

United Nations Commission on Status
of Women 69th session (CSW69)
Graduate Women International
Delegate Reports Summary
March 2025



2025 Priority Theme

The CSW69 held in March 2025, focused on the theme: *“The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly”*



Introduction

The CSW69, held in March 2025, marked a pivotal point in the global review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, thirty years after its adoption. This report reflects the participation and insights of Graduate Women International (GWI) delegates from around the world who engaged—both in person and virtually—in official sessions, side events, and civil society dialogues.

The content is organized according to the 12 Critical Areas of Concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. The discussions addressed a wide spectrum of themes, including the ***economic empowerment of women, digital violence, climate justice, the rights of adolescent girls, the visibility of older women, and the continued underrepresentation of women in positions of power and decision-making.***

At a time when educational disparities are widening and gender-focused policies face increasing resistance, CSW69 reaffirmed the need for coordinated international action, sustained civil society engagement, and the protection and advancement of the rights of women and girls. ***GWI's delegation brought intergenerational insight and global expertise, emphasizing education as a critical tool for dismantling barriers to learning and opportunity for women and girls.***

This publication presents GWI delegates key takeaways during CSW69, with particular emphasis on the need for the concrete implementation of commitments made under the Beijing Platform for Action.

Graduate Women International extends its sincere appreciation to the delegates who contributed their time and expertise in compiling the reports that follow.

CSW69 Participation Summary submitted by Shaila Rao Mistry, GWI VP Advocacy

“CSW69 marked a pivotal moment in global efforts to advance women’s empowerment, reaffirming the need for high-level advocacy to achieve gender equality. This year’s session was a critical platform for advancing women’s rights amid global political, social, and economic changes. GWI’s and WG-USA’s advocacy role in promoting women’s participation in decision-making has never been more vital, and our presence at CSW69 ensured our voice was heard. Following a partial report on CSW69.” Read Shaila’s comprehensive report can be read [HERE](#).

The Girl Child

➤ **Terry Oudraad**, GWI-Netherlands, attended the **“Asia-Pacific young feminists at the forefront of the BPfA implementation”**

“In Fiji, CEDAW implemented: law against child marriages upgraded from 12 years to 16. Also focusing on measurements against digital violence. In Mongolia BPfA remains crucial for women and girls to get their human rights. BPfA remains an symbol for hope, commitment is not enough need action in real life. The speaker did not know what feminism was. The speaker from Kyrgyzstan, puss for climate change, women and girls in rural areas do not know much about the issue.

In China women and girls with disabilities need help. They are developing a mini app for hearing and visually impaired. Also, awareness-raising workshops on sexual and reproductive health services for person with disabilities, is a very good way of creating awareness and helping healthcare workers to provide more disability-inclusive healthcare. The speakers were all young women very dedicated.”

➤ **Terry Oudraad**, GWI-Netherlands, also attended **“Educating Women and Girls: Advancing their Empowerment and Equality”**

“100 years ago, in 1925, in Newfoundland and Labrador (Canada) vote for women was achieved. There were ladies reading rooms where women could meet and discuss & push for the right to vote. The current climate changes is bad for girls especially after covid, they often do not go back to school however tablets/ cellphones are a way to help them get educated. Ofcourse do need electricity etc and the funds to obtain these phones. Critical thinking is also necessary, think out of the box, and as Soon-Young Yoon, she discovered that the UN is the most democratic institution institute in the world. Talk about the issues, and see how we in the developed world can help inspite of the cutbacks in funding by various countries.”

➤ **Dr. Maureen Byrne**, GWI UN Representative, New York, attended **“Power4Girls: Invest in girls, transform the world”**

“It is clear that adolescent girls have significant strengths as well as challenges. This session addressed the

the issues they are facing and successful programs that have resulted from collaboration between UNICEF, national governments, philanthropic foundations, grassroots organizations, and adolescent girls themselves.”

➤ **Amplifying voices and leadership of Women-led organisations in humanitarian GBV-response – a dialogue about expectations and realities”**

“The Sessions most important findings were: Keep on fighting, resisting and building new realities, go from control to trust if it comes to address the donors, bring in the youth led women organisations. This side event at the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) aimed to amplify the voices and leadership of Women-Led Organisations (WLOs) from the Majority World engaged in gender- based violence (GBV) interventions in humanitarian action.

