toolkit* distributed here.)

Next qn: the gender apartheid campaign is getting a lot of momentum. What can civil society do to support it?

Elka: **Lobbying (educational lobbying)** produces results. Create the narrative. Get "gender apartheid" into their minds.

Gaisu: Mobilization is key. **"The Taliban are being very systematic."** It's easy to get information about this online. The fight is exhausting.

Q&A

What about social media? This is the media most people use. In Morocco men dominate.

Meshtuka (the blind woman) asks: All three methods – conventions etc– This gender apartheid movement comes from the heart. We need to make sure that it has a positive effect on all these developments.

Reprentative of Nari Poko (Bangladesh): Girls are getting education here in the US., but with all the things going on here, what can we do?

FAWCO [Americans living overseas] representative: The Afghan situation is being eclipsed by the overwhelming news of what's happening here in the U.S.

Gaisu: About social media, propaganda works. **Combat narratives with other narratives, on other platforms.** There are many journalists using various platforms. Getting Afghan women to speak up in small ommunity spaces also is good. What's happening in U.S. cities? Story-telling workshops? Artistic events. **Story-sharing.**

**Iranian and Afghan women are starting to come together** and make the point that gender apartheid isn't happening in just one place. Sharing info on the atrocities happening in both countries. **Grassroots mobilization is necessary.** Policy makers won't give this any priority unless they're pushed.

She went to the U. of Virginia and then to Columbia. Learning/Education is important, but having a degree from here can be a harmful label, but in the long run it's worth the investment.

Elka: **The argument for gender apartheid is strengthened when you take it out of one country.** The fight is long. Keep your eye on the light at the end of the tunnel. When you get to a rough spot, be nimble. Tell the story in a way that others will listen. Hire Afghan graduates here.

Ewelina: Make sure the stories about Iran and Afghanistan are told over and over. RE the spread: Iraq is recently introducing legislation to make child marriage legal, though it was declared illegal only a few years ago.

We need men to join this campaign and fight for Afghan women too.

Concluding remarks: Collective action is needed. Every diplomatic and legal action is needed to **hold the Taliban accountable**.

KEYWORDS: Taliban, Iran, ICJ, ICC, law, culture, apartheid,narrative, gender apartheid, cso,

civil society,

**Violence Against Women: 30 Years after Beijing**

Panelists:
Alessandra Guedes (UNICEF)
Diana J. Arango (World Bank)
Avni Amin (WHO)
Ayesha Mago (SVRI -Sexual Violence Research Initiative)
Elizabeth Dartnall (SVRI)
Shalini Joshi (Meedan)

Avni Amin

**Ten Lessons learned.**

1. Investing core funding to feminist NGOs – those countries that got support have made the most progress. India, S.Africa Brazil, e.g. Nicaragua had high rates of violene. Advocates produced changes in laws. 20 years later studies in same communities found 70% drop in intimate partner violence.

2. Public health data is a powerful too. WHO multi-country study on dometic violence was published in 2005. By 2013, 80 countries had done surveys. In 2021, ln ....

3. VAW is preventable with a multisectoral approach. A framework (R-E-S-P-E-C-T) identified effective challenges & interventions. Relationships - ...Poverty-reduction-...

4. Hold governments accountable. VAW policy database.

5. The health system is important, but needs practical guidance, specific tools.

6. Apply implementation science to scale up. Innoate with scale in mind. Allow sufficient time, intensity and funding. Accountability to communities. Do no harm. Example: SASA! Community level change. Techniques used in [25] countries

7. Address intersections between VAW and violence against children. Children who witness violence against their mothers, e.g., suffer same effects.'

8. Listen, engage and co-produce research and policy with survivors: a present goal.

9. Research to harness digital innovatoins to address online abuse. Understand the harms it causes.

10. Make an "investment case." VAW [is bad for the GDP], but investment isn't proportional. We now know of many cost-effective interventions. Need is $800 million/year, but investment is only $473 million.

Ayesha Ago - Asks for comments on the intersection between VAW and viole nce against children

Alessandra Guedes. Our UNICEF think-tank is based in Italy.

Over time we've been able to measure VAW; and now to identify & map risk factors:

Gender equality, alcohol use. These are also associated with violence against children.

Six areas: Rigid gender norms, ... Harsh discipline of childen associated with VAW.

Some interventions can cause harm: incarceration of women, removal of children from a household. Need to think about most effective interventions.

Elizabeth Dartnall

.... Deeloping "participatory research teams." We need to break out of our silos, do more **interdisciplinary research.** Develop new kinds of knowledge. Think of new ways to set priorities. How to fund research. Think about: Whose knowledge counts?

We're also trying to understand femicide across the globe.

Shalini

Challenges: Whose perspective are we looking at? Global North is [setting the agenda]. More local and regional perspectives are needed in research methodology, data collection, analysis, etc

Technology: oline speech. AI. Questions of representaton. Machine learning may be ineffective in understanding diverse community views. AI models, imaging, languages not developed by women and minority communities.

There is very little funding for....

The work on AI in this field is quite new. Biases and stereotypes

Ask: Whose data is being collected? How is confidentiality protected? Security of databases. What can (& can't) bots handle?

Diana Arango

The World Bank has someone based in Latin America [her] working on GBV. This is because of all the data that has been produced by these efforts. She was the second person hired by the WB to work on GBV. (10 years ago) There is now enough data to show that GBV is happening in all sectors: transport, health, education, water-sanitation, e.g. Insitutional strengthening recommendations and policy rec's now possible. Evidence and prevalence data were organized in clear language for all sectors, to raise awareness.

A Uganda case was brought by feminist activists to WB showing that their programs were causing GBV.

There are now 450 projects in the works and nine specialists at the WB. In Brazil Mato Grosso education sector: developing a curriculum with Ministry of Education on adolescents. IN Liberia, using SASA re: economic empowerment.

Research has had an impact.

(WB only works with governments.)

Government reps ask her: what works, and how can it be scaled up?

KEY WORDS: femicide research VAW GBV

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