



Beijing +30 Civil Society - UNEC Geneva Review October 2024

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Reflections on Participation at the Beijing + 30 /UNEC Geneva Review

Participating in the Beijing +30 Review in October 2024 was a profoundly transformative experience. This event brought together 56 countries to evaluate progress since adopting the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. This gathering of experts, civil society advocates, and leaders from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region was filled with energy and hope as we collectively assessed gender equality across the 12 action areas. It was not just a period of reflection but A CALL TO ACTION. An opportunity to shape the global gender policy agenda leading into the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 69) in March 2025 and defining time to set the course for decades to come.

Key United Nations figures, including Ms. Tatiana Maclean, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECE, and Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, UN Women Deputy Executive Director, were present, reinforcing the importance of this review. Their participation, along with other leaders from Member States, underscored the global commitment to advancing the goals set 30 years ago. Every session carried a strong sense of urgency, emphasizing that this moment could define the future of gender equality. The diverse voices from civil society organizations, UN representatives, and government officials showcased the strength of collaboration in tackling the evolving challenges to gender equity.

Being part of this monumental effort was humbling and empowering. It reaffirmed the power of collective advocacy and global solidarity and reminded me of the profound impact we can achieve together. It was also a reminder of the work ahead and the need to expedite a goal-oriented approach. I was privileged to prepare expert papers and reports, organize and lead parallel events-workshops, prepare oral and written statements, and lead key discussions and initiatives across the following several areas:





1. Leadership Roles at Beijing + 30 Civil Society 2-day Review

- Women in Power and Decision-Making: Advocating for gender parity in leadership roles.
- Women in Health: Promoting access to quality healthcare services.
- Institutional Mechanisms: Strengthening accountability frameworks.
- Women in the Economy: Ensuring equal economic opportunities.
- Beijing on Trial: Arguing the case for implementing Beijing's mandates.
- North American and European Caucus Meetings.
- Prepare written and oral statements for presentation at UNECE

These responsibilities deepened my commitment to the cause and further reinforced the importance of our shared goals.

2. Delegate to UNECE 2day Beijing +30 Review in Collaboration with NGO CSW Geneva

These sessions featured high-level participation from UN officials, ministers, and ambassadors from all attending member states. Each panel addressed specific areas of the 12 Action areas. High-level delegates made insightful statements and reports from all UNECE. This experience further ignited my passion for transformative change, deepening my commitment to advancing gender equity. It reinforced my determination to accelerate advocacy efforts and secure tangible outcomes in all these critical areas.

Report Overview: Flow and Insights

The two-day event served as a monumental reflection and a call to action, setting the stage for CSW 69 in March 2025. The sessions provided a platform for a robust exchange of ideas, insights, and advocacy. The UNECE B+30 Review, held in collaboration with NGO CSW Geneva, offered an invaluable opportunity to discuss gender policies and future directions. It featured high-level participation from UN officials, ministers, and ambassadors, ensuring diverse global perspectives on gender equality. The report is structured as follows:

1. Analysis of the Beijing +30 Review - Gaps, challenges, and emerging issues. not addressed present during the Beijing 1995 Era
2. UNECE B+30 Review - Insights from the collaborative work and advocacy efforts that shaped the review and the discussions.
3. Expected Impact and Next Steps: This section includes recommendations, anticipated outcomes, and a forward-looking approach to continuing this essential work.

Beijing on Trial: Analyzing Key Gaps and Challenges



The Beijing Platform for Action, established in 1995 during the Fourth World Conference on Women, laid a bold and comprehensive agenda to achieve gender equality and empower



women worldwide. While significant progress has been made, critical gaps and challenges in realizing its full vision remain—particularly in gender equity, financing, investment in women, and access to high-level decision-making roles.

Gender-Based Violence: Despite heightened awareness and efforts to advocate, gender-based violence remains deeply entrenched. In many countries, survivors still lack the protection of effective legal frameworks and adequate support systems.

