



GWI United Nation Representative

Advocacy Report

2024

GWI advocacy goals

- 100% of United Nations Member States commit to policy, legislation, budget and infrastructure to facilitate transition of girls from primary to secondary school and ensure gender parity and gender equality throughout secondary education by 2030.
- By 2030 100% of United Nations low-income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
- 100% of United Nations Member States commit to and implement policies for continuing education to empower women throughout the life course, within the formal and informal economies.
- Influence the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
- All 17 SDGs will include girls' education targets.

Please bear in mind these five overarching, long-term goals during any United Nations intervention that you make on behalf of GWI. Any intervention should push these five goals further.

NB: *Although these goals represent GWI's mission, UN Reps are also invited to promote GWI key messages on areas where especially relevant e.g., women in STEM, securing investment in women teachers, addressing barriers to girls' education such as child marriage.*

GWI United Nations Representative names: Maryella Hannum, MSc

United Nation Duty Station represented: UN Headquarters/NY

Meetings attended: UN Headquarters NY, 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), 11-22 March, 2024

The 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) served to bring together representatives of UN member States, UN entities, ECOSOC accredited NGOs and civil society representatives from across the world to discuss the priority theme *“Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.”* CSW68 also addressed the Review Theme (agreed conclusions of CSW63) *“Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.”* The gathering this year focused on the need to tackle poverty, and strengthen institutions and financing with a gendered perspective in order to accelerate gender equality.

Key Take Aways from the Session:

The UN Secretary General stated, “globally, poverty has a female face”. There are many statistics and deep-rooted dimensions to poverty that are widely cited in making this claim, and which account for women and girls being disproportionately impacted. Gendered poverty is deeply entrenched politically, socially and economically,



causing, and leading to, ingrained discriminatory systemic structures, laws and social norms. The CSW68 priority theme provided a unique opportunity to evaluate and reassess the systemic structures that perpetuate poverty among women, and to seek actions to leverage public institutions and gender-sensitive financing mechanisms for building a more equitable future. In this regard, gendered responsive economic and social policies are central to addressing poverty among women.

CSW meets each year to address the widespread inequalities, violence and discrimination women continue to face all around the world. The theme this year allowed for strong active engagement by participants in so many aspects. CSW68 was held amid a number of global crises and tensions. Additionally, women's rights have been under attack and a significant momentum currently exists in pushing back on progress that had been made in years past. Events held during CSW68 highlighted the many deteriorating conditions for women around the world as their rights are being undermined and reversed. A trend of international relations becoming affected by domestic politics was also recognized. An aspect of this was evident during discussion by Member States of the negotiated outcome document and the adopted Agreed Conclusions.

According to UN Women, the Agreed Conclusions are meant to contain an analysis of the priority theme and a set of concrete recommendations for governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, and are to be implemented at the international, national, regional and local levels. The process of negotiations seems to have become more of a struggle between gender rights advocates pushing for progressive gender language and right-wing coalitions pushing for conservative, anti-gender language. Negotiations must reach a consensus. The struggle over language was evident on 27 March during the 17th Plenary Meeting of CSW68 (closing) where Member States met to continue discussion and consideration of the Agreed Conclusions that were adopted by the Commission. During this meeting it was striking the number of Member State representatives who spoke up regarding their dissatisfaction and disagreement of certain language that was included in the Adopted Agreed Conclusions. Language issues were especially evident over the inclusion of the reference to "family" in the traditional sense, to the phrase "multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination", which refers to the way discrimination occurs on the basis of more than one perceived characteristic, and to concepts around "intersectionality" and "diversity". All of these mentions have become particularly controversial for conservative leaders. This is well documented in the report by International Peace Institute (IPI) Global Observatory and can be read in more detail at <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2024/04/a-review-of-the-68th-commission-on-the-status-of-women-small-wins-in-a-polarized-landscape/>.

Other points of contention were around the use of "gender-responsive" and "gender-based violence" resulting in the elimination of these phrases, which is anticipated to carry over to CSW69 and the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+30). The elimination of these and other phrases from the Agreed Conclusions are believed to weaken the resolve in addressing various aspects of women's rights and efforts to accelerate gender equality in forthcoming negotiations and outcome documents. Despite these setbacks the article referenced above acknowledges gains that were made in the negotiations and are important to note, such as the inclusion of language acknowledging gendered aspects of unpaid care and domestic work.

As previously stated, CSW gathers each year to address the widespread inequalities, violence and discrimination women continue to face all around the world. UN Women states the Agreed Conclusions are meant to contain an analysis of the priority theme and a set of concrete recommendations for governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, and are to be implemented at the



international, national, regional and local levels. For these reasons, it is important to recognize the struggle that is taking place over language to be included and adopted in outcome documents. The theme this year allowed for strong engagement by participants in so many aspects towards achieving gender equality, and the discrepancies over language as it relates to women's rights is critical to recognize as we move toward CSW69 and Beijing+30.

Submitted by: Maryella Hannum, MSc, April 28, 2024