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## Commission on the Status of Women

### Sixty-ninth session

New York, 10–21 March 2025

Agenda item 3 (a)

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution [2022/5](#))**

## High-level interactive dialogue: Beijing@30: a dialogue with youth representatives

### Chair’s summary

1. On 14 March 2025, the Commission on the Status of Women held a high-level interactive dialogue entitled “Beijing@30: a dialogue with youth representatives” to reflect on the progress made since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with youth representatives from Member States’ delegations and civil society organizations. The Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy of Ukraine, Kateryna Levchenko, chaired the meeting, while the United Nations youth representative for human rights and security for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Fenna Timsi, moderated the interactive dialogue.

2. The following speakers made opening remarks: an amputee peer counsellor from the Mobility Clinic Limited, Eva Chukwunelo; an activist and member of the Beijing+30 Youth Steering Committee, Ema Meçaj; Governance Coordinator, Young Diplomats of Canada, Ahdithya Visweswaran; the founder of the Indigenous youth organization Anyar, Laura Dihaignidili Huertas Thompson; and a manager of the Criterion Institute, Sanjana Chhantyal. Of the 27 speakers from Member States, 24 were youth representatives. All eight of the speakers from civil society organizations were young people. The Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Sima Bahous, presented opening remarks reflecting on and emphasizing the importance of young people in advancing gender equality.



**Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action 30 years after its adoption**

3. The interactive dialogue brought together young leaders and advocates to reflect on the progress made since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, which is a comprehensive framework for gender equality and the rights of women and girls. Several participants highlighted the fact that women and girls continued to be disproportionately affected by discriminatory laws, limited access to leadership positions and systemic barriers that prevented their full participation in decision-making processes. They underscored the urgent need for structural transformation to fulfil the promises of the Beijing Platform for Action, and called for inclusive policies, financial justice and systemic change. Speakers emphasized the fact that women and girls with disabilities remained invisible in policies and budgets owing to a lack of disaggregated data. They described the Beijing Platform for Action as a global road map for gender equality, stressing the importance of localizing commitments, addressing poverty and femicide, and ensuring the participation of young people in policymaking. Some speakers stressed that gender equality required dismantling patriarchal norms, engaging men and boys as active allies of change and institutionalizing accountability frameworks to accelerate progress.

4. Participants highlighted progress with respect to the strengthening of normative, legal and policy frameworks to improve the rights and opportunities of women and girls, including gender-responsive legislation, protection against gender-based violence and increased access to education and healthcare. They emphasized the importance of aligning those efforts with overarching international commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure long-term impact.

5. Speakers called for stronger protections for Indigenous women and girls, and women and girls of African descent, denouncing systemic inequalities and forced displacement while reaffirming the role of young people as critical allies in the fight for justice. They reflected on the financial system's role in perpetuating gender inequality, emphasizing the need to invest in women-led solutions and ensure the representation of women in economic decision-making.

**Ensuring the inclusion and representation of young people**

6. All participants highlighted the importance of inclusive policies that ensured equal opportunities for all, particularly for young women with disabilities, Indigenous women and girls, and other historically marginalized groups. They emphasized the need for comprehensive data collection, representation in decision-making spaces and inclusive education that catered to diverse needs. They also called for greater representation in the media, business and governance to challenge existing stereotypes and promote societal transformation.

7. Several participants pointed out the need for institutional efforts to ensure inclusion to move beyond tokenism and symbolic justice. One noted that young women with disabilities remained absent from classrooms and decision-making spaces, reinforcing systemic exclusion. Without sustained action, those gaps would continue to exclude the most vulnerable from meaningful participation and impede the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 5.

**Engaging men and boys as agents of change**

8. Several speakers emphasized the role of men and boys as active partners rather than passive supporters in dismantling patriarchal norms and achieving gender equality. They underscored the need to challenge entrenched notions of masculinity

that perpetuated violence and inequality. Young men and boys should not be seen as peripheral participants but rather as key stakeholders in the gender equality agenda.