Economic Empowerment: Women continue to face significant barriers to economic opportunities, including unequal pay, limited access to credit, and underrepresentation in leadership positions. The gender pay gap remains a persistent issue in many regions.

Political Participation: Women's representation in political decision-making is still very limited in all member states and regions. While there has been progress, women remain underrepresented in parliaments and leadership roles, with women's voices still unheard at the highest levels of governance.

Education: Global enrollment rates for girls have improved, but disparities persist, especially in rural and marginalized communities. Access to quality education and resources remains a substantial challenge in these areas.

Health and Reproductive Rights: Access to healthcare, including essential reproductive health services, remains inadequate in many parts of the world. Barriers to these services continue to affect women's well-being and overall health outcomes.

Intersectionality: Women facing multiple layers of discrimination—based on race, disability, sexual orientation, and other factors—are often overlooked in policymaking. Intersectionality remains an underrepresented issue in many gender equality frameworks.

Cultural Norms and Stereotypes: Deep-rooted cultural norms and gender stereotypes remain a significant obstacle to achieving gender equality. Overcoming these entrenched attitudes is a long-term challenge that demands ongoing effort and societal change.

Environmental Impact: The intersection of gender and the environment has gained attention, yet women's roles and leadership in environmental sustainability remain under-recognized.

Institutional Mechanisms: Efforts to create robust institutional mechanisms to hold governments accountable and implement gender equality policies have been inconsistent. Stronger enforcement is needed to ensure real, lasting change.

Media Representation: Women's representation in the media continues to be skewed and often objectified. While progress has been made, more diverse, accurate, and empowering portrayals of women are needed to break societal stereotypes. 394



Emerging Issues and Gaps - not present during the Beijing 1995 Era

Several emerging issues were not even on the radar in 1995, but today, they are critical to advancing women's leadership and participation in global conversations.

Artificial Intelligence and Technology: In 1995, AI was not part of everyday life, nor was it considered in health, education, or the economy. Today, AI is omnipresent, and addressing ethical concerns, data privacy, and bias in AI systems is crucial. Comprehensive regulations and frameworks must be developed to ensure AI is used responsibly without perpetuating gender bias.

Women in Business: The concept of women in business was not fully recognized in 1995, especially regarding leadership roles in both the private and public sectors. Despite progress, women still face significant barriers to leadership. Organizations must implement mentorship programs, flexible work arrangements, and policies supporting work-life balance to empower women.

Financial Exclusion: In 1995, financial institutions largely overlooked women, particularly in marginalized communities. Today, the financial sector must prioritize inclusive practices—such as offering micro-loans, financial literacy programs, and tailored services—to ensure women and underserved populations can access the economic resources they need.

COVID-19's Exacerbating Impact: The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and deepened existing inequalities. Many gains in gender equality have been reversed, exposing how fragile progress can be. This setback underscores the need for renewed commitment, resources, and sustained global collaboration to address these enduring gaps.

While progress has been made in various areas, the global community has still made limited strides toward fully realizing the goals set by the Beijing Platform for Action. To close these gaps, we must redouble our efforts, allocate sufficient resources, and foster greater collaboration at every level of society. Only with renewed dedication can we create a world that genuinely upholds the principles of gender equality and empowers women in all spheres of life.

Recommendations for Advancing Gender Equality

Civil society and our Herculean efforts of the leaders and members from 56 countries did extensive review and collaborative research and discussion and came up with insightful recommendations. The B+30 Review at UNEC Geneva focused on evaluating progress and setting future directions for sustainable development, particularly in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development context. General Recommendations from B+30 Review:

1. **Inclusion of Women in Power and Decision-making** in all sectors of Public and Private sectors and academia and governance
2. **Funding of Women Entrepreneurs and Investment in technology** to advance women's health and grow businesses and economy, and training for leadership
3. **Strengthening Partnerships:** Emphasize the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs). Foster more significant engagement with



civil society, the private sector, and local communities in decision-making. Particularly respecting Civil Society inputs