It provided a platform for dialogue and exchange among WLOs, donor governments, and other stakeholders to advance the meaningful participation of WLOs in humanitarian GBV response and coordination. By centring the voices of WLOs, this event sought to address power relations in the humanitarian system and highlight women’s leadership in building a more equitable, accountable system that empowers women and girls.

• Objectives of this session:

- Amplify the voices and enhance the visibility of WLOs through the global CSW platform
- Reinforce commitments on women’s leadership and future direction of WLOs’ participation in GBV Interventions
- Engage donors and humanitarian stakeholders in key recommendations
- Foster collaboration between WLOs, donors and humanitarian stakeholders
- Present findings of the report “Redefining Resilience: Strengthening Women-Led Organisations to Lead GBV Intervention in Crisis Situations” widely and advocate for systemic change”

Strengthen WLOs, recognizing that their leadership directly improves support and outcomes for the communities they serve.”

Women and the environment

➤ **Dr. Maureen Byrne, GWI UN Representative, New York, attended “Explanation of Position on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Political Declaration”**

“The US rejects climate change, the right to development, temporary measures for parity, the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, CEDAW, government regulation of online platforms, and indicates that violence against women in the US is caused by migrants, foreign criminals, and an open-border ideology.”

➤ **Sally Dunbar**, Graduate Women New Zealand, attended **“Harnessing Aotearoa NZ's GenZ leadership to confront gender equity barriers”**

“This powerful session featured young leaders from Pacifica Inc, YWCA, and Te Rōpū Wāhine Māori Toko i te Ora (Māori Women’s Welfare League), sharing their insights on gender equity. Despite Aotearoa New Zealand’s reputation for progress, intersectional challenges persist, particularly for Māori, Pacific, and ethnic communities. The discussion highlighted resilience, cultural wisdom, and a commitment to social justice.

Key Themes & Reflections from the Gen Z Panel:

- **Ancestral Stories & Language Restoration:**

The panel spoke of the deep connection to their ancestors, whose stories guide them in reclaiming their language and identity.

- **Intergenerational Impact & Historical Cycles:**

Displacement, land separation, and systemic barriers continue to affect Indigenous and Pacific communities. Learning from history helps shape a better future.

- **Connection to Land & Collective Identity:**

The land embodies life force and identity. No one stands alone—each person is interwoven into the collective fabric of their people.

- **Responsibility & Shared Goals:**

Past struggles remain raw, but there is a duty to acknowledge them while forging shared goals for Māori and Pacific communities.

- **Inspiration from Role Models:**

The panelists highlighted Brianna Fruean, a South Pacific advocate for climate justice. Grandparents also played a crucial role in shaping their cultural identity through storytelling and weaving traditions, strengthening intergenerational connections.

- **Representation & Language Pride:**

Many faced language discrimination, both in the Pacific and New Zealand. The key message: wear your culture and language proudly.

- **Leadership Behind the Scenes:**

True leadership is about making space for others, ensuring historically silenced voices are heard.

Closing Reflection:

Guided by “Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua” (I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past), the session reinforced that while Gen Z is paving new paths, their leadership is deeply rooted in ancestral wisdom. They are not just confronting barriers but shaping Aotearoa’s future with purpose.”

Women and the economy

▶ **Sally Dunbar**, Graduate Women New Zealand, attended “ **Empowerment of Women in Politics, Economy and Education**”

“This event, co-hosted by the International Council of Women (ICW), Welcome Clubs International (WCI), and the Korean Institute for Women and Politics (KIWP), evaluated progress since the Beijing Declaration and addressed barriers that continue to limit women’s full participation in politics and the economy.

Key Takeaways from the panel:

1. The Gender Leadership Gap

Despite progress, women remain underrepresented in leadership across politics and business. In 2024, only 27% of parliamentary seats and 23% of cabinet positions worldwide were held by women, with just 10.4% of Fortune 500 CEOs being female. The 20% global gender pay gap reinforces financial disparities that hinder women from entering politics, where funding is crucial.

2. Barriers to Women’s Political Participation

Structural barriers, including economic and social biases, masculine political culture, and psychological violence, continue to discourage women from entering politics. Gender-based political violence is normalised and must be actively addressed. Women need funding, networks, and institutional support to run for office.

3. Economic Inequality and Women’s Financial Empowerment

With men holding the majority of global wealth, women’s financial independence is critical to closing the gap. Solutions discussed included:

- Care infrastructure to prevent women from being forced out of the workforce.
- Asset management strategies to help women build and retain wealth.
- Social protection systems to ensure economic security for vulnerable women.