9. Speakers highlighted the fact that socialization played a crucial role in shaping gender norms, arguing that cultural transformation must begin early in families, schools and communities. Institutionalizing accountability frameworks and providing resources to ensure widespread change were identified as necessary steps. One participant noted that institutional and ideological barriers still limited the role of men, despite efforts by civil society organizations to include men in gender equality initiatives.

### **Enhancing education, training and skills development**

10. Participants emphasized the fundamental role of education in achieving gender equality and economic empowerment. They highlighted the importance of ensuring equal access to education for girls, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings, where barriers such as displacement, gender-based violence and limited infrastructure continued to hinder progress.

11. Speakers also stressed the necessity of integrating digital literacy into educational curricula in order to address the gender gap in technology and provide young women with the skills required to compete in the labour market. Furthermore, the role of the media in changing mindsets and increasing representation was underscored, as media and storytelling played a crucial role in shaping gender norms and encouraging girls to see themselves as leaders and change-makers.

12. Several participants pointed out that many young women and girls, particularly those from marginalized and rural communities, still faced significant challenges in accessing high-quality education, despite existing commitments. One participant noted that the existing educational divide would only widen without targeted investments in digital infrastructure and inclusive learning environments, depriving millions of girls of the tools needed to shape their own futures.

### **Implementing economic and social policies to ensure the economic empowerment of young women**

13. Various participants emphasized the importance of economic and financial justice as a key pillar in the achievement of gender equality for all, including young women. Despite progress with respect to the promotion of financial inclusion, economic inequalities persisted, as women and girls remained disproportionately affected by poverty. Participants called for gender-responsive budgeting and equal pay policies to address the systemic economic disparities that disproportionately affected women. In addition, they stressed the need to improve financial access, in particular for marginalized women, including those in rural areas and conflict settings, who often faced structural barriers in accessing credit, banking and entrepreneurial opportunities.

14. Participants also underscored the need to recognize and value unpaid care work within economic systems, advocating policies that redistributed care responsibilities and integrated social protection mechanisms to support women's economic participation. Many participants urged decision makers to adopt gender-responsive budgets, which they viewed as an essential measure in that regard.

15. Numerous participants highlighted the importance of supporting women and girls through training, education and mentorship in fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Several mentioned the importance of investing in young people and start-up companies.

**Strengthening the collective voice, leadership and decision-making of young women**

16. Participants stressed the importance of ensuring that young women were included in political processes and decision-making at all levels. They called for gender quotas and leadership programmes to address the persistent underrepresentation of women, particularly those from marginalized communities. Feminist, intersectional and intergenerational approaches to governance were highlighted as essential for the creation of inclusive policies that reflected the needs of all women and girls.

17. Participants also emphasized the need to strengthen the collective voice and leadership of young women by institutionalizing youth engagement in political spaces, ensuring that young advocates were not only consulted but permitted to actively shape policies and governance structures.

18. Several participants pointed out that young women continued to face systemic barriers, including colonial legacies, discriminatory legal frameworks and electoral violence, which hindered their political participation. One participant noted that a lack of sustained investment in mentorship programmes, childcare support and gender-responsive governance reforms would inhibit the meaningful engagement of young women in leadership, reinforcing their exclusion from decision-making spaces.

**Ending gender-based violence**

19. Speakers emphasized the fact that gender-based violence, including femicide and domestic violence, remained an urgent challenge worldwide. Many highlighted the increasing prevalence of cyberviolence and digital harassment, which were pushing women and girls out of public spaces and limiting their participation in online and offline activism.

20. Participants also called for policies that prioritized prevention, in order to ensure that legal frameworks, education and community-based interventions complemented one another to eliminate all forms of violence against women, girls and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people, and to guarantee their access to justice.

21. Participants pointed out that enforcement remained weak and social norms continued to allow violence to persist, even in regions with stronger legal frameworks. One speaker noted that meaningful progress in eliminating gender-based violence would remain out of reach without sustained investment in survivor-centred services and accountability mechanisms.