4. **Data and Monitoring:** Enhance gender-disaggregated data collection and monitoring systems to track women and girls' progress within SDGs' goals.
5. **Integrated and Inclusive Policies:** Promote policies that ensure inclusivity and equity, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable populations.
6. **Sustainable Financing:** Encourage innovative investing financing mechanisms to support sustainable development initiatives.
7. **Capacity Building:** Focus on building institutions' capacity to implement and monitor sustainable development strategies effectively. Invest in capacity building for governments and local communities to implement sustainable practices.
8. **Utilizing Institutional mechanisms,** such as funding, procurement, and internal governmental framework
9. **Climate Action:** Prioritize climate resilience and adaptation strategies for development.
10. **Technology and Innovation:** Leverage technology and innovation to drive sustainable solutions and service delivery. Monitoring the positive use of Artificial Intelligence
11. **Resource Mobilization:** Develop strategies for mobilizing resources, including public, private, and funding, to support sustainable initiatives, particularly in areas of advancing women's health, education, economic participation
12. **Knowledge Sharing:** Promote platforms for sharing the best practices and lessons learned from different countries and regions.
13. **Inclusion of vulnerable groups** – recognizing the differential needs of all social groups.

By addressing these gaps and fostering global collaboration, we can build a future that reflects the vision set out in the Beijing Platform for Action, advancing gender equality for all.

Connecting the UNECE and NGO CSW B+30 Review: Gaps, Challenges, and Outcomes



The UNECE and NGO CSW B+30 Review Summit, held in Geneva in October 2024, was a crucial event to assess the progress toward gender equality outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action. This four-day summit gathered a diverse coalition of governments, civil society organizations, and experts to analyze the state of gender equity across multiple sectors. While significant strides were noted since the 1995 Beijing Platform, the summit underscored that several critical gaps persist. These gaps, particularly in areas like gender-based violence, economic empowerment, political participation, and intersectionality, remain fundamental barriers to achieving full gender equality. Moreover, these issues are compounded by the evolving global



challenges include the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. 118

Key Gaps and Challenges Identified at the Geneva Summit

During the UNECE and NGO CSW B+30 Review, several pressing issues emerged:

1. **Gender-Based Violence:** Despite rising awareness, gender-based violence remains endemic. The lack of comprehensive legal frameworks and support systems continues to impede progress.
2. **Economic Empowerment:** Women face systemic barriers to accessing equal economic opportunities, including the gender pay gap, limited access to credit, and underrepresentation in leadership positions. There is a pronounced need for more targeted interventions, such as mentorship programs and flexible work policies.
3. **Political Participation:** Women’s representation in political decision-making remains low. While there have been some advances, women continue to be underrepresented globally in political power and leadership positions.
4. **Intersectionality and Inclusivity:** Many women facing multiple forms of discrimination—based on race, disability, or sexual orientation—are often excluded from key conversations and policymaking processes. This systemic oversight continues to present a significant barrier to achieving true gender equality.

These gaps, though well-documented over the past three decades, have been exacerbated by evolving global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and technological advances. However, the B+30 Review also provided a roadmap for addressing these challenges through a more profound commitment to inclusive policymaking, more vigorous enforcement of gender-equal frameworks, and targeted interventions that consider the needs of marginalized groups.

Anticipated Outcomes: Connecting UNECE, COPs, Pact of the Future, and ECOSOC



In the wake of the Geneva Summit, the anticipated outcomes from a variety of international platforms—UNECE, COPs, HLPF, ECOSOC—show an emerging consensus on the need for action in several key areas:

1. **Implementation and Participation:** The Geneva Summit highlighted the need for active policy implementation at all levels of governance. Gender equality cannot be achieved through aspirational goals alone; it requires concrete, tangible actions. Platforms like



ECOSOC and the Pact of the Future emphasize monitoring progress and ensuring women's voices are heard in all decision-making processes. The upcoming CSW 69 in March 2025 will provide further opportunities to solidify these commitments.