4. Technology’s Role in Gender Equality : Safe and secure digital tools like Harnessmap and SafetyPin help women access information and build networks while staying protected from online threats. Gender-inclusive technology must be prioritised to strengthen women’s participation in governance, economics, and policymaking.

5. Collaboration and Collective Action

Intergenerational collaboration is key—honouring the wisdom of older generations while empowering young women to lead change. The fight for gender equality must move beyond rhetoric and result in policy shifts that prioritise care, inclusivity, and women’s economic control.

Final message: Women make up 52% of the global population—why are others still determining our lives? It’s time to shift power, build a critical mass of women in leadership, and ensure gender equality is embedded in all decision-making.”

➤ **Sally Dunbar**, Graduate Women New Zealand, attended **“Do Older Women Have Economic and Social Rights?”**

“This virtual parallel event at CSW69/Beijing+30 examined the economic and social status of older women since the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. While the Beijing Platform advanced women's rights, older women remain overlooked in gender equality discussions. The session explored progress over three decades, barriers to economic security and social inclusion, and strategies to enhance protections for older women. Discussions focused on policies addressing poverty reduction, financial independence, access to services, and recognition of older women's contributions in both paid and unpaid roles. The panel discussion covered three key perspectives:

- Yesterday – Reviewing commitments made during the 1995 Beijing Conference
- Today – Examining older women's current financial realities and contributions
- Tomorrow – Exploring efforts to strengthen economic security and social protections

Speakers included Judy Lear on older women's role in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, Tanvi Patel on their current economic and social status, and Mabel Bianco on the future of older women in relation to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, with Ramsey Alwin moderating.

Despite progress, older women remain disproportionately affected by financial insecurity, age discrimination, and exclusion from economic opportunities. Many lack stable housing, struggle with financial independence, and are expected to rely on family. Forty-four percent of women over 65 do not have sufficient pension income. Many continue working in informal jobs beyond retirement age without government protections. On average, older women spend 3.5 hours daily on unpaid caregiving, limiting pension eligibility.

Older women also face systemic age discrimination, restricting access to employment, financial services, and policymaking roles. Though seven major UN documents address women's rights, older women are explicitly mentioned in only three. Governments and organisations must strengthen social protection systems, expand pension coverage, improve healthcare access, and provide microfinance options. Recognising unpaid caregiving as formal labour with financial benefits is essential. Addressing age discrimination, increasing financial inclusion, and ensuring representation in global policies will help older women age with dignity, security, and confidence. Aging should not mean invisibility or economic hardship.”

Institutional mechanisms

➤ **Sally Dunbar**, Graduate Women New Zealand, attended the CSW69 Workshop **“Shaping Tomorrow – Young Women Pioneering Change for Equality”**

“This CSW69 workshop highlighted the role of young women in driving gender equality and leadership. With the global youth population at 1.8 billion, discussions focused on breaking systemic barriers, increasing participation in decision-making, and fostering collaboration. The session addressed key challenges and opportunities to support young women in shaping a more inclusive future.

Key challenges:

Despite progress, young women face structural, cultural, and societal barriers that limit leadership opportunities:

- **Confidence & Gender Stereotypes:** Many young women struggle with self-doubt and fear of failure, reinforced by societal expectations.
- **Limited Access to Decision-Making:** Age bias and systemic exclusion prevent young women from participating in leadership.
- **Funding & Resource Gaps:** Many initiatives lack financial support, mentorship, and sustainability.
- **Digital Harassment:** Gender-based cyberattacks discredit young women’s voices and discourage advocacy.
- **Balancing Advocacy & Careers:** Engaging in activism can impact career progression due to gender biases.
- **Cultural & Legal Barriers:** Institutional restrictions and deep-rooted norms hinder young women’s advancement.
- **Lack of Mentorship & Representation:** Without relatable role models, young women struggle to envision leadership pathways.