**Links between climate change and gender justice**

22. Participants emphasized that the climate crisis disproportionately affected women and girls, particularly those from Indigenous and marginalized communities. They highlighted the fact that climate change exacerbated existing inequalities, limiting women's access to education, economic opportunities and decision-making spaces.

23. Indigenous women had been at the forefront of environmental justice movements, advocating land rights, sustainable resource management and policies that recognized the intersection between gender and climate resilience. Ensuring that climate policies were gender-responsive and inclusive of women's voices was critical to achieving both environmental and gender justice.

24. Participants expressed concern that women and girls continued to be excluded from major climate decision-making forums despite international commitments. Without dedicated funding and policy reforms, the intersection of climate change and

gender justice would remain a gap in global governance, leaving vulnerable communities lacking the support needed to achieve greater resilience.

### **Protecting the health of women and girls and strengthening legal frameworks**

25. Speakers highlighted the urgent need for legal reforms to uphold human rights and eliminate discriminatory laws that perpetuated inequality. They emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health and rights as fundamental components of gender justice.

26. Participants called for the elimination of laws that continued to restrict the freedoms of women, girls and marginalized groups, advocating stronger international legal mechanisms to address human rights violations. Strengthening institutions such as the International Criminal Court and reforming the Security Council were identified as key steps towards enhancing accountability and ensuring that gender-based crimes were effectively penalized.

### **Strengthening the role of women in conflict and protecting their rights**

27. Participants stressed the importance of women's leadership in peace processes and the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. They emphasized the need for far more women to serve in leadership roles in peace negotiations, mediation efforts and post-conflict governance. Evidence showed that peace agreements were more durable when women were involved in the process.

28. Participants from countries directly affected by conflict focused on how war disproportionately affected women and girls, and the importance of elevating the voices of women and young people in post-conflict reconstruction processes. Some raised concerns about the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. They called for stronger accountability mechanisms for perpetrators, the prioritization of justice for survivors and safe reporting systems. Participants stressed the need to modify legal frameworks correspondingly.

29. Several participants highlighted the challenges faced by women displaced by war, particularly in refugee camps and regions in conflict. They stressed that the strain on resources left refugee women more vulnerable to exploitation. Youth delegates and civil society representatives called for international support to provide education, healthcare and economic opportunities for displaced women.

### **Way forward**

30. Participants identified steps that could be taken to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and overcome bottlenecks, including:

(a) Enhancing data collection and representation: governments and organizations were urged to prioritize the collection of disaggregated data to ensure that young women with disabilities, Indigenous communities and other marginalized groups were accurately represented in policymaking. Strengthening data systems would lead to evidence-based policies that addressed systemic inequalities;

(b) Expanding financial inclusion and access to economic opportunities: overcoming gendered economic disparities required reforming financial systems; increasing access to credit, investment and entrepreneurship opportunities; and ensuring equitable financial policies that supported women's social mobility;

(c) Strengthening legal protections against gender-based violence: despite existing legal frameworks, gender-based violence remained widespread, particularly in conflict and humanitarian settings. Governments were called upon to commit to

robust enforcement mechanisms, survivor-centred services and policies that prioritized prevention;

(d) Removing barriers to leadership and decision-making: addressing colonial legacies, discriminatory legal frameworks and electoral violence was essential in order to ensure the full participation of young women in leadership. Structural reforms, gender quotas and leadership programmes must be institutionalized to promote inclusion;

(e) Challenging structural and cultural barriers: dismantling patriarchal norms and harmful masculinities required early intervention through education, media representation and community engagement. Governments and civil society must work together to institutionalize accountability mechanisms that would drive long-term cultural change;

(f) Investing in education and digital access: prioritizing equitable education policies, digital literacy programmes and vocational training was critical, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings. Expanding access to technology and education infrastructure would equip young women with the skills needed to thrive in a modern economy.

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