

CSW64: An Update

The 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was due to take place between 9-20 March 2020. It is a critical part of the Beijing+25 review processes taking place this year – alongside the Generation Equality Forum and the high-level meeting at the United Nations General Assembly. However, public health concerns around the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) led to the Chair of the Commission announcing that the 2-week long event would be shortened to a 1 day procedural meeting where the draft Political Declaration would be adopted and action taken on any other draft resolutions. All official side events were cancelled and delegates, as well as other stakeholders, from outside New York were advised not to travel to the United Nations Headquarters.

Political Declaration

This year, instead of ‘Agreed Conclusions’ negotiated at the end of CSW, member states produced and adopted a [Political Declaration](#). While the Declaration reaffirms the commitments within the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), it still lacks a strong political analysis of the current global threats impeding the BPfA’s implementation and does not provide a clear path for realising the ambitious commitments made 25 years ago.

Responses to the Political Declaration

Many civil society organisations have expressed their dissatisfaction with the content of the Political Declaration. Global Unions, released the following [statement](#) highlighting how the Declaration continues to uphold a failed economic model which is responsible for so much suffering and points to the areas in the text where the language could have been strengthened – especially around labour rights and unpaid care.

To address the gaps in the Political Declaration, the Women’s Rights Caucus—a global coalition of more than 200 feminist organisations, networks and collectives that advocates for gender equality at the United Nations (UN)—has published an [Alternative Feminist Declaration](#). The Feminist Declaration outlines a bold and urgent agenda for gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls.

Next Steps

CSW64 was scheduled to formally close on Friday, 13th March 2020 after a final round of smaller meetings. However, COVID-19 has resulted in these meetings being postponed to a future date which will be announced soon. In light of the outcomes that COVID-19 has caused in relation to this year’s CSW, civil society organisations around

the world have been keen to make sure that this does not set a new precedent for future CSW convenings – namely proceeding taking place behind closed doors and without civil society involvement. There have been urgent calls for CSW64 to reconvene in its full form later on in the year. However, as the long-term public health threats posed by COVID-19 are still unknown and the UN calendar for 2020 is already full, it is highly unlikely that CSW64 will reconvene this year or replace CSW65. However, there are calls for the UN multi-stakeholder meeting scheduled for 23rd July 2020 (after the High-Level Political Forum) to be extended in order to organise side events and other feminist-led mobilisations which did not take place at this year's CSW. A formal decision has not yet been made on this proposal. ECOSOC accredited organisations looking to attend the multi-stakeholder meeting in July, as well as the United Nations General Assembly in September, should register [here](#) before the deadline on 27th March 2020.

Currently, both the Generation Equality Forum and the United Nations General Assembly are scheduled to take place as planned but the situation is evolving rapidly. The Gender and Development Network will update members accordingly.

Acknowledgements

The Gender and Development Network (GADN) brings together expert NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women's rights issues. Our vision is of a world where social justice and gender equality prevail and where all women and girls are able to realise their rights free from discrimination. Our goal is to ensure that international development policy and practice promotes gender equality and women's and girls' rights.

Gender and Development Network

c/o ActionAid
33–39 Bowling Green Lane
London EC1R 0BJ

T: +44(0)20 3122 0609
E: info@gadnetwork.org
www.gadnetwork.org

Registered charity no. 1140272

For more information

For more information about GADN, please email the GADN Coordinator at coordinator@gadnetwork.org

Disclaimer

GADN produces a series of briefings for use by our members and others in consultation with our Advisory Group and relevant Working Groups. They do not necessarily represent the views of all our members.