Opportunities for Change:

The workshop identified solutions to empower young women as leaders and change-makers:

- **Scholarships & Financial Support:** Expanding education, mentorship, and funding for leadership development.
- **Confidence & Leadership Training:** Public speaking, advocacy, and networking programmes to build skills.
- **Safe Learning Spaces:** Creating inclusive, non-hierarchical environments where women can fail, learn, and grow.
- **Technology for Change:** Digital platforms can break barriers and amplify voices.
- **Policy & Systemic Reform:** Strengthening laws, workplace policies, and cyber protections to support gender equality.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Training young women in financial literacy and leadership.
- **Intergenerational Collaboration:** Encouraging partnerships between young and senior leaders for shared learning

Conclusion: This session reinforced that young women are not just the future—they are the present. By removing barriers and investing in leadership, we can create a more inclusive, empowered future.”

 **Aisha Alshawaf**, British Federation of Women Graduates (BFWG), attended the **CSW69 Town Hall meeting**

“I Attended the General Assembly at United Nations for CSW town hall session. Discussing gender equality Secretary General Antonio Guterres gave a talk started by thanking the civil society standing with them on the front line and the Importance of learning solutions from civil society.

Stopping misogyny is one of the development goals yet it is still present not only in underdeveloped countries and conflict zones such as Sudan & Afghanistan, but also increasingly in the developed world as well. Equality should be at the heart of the matter.”



Aisha Alshawaf

Women in Power and Decision-making

➤ **Suzanne Nette**, GWI Intern, attended the online parallel event **“Empowering Young Women for Sustainable Development: Progress and Future”**

“Sudha Srivastava started the session with a presentation on leadership development. She claimed that female leadership matters because it enables diversity, inclusiveness and economic growth. Leadership positions are difficult to access for women because of challenges such as gender bias and societal stereotypes, work-life balance pressures, limited mentorship and networking opportunities, unequal access to leadership roles and training. To encourage female leadership, we can make sure girls are being exposed to role models, we can work with schools and children picture books to normalise women in leadership roles. Targeted leadership training programs, skill development and confidence-building workshops are also effective.

Cynthia A. Adinortey then talked about period poverty and menstrual hygiene. Period poverty often prevents girls from going to school, has educational impact, health risk, social and economic implications. Girls in rural and peri-urban areas can miss 3 to 5 days of school each month. Period poverty is exacerbated by a luxury tax on foreign sanitary pads, making them unaffordable. The Ghana Association of University Women created “the GAUW Menstrual Hygiene Project”. It focused on empowering women and girls by providing them with knowledge and tools about periods. Girls and boys need to be educated on the matter.

Finally, Nyarai Tunjera talked about digital literacy and AI. 250 million women worldwide lack digital skills, limiting their economic opportunities. Women are 45% less likely to have digital skills than men. She considers digital literacy as a human right. She participated and organized digital literacy training for marginalised women and girls in Cape town to improve their lives, enhance their opportunities and contribute to their communities. Many of these programmes face challenges and need further support.”

► **Dr. Anino Emuwa, BFWG, attended “Women Rise For All: Turning Hope into Action”**

“The event, jointly organized by the UN Office for Partnerships and UN Women, is part of the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) and will highlight the transformative power of women’s leadership in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It will provide a platform for intergenerational connection, collaboration, and bold commitments to action. Over 400 women leaders at Women Rise for All: Turning hope into action, convened by Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations alongside the Commission on the Status of Women, to discuss the path ahead for gender equality and highlight the transformative power of women’s leadership.

Speakers included: H.E. Amina Mohammed DSG United Nations, H.E. Halla Tomasdottir, President of Iceland, Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director, UN Women , Jessica Sibley, CEO, Time Inc., María Fernanda Espinosa, Former President, UN General Assembly, Executive Director, GWL, Annemarie Hou, Executive Director, UN Office for Partnerships, Alyse Nelson, President & CEO, Vital Voices Global Partnership and Michelle Li, co-founder, Women and Climate The first time the UN has convened a gathering of this magnitude of women leaders, this was more than a conversation-it was a call to action.

Together, we are forging intergenerational connections, fostering collaboration, and driving bold commitments to a more equitable future.”

► **Mariam Ishak, from the NFA Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), attended “50 years on - Icelandic quest for equality”**

“The legacy of the 1975 Women’s Strike in shaping Icelandic society. Policy innovations: From gender quotas to equal pay laws. The country elected the first female leader in 1980. In 1982 & 1983 the 1st female political parties were formed. Intersectionality: Addressing diverse challenges in gender equality. The global perspectives are the lessons learned and future aspirations.”