- 2. Revitalization of Institutional Mechanisms:** One of the most pressing challenges is the need to dismantle outdated and ineffective institutional mechanisms and rebuild them to be more inclusive and accountable. The Geneva Review stressed that many institutions remain slow-moving and insufficiently committed to gender equality. The upcoming initiatives under ECOSOC and the COPs must prioritize gender-responsive budgeting and accountability mechanisms to hold governments accountable.
- 3. Language and Framing:** The use of language is crucial in shaping societal attitudes toward gender equality. The UNECE review and the Pact of the Future discussions recognized that outdated and biased language in policy frameworks and international agreements often reinforces inequalities. A shift toward inclusive, empowering language is necessary to redefine how we approach gender equality in global discourse. Requiring only past UN language and referencing to be used in the presentation of reports and recommendations grossly curtails innovation and creation policies for current-day socio-economic issues
- 4. Engagement of Younger Generations:** The Geneva Summit underscored the importance of engaging younger generations in the gender equality movement. The involvement of youth, particularly women and girls from diverse backgrounds, is essential for long-term change. Upcoming dialogues at the HLPF and ECOSOC should focus on strategies for amplifying the voices of younger activists, ensuring that gender equality remains a priority for future generations.
- 5. Strategy of Branding and Use of Media:** The review also touched upon the strategic use of media and branding to reshape narratives around gender equality. UNECE and the Pact of the Future have called for a more robust approach to using media platforms to challenge stereotypes, highlight gender inequalities, and promote positive role models. Effective harnessing of social media and digital tools can be powerful agents of change.

Rebuilding Institutional Mechanisms - Dismantling Embedded Bias

One of the central themes of the B+30 Civil Society Geneva Summit was the need to overhaul existing institutional mechanisms. Many national and international institutions have failed to respond to the evolving challenges women face today adequately. The UNECE review and other global platforms, including ECOSOC, have emphasized the need for institutional revitalization.

This means reforming current mechanisms and creating new frameworks that are more agile, gender-responsive, and inclusive. Gender-responsive budgeting and transparent, accountable governance structures will ensure that progress is measurable and sustainable. We need disruptive and dynamic pivoting from existing institutional mechanisms in all sectors and socio-economic spheres to shift significantly away from our current slow incremental progress



toward gender equity. Using the models in some private sector areas will be a giant step toward dismantling some embedded bias in our institutions.

The Elephant in the Room - Unaddressed Issues

Effective collaboration across these diverse groups requires a multifaceted approach integrating advocacy, strategic partnerships, and sustained dialogue. By working with governments, financial institutions, civil society, women leaders, marginalized groups, and the younger generation and engaging marginalized groups and the younger generation, we can drive meaningful change in advancing gender equality. The key is fostering an inclusive, intersectional, and action-oriented approach to building a global future prioritizing women's empowerment.

1. **Global Enforcement Mechanisms:** While stronger institutional frameworks and accountability were highlighted, no clear mechanism was proposed for enforcing compliance across nations. Many countries still lack the political will or capacity to implement gender equality policies effectively.
2. **Global Health Disparities:** Although women's health and reproductive rights were mentioned, the global health disparities that affect women, particularly in conflict zones or low-income regions, were not addressed in-depth.
3. **Men and Boys as Allies:** The role of men and boys in advancing gender equality was not sufficiently emphasized. Engaging them as allies in breaking down gender stereotypes and supporting women's empowerment is crucial for lasting change.
4. **Long-Term Funding and Resource Allocation:** There was a gap in addressing sustainable financing for gender equality initiatives. While some recommendations mentioned innovative financing, a clear, long-term funding strategy for gender-focused programs is still lacking.
5. **Cultural and Societal Norms:** The review touched on deep-rooted cultural norms but did not offer substantial strategies for overcoming them. A more focused effort is needed to address these societal attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality.
6. **Artificial Intelligence and Technology:** While technological advancements, including AI, were mentioned, a comprehensive strategy for mitigating risks related to gender biases in emerging technologies was not fully developed. This area demands urgent attention.
7. **Integration of Marginalized Groups in Policy Discussions:** While intersectionality was acknowledged, the recommendations did not sufficiently detail the specific inclusion of marginalized women, including LGBTQ+ individuals, refugees, and women with disabilities. More targeted interventions are needed to ensure these groups are not left behind in policy frameworks.