► **Terry Oudraad, GWI-Netherlands, attended “Women in Power, Getting to 50-50 at the Table, March 12, 2025”**

“Many suggestions and actions as mentioned, see above. But also work with men to achieve parity. We need that if women we want to succeed, start also by training your son, nephew to view the world in a more feminist way. Also make sure that women get positions such as as minister for Defense, Mining, Finance etc. Women need to believe in themselves, build confidence, women should support women.”



Irene Natividad, Ambassador Delphine O, Gertrude Mongella and Ranjana Kumari

➤ **Women Leadership: How traumas develop power and decision making”**

“The Power of this Women’s Leadership Event was nice! Five incredible women leaders from different careers and from working and living in 20 countries came together to share their stories about Leadership & Trauma.

The individual stories and inputs were about migration, motherhood, workplace discrimination and career. Every story resonated with those listening. These narratives weren’t just personal; they were universal, touching on the deep and often unspoken ways our experiences shape the leaders we become. The Speakers were: Berthe De Vos-Neven, Oleksandra Harmash, Beata Wandachowicz-Krason, Marilupe Morales de Velasco, Shirley Kaye Randell AO, PhD.”

Human rights of Women

➤ **Dr Anino Emuwa, BFWG, attended the opening session of CSW69**

“The sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the status of Women at United Nations Headquarters in New York, started with an opening session with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations and Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women, Abdulaziz M. Alwasil and the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Sima Bahous.

For the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. The event brought together Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and non-governmental organisations.

During the session, a political declaration was adopted by consensus by governments, to respect, protect, and champion the rights, equality, and empowerment of women and girls. This included:

The need to uphold all human rights and fundamental freedoms for every woman and girl, without exception, the need to integrate women’s voices and leadership into all stages of conflict prevention, peace building, and conflict resolution. 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. The necessity of closing the gender digital divide, the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including emerging forms such as digital violence, online harassment, and cyberbullying. Many members of the GWI delegation were in attendance.”

➤ **“Turning Push-Back into Progress”**

“The global movement against gender equality is a crisis impacting the lives of women and girls everywhere. With gender equality policies under attack, the need for a united, powerful response is urgent. How do we safeguard advancements already made? How do we counter the push-back? And how do we come together to maximize our impact? Join Nordic and international activists and experts as they unveil bold strategies to reverse the tide and drive forward gender equality. Let’s push for progress together.”

➤ **Mariam Ishak**, from the NFA Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), attended the event **“From Vision to Reality: Saudi Arabia's Journey Towards Women Empowerment”**

“Speakers & Key Figures: Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Wasil (UN Ambassador): Presented several initiatives promoting women's economic and social participation, especially in STEM fields. Dr. Sima sami Bahaus (Executive Director, UN Women). Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saude (CEO, Rotana Group): Advocated for children and women rights and led several initiatives like "waayia" project.

Dr. Maymouna Al Khalil (Head of Family Affairs Council): Addressed key legislative gaps affecting women's empowerment. Dr. Hanan El Ahmady (Member, Shura Council): Spoke on legislative efforts supporting women's rights and leadership. Prof. Einas Al-Eisa (Leader, Princess Noura University – the largest women’s university in the world): Highlighted Saudi women’s increasing presence in education.

Legislative Reforms: 2022: Introduction of Family Law and removal of the male guardianship requirement. Women now hold 31% of law practice licenses in Saudi Arabia. Several female mayors and members of the shura council

Economic Empowerment: Women’s workforce participation rose from 22% to 35% under Vision 2030. 24.7% of small & medium businesses in Saudi Arabia are women-owned.

Cultural & Artistic Empowerment: 3,500 female artisans trained to preserve Saudi culture and craftsmanship. Production of 12,000 cultural pieces distributed in major world events

STEM & Education Growth: Women now outnumber men in primary and university education. Princess Noura University continues to lead in female higher education as the largest female university in the world.

Vision 2030 & Future Outlook: Strengthening policies that support women in leadership roles, expanding female participation in STEM and entrepreneurship, enhancing legal protections and social reforms for women’s rights.

➤ **Mbayame Ndiaye**, Association Sénégalaise des Femmes Diplômées des Universités, attended **CSW69 events**

“1- Guteress extends his sincere thanks to civil society for its stance in these difficult times of rising misogyny, which is reversing the progress made in improving the conditions of women, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Beijing and also the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325. He concluded his

remarks thus: also the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325. He concluded his remarks thus: "I will fight with you and for you." According to him, resistance must be resisted so that societies can preserve their vital interests, and the mobilization of young people is essential.

2- Recommitment, financing, and acceleration of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by governments, with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3- récent data on gender equality statuts in armed conflict

Key WPS agenda mechanisms : UNSCR 1325 (2000) and US WPS act (2017), lock of accountability seen throught the

« comfort women » agreement

Recommendations for upholding and implementing WPS principles and commitments :

Increase Women’s représentation in leadership rôles in conflict-related policymaking;

US government must adopt a feminist foreign policy ;

Redéfinie conflict and préserve the histories and voices of women and families affected by conflict -related violence throught education.

4- The causes and consequences of child marriage. In addition to coercive measures, most of which have proved ineffective, calls for positive masculinity education have been made.

5- The high-level network on gender-responsive policing to combat violence against women met to assess the progress made since its creation. Senegal and Chile are playing an extraordinary role in this area by providing the necessary prevention and optimum care for survivors.

Over time, several countries have joined the network and 88% of member countries have documented progress. Senegal shared its mechanisms for protecting women's rights, in particular the gender policy of Vision 2050, which places women at its heart. The Minister of the Interior also reaffirmed the national police force's commitment to gender-sensitive policing practices.

Wanda Bedard, founder of the 60 Million Girls Foundation, also shared the offline digital learning activities she has developed for isolated communities. According to her, this technology enables students to access locally adapted, culturally relevant and language-specific learning materials and content. Other great female leaders shared what they are doing to boost the leadership of women.”

Violence against Women

➤ **Terry Oudraad**, GWI-Netherlands, attended **“Threats and Opportunities of Digital Technologies: Women in the Public Eye”**

“Setbacks and challenges arising from/ during the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall the pandemic has shed light on pre-existing gaps already identified by GREVIO in the area of specialist services, magnifying them and/or giving rise to new shortcomings. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence. The Discrimination and Violence against Women Platform (EDVAW Platform) is highly alarmed at the increase in technology-

facilitated violence, and what this means for pre-existing power hierarchies. The Platform released its first thematic paper on the digital dimension of violence against women in 2022, with many of the mechanisms also publishing individual studies and policies on the topic.

The Platform is highly concerned with the emerging new digital dimension of violence against women and girls. A standard definition of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls is lacking, which contributes to a global dearth of comparable statistics. However, the data that has been gathered at the national and local levels supports high prevalence rates.

The rapid expansion of digital spaces has not only mirrored but, in many cases, amplified the structural inequalities and patriarchal norms that perpetuate gender-based violence.

Online harassment, cyberstalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and other forms of digital abuse have become pervasive, disproportionately targeting women and girls on intersecting grounds. This digital violence reinforces existing power imbalances and undermines women and girls participation in society. Digital platforms also fuel misogynistic and sexist attacks making it more difficult for victims to access justice and reparations and exacerbating their social and economic vulnerabilities. The Platform urges a comprehensive and coordinated response to this threat, emphasizing the need for stronger mandatory regulatory frameworks, increased digital literacy, and the development of effective mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable in the virtual realm.

Thus, without concerted action, the unchecked rise of technology-facilitated violence threatens to undermine the progress made in advancing gender equality and could entrench the very hierarchies that the Beijing Platform for Action seeks to dismantle.”

► **Terry Oudraad, GWI-Netherlands, attended “AI and Digital Building an Inclusive Future Technology”**

“Women & children in all the Nordic countries face a lot of online harassment. In Norway especially the girls, 3 times more than boys, also deep fake videos are a growing concern.

We need to learn from history and although the laws have change, and all citizens should be treaty equal this is not always the case. The laws must be implemented and upheld. Focus on security, women in Sweden are afraid to walk home at night thus also security needs to be implemented.

Equal pay legislation is in place just as childcare in most Nordic countries however not always properly implemented.

Also issues as menopause and hormone health should be an issue for women, this was put to the panel by a member of the Dutch Women's Council who was also at CSW69. Sweden was in total agreement women's health issues at any age should be at the forefront.”

Education and training of Women

▶ **Sally Dunbar**, Graduate Women New Zealand, attended “**Friday 14 March 2025: Women’s Empowerment Toolkit**”

“Women’s Empowerment Toolkit: A Roadmap for Change”

The Women’s Empowerment Toolkit event, sponsored by the International Human Rights Consortium (IHRC), brought together an expert panel to discuss strategies for overcoming social, economic, and cultural barriers that limit women’s progress. The session provided a roadmap for fostering an inclusive and empowered world for women.