Conclusion - Collaboration to Renew Commitment and Action

To effectively collaborate and influence the key stakeholders in advancing gender equality and achieving the objectives of the Beijing +30 review, there are strategic approaches for each group. Below are specific methods for working with each targeted stakeholder.

1. Chair of CSW and CSW Members

Aligning shared gender equality goals will strengthen relationships with the chair and CSW



members. Provide expert input and evidence-based recommendations, particularly on gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and political participation. Advocate for intersectionality, addressing marginalized women's needs and highlighting emerging issues like women's roles in technology and leadership. Encourage cross-sector collaboration for comprehensive solutions.

2. US Government and US Mission

Use diplomatic networks to ensure the U.S. maintains leadership on gender equality in global forums. Align advocacy with U.S. policy goals, especially in international development and human rights. Collaborate on funding gender equality initiatives and ensure the U.S. Mission at the UN continues to prioritize women's rights.

3. Other UNECE Governments and Canada

Collaborate with UNECE governments, including Canada, to build regional agreements supporting gender equality. Advocate for strong resolutions on financing and accountability and share best practices for women's economic and political participation. Form alliances for joint advocacy in international forums to strengthen gender equality frameworks.

4. Civil Society and NGOs

Foster collaboration between civil society organizations and governments to develop inclusive strategies. Support capacity-building for NGOs and amplify grassroots voices in decision-making. Coordinate joint advocacy campaigns to drive the implementation of Beijing +30 recommendations.

5. Leadership in Other Sectors of Government, Academia, and the Private Sector

Engage government, academia, and private sector leaders to integrate gender equality into policies. Promote gender-sensitive research and encourage businesses to adopt gender equity practices. Collaborate with top leaders to drive a culture of gender equality across sectors.

6. Financial Institutions

Advocate for gender-responsive investments and create financial products tailored to women's needs, such as loans for female entrepreneurs. Align efforts with international financial institutions to support SDG 5 and prioritize gender equality in global financing.

7. NGOs and Women Leaders

Facilitate coalition-building among NGOs and women's organizations to address gender barriers. Amplify the voices of women leaders and ensure their inclusion in decision-making. Foster inter-generational dialogue for mentorship and leadership development.

8. Younger Generations and Marginalized Groups

Empower young women and marginalized groups by providing leadership platforms, political participation, and entrepreneurship training. Ensure their needs are addressed through an intersectional approach. Leverage technology and social media to engage and mobilize these groups for advocacy.



The UNECE and NGO CSW B+30 Review emphasizes a multi-pronged approach to gender equality, integrating gender-responsive policies, rebuilding institutions, and engaging all sectors. Strategic media use and intergenerational dialogue will dismantle barriers and drive progress toward an equitable future.

The UNECE and NGO CSW B+30 Review highlighted the importance of taking a multi-pronged approach to achieving gender equality. The gaps and challenges identified throughout the summit reflect broader international concerns addressed in forums such as UNECE, COPs, and ECOSOC. Implementing gender-responsive policies, engaging younger generations, and rebuilding institutional mechanisms ensures that progress is sustained. By strategically using the media and fostering intergenerational dialogue, we can drive the global community toward a more equitable future, dismantling entrenched barriers and building lasting progress.