Panel Speakers:

- Janice Robinson – President, International Human Rights Consortium
- Sita Somara – Advocate for financial empowerment and access to education
- Bobbie Shrivastava – Expert in digital transformation and enterprise workflows
- Jvothi Para – Mentor and champion for women in leadership

Key Themes:

The panel reinforced that empowerment is a lifelong journey and that women must have access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities to thrive.

1. Economic Empowerment – Financial independence is essential for personal freedom. This includes improving access to education, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship while addressing financial barriers such as university tuition and funding for women-led businesses.
2. Educational Empowerment – Investing in education equips women with critical thinking skills and the ability to make informed decisions. Bridging the gap between education and industry through mentorship and career readiness programs is essential.
3. Social Empowerment – Building confidence, resilience, and networks enables women to become role models and leaders in their communities.
4. Political Empowerment – Knowing one’s rights in the workplace, property ownership, and safety laws is key to advocating for change. Encouraging women to participate in community action and policy advocacy ensures their voices are heard.
5. Wellness Empowerment – Mental and physical health are essential for success. Prioritising self-care, work-life balance, and access to healthcare allows women to care for themselves before supporting others.

The discussion also explored bridging the gap between education and industry, highlighting the need for stronger partnerships with universities, NGOs, and businesses to prepare women for employment. The session reinforced that small steps today can lead to lasting change, ensuring women have the tools to take control of their lives, contribute to society, and promote a stronger, more inclusive world.”

➤ **Patrice Wellesley-Cole**, President GWI, attended **“AI and Digital Building an Inclusive Future Technology”**

“AI and Technology may have transformed the world but it is not a panacea for Society’s ills nor will it replace human creativity, judgement or common sense. It augments human capacity, does not replace it. The inclusive nature and market of AI and Technology means a quality education can be rolled out to the 4 corners of the earth through generative AI.

I stressed GWI’s written statement to the 2024 HRC - Integrate AI digital skills into education programmes to prepare students for future challenges and promote responsible innovation. Promote cross- sector partnerships to enhance educational access and quality particularly in emergency and post- conflict situations ensuring that digital education and AI resources are included for equitable development. Recommit to equipping women and girls with the knowledge to navigate future job markets and understand the ethical imperatives of AI promoting responsibility, innovation and creating a culture of Peace in an increasingly digital World.”

➤ **Sally Dunbar**, Graduate Women New Zealand, attended **“Educating Women and Girls: Advancing their Empowerment and Equality”**

“Attending this NGO CSW69 parallel event, co-hosted by the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) and Women Graduates-USA, was inspiring and thought-provoking. The discussion explored how education drives gender equality and leadership, emphasising the need for innovation, collaboration, and action.

Key Takeaways:

1. Education as a Pathway to Leadership

Joan-Marie Aylward highlighted that leadership is shaped by education, empathy, confidence, and strong communication. She stressed the value of intergenerational learning and mentorship from both men and women. Safe spaces like The Reading Room allow women to connect and uplift each other.

2. Ensuring Access to Quality Education

Wanda Bedard noted that education reduces poverty and fosters stability, but displacement and marginalisation still hinder girls’ learning. Innovation is key—tools like the ‘Rachel’ server provide free, self-directed education in local languages, increasing literacy, confidence, and school attendance without requiring Wi-Fi.

3. Developing Critical Thinking in Women and Girls

Geeta Desai emphasised the changing global landscape, requiring women to strengthen critical thinking, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. Encouraging debate, questioning biases, and fostering multi-perspective problem-solving are crucial for the next generation of female leaders.

4. Addressing Barriers to the Beijing Platform for Action

Soon-Young Yoon highlighted the gap between commitments on paper and real action. Governments must be held accountable. Media plays a major role in educating society and driving change. Gender equality is interconnected with social and ecological systems, demanding global collaboration.

5. The Role of CEDAW and Collective Action

There was a strong call to bring CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) back into CSW discussions. The session closed with a reminder:

Raise women up, keep the conversation going, and never forget the path that led us here. Power comes through the vote—use it. This session reinforced the urgency of education, innovation, and collective action in advancing gender equality. The conversation was uplifting and informative.”

Sincere thanks to everyone who participated in CSW69. Your active involvement strengthened the voice and presence of the GWI delegation.