



High-level interactive dialogue: Accelerating implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: the role of the Commission on the Status of Women

**Thursday, 13 March, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm and
Tuesday, 18 March, 3.00 – 6.00 pm**

United Nations Headquarters – Conference Room (CR) 4

Concept Note

Overview

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946, is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality, the rights and the empowerment of women and girls. From 1947 onward, the Commission focused on setting standards and formulating international conventions to change discriminatory legislation and foster global awareness of women's issues – such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted in 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention in 1999. It was also through a decision by the Commission that the first world conference on women took place in 1975, followed by the 1976–1985 UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. Additional world

conferences took place in Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995.

In 1996, through resolution 1996/6, ECOSOC expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress on and problems with the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), as well as in mainstreaming a gender perspective across UN activities. In the Pact for the Future, adopted by the General Assembly in September 2024, ECOSOC was requested to explore options for revitalizing CSW in the context of the Beijing+30 anniversary and within the framework of strengthening the work of the Council¹.

As in previous Beijing+5 processes, a large number of Member States, especially Ministers for Gender Equality, heads of national machineries for gender equality, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), young people and other stakeholders are expected to attend the upcoming session, creating an opportunity for them to assess Commission's work over the past 78 years. It will be an occasion for different stakeholders to identify gaps, challenges and opportunities in the Commission's work, as well as to determine what is needed to ensure that its work supports and responds to the needs and demands of national machineries for gender equality in fulfilling the commitments made in the BDPfA and the 2030 Agenda. The high-level interactive dialogue will also be an opportunity to consult Ministers for Gender Equality and representatives from all Member States on options for revitalizing the Commission on the Status of Women, in line with the commitment outlined in the Pact for the Future.

Format and participation

The high-level interactive dialogue during the first week will be chaired by a minister from a Member State that is currently serving in the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women. In the second week, the high-level interactive dialogue will be chaired by the Chair of CSW, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz M. Alwasil.

The Ministers from the Member States co-facilitating the intergovernmental process on CSW revitalization, H.E. Ms. Lesego Chombo, Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs of Botswana, and H.E. Ms. Norma Foley, Minister for Children,

¹ A/RES/79/1 para 71(d)

Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland, will moderate the high-level interactive dialogue in the first week.

The two co-facilitators of the negotiations on CSW revitalization, H.E. Ms. Gladys Mokhawa, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. Fergal Mythen, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations will moderate the high-level interactive dialogue during the second week.

The dialogue will start with introductory remarks by the Chair of CSW, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz M. Alwasil, the President of ECOSOC, H.E. Mr. Robert Rae and a representative of civil society.

Following the opening remarks, ministers for gender equality and heads of national machineries for gender equality will be invited to comment on the leading questions (see below). Ministers will participate in the dialogue on a voluntary basis. No speakers' list will be kept. Initial comments will be limited to three minutes, and any follow-up comments to one minute. The dialogue will continue during the second week on 18 March with the participation of Member States, members of parliament, representatives of civil society in consultative status with ECOSOC, UN system entities, and other relevant stakeholders.

Leading questions

1. What is required to ensure that the Commission effectively supports and addresses the needs of national mechanisms for gender equality in fulfilling the commitments outlined in the BDPfA, the 2030 Agenda, and the CSW Agreed Conclusions?
2. How can the monitoring, follow-up, review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing DPfA be strengthened at CSW?
3. What new practice or way of working should be put into place to ensure that the Commission responds to new and emerging issues?
4. How differently should the commission be organized to ensure that it is fit for purpose?

Outcome

The outcome of the discussion will be in the form of a summary by the Chair of the Commission, prepared in consultation with the regional groups, through the members of the Bureau.

Run of Show for the High-Level Interactive Dialogue (Week 1, 13 March 2025)

- Chaired by a Minister from a Member State serving in the Bureau of CSW
- Co-moderated by the Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs of Botswana, H.E Ms. Lesego Chombo and the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland, H.E. Ms. Norma Foley
- Opening remarks by:
 - The Chair of CSW69, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz M. Alwasil
 - The President of ECOSOC, H.E. Mr. Robert Rae
 - A representative of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY (NGO CSW/NY), Ms. Joanne Sandler
- Interactive dialogue with ministers for gender equality and heads of national machineries for gender equality

Run of Show for the Interactive Dialogue (Week 2, 18 March 2025)

- Chaired by the Chair of CSW, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz M. Alwasil
- Opening remarks by:
 - The Chair of CSW, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz M. Alwasil
 - The President of ECOSOC, H.E. Mr. Robert Rae
- Co-moderated by H.E. Ms. Gladys Mokhawa, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations and H.E. Mr. Fergal Mythen, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations
- Interactive dialogue with Member States representatives, UN System, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders.



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13 March 2025 - 10.00 am – 1.00 pm, Conference Room 4

Speakers' and Moderators' biographies

H.E. Ms. Lesego Chombo is the Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs in Botswana and a Specially Elected Member of Parliament, advocating for women's leadership, economic empowerment, and a violence-free society. She was recently elected Chairperson of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and leads Botswana's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender-Based Violence. As Africa's youngest minister at 26, she is a champion for youth leadership. A former practicing attorney, she is also a philanthropist, running charity programs to support disadvantaged children and families. A multifaceted creative, she exemplifies the limitless potential of women.

H.E. Ms. Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD is the Minister for Health. Appointed by the Taoiseach to this role in January 2025, Dr. Carroll MacNeill previously served as Minister of State for European Affairs & Defence across the Departments of the Taoiseach, Foreign Affairs and Defence. Prior to that, she was Minister of State in the Department for Finance with special responsibility for Financial Services, Credit Unions and Insurance. Before entering elected politics, Minister Carroll MacNeill qualified as a Solicitor and Barrister. She holds a PhD in public policy where her research interest was in political institutions and the judiciary. Minister Carroll MacNeill has worked as a lawyer in the public service, both within the Oireachtas as Legal Adviser in the Office of the Leader of Fine Gael and within Government as Special Adviser in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, in the Department of Justice and Equality & in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Alwasil has been the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations since August 2022. Prior to his appointment, he served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva for six years. With extensive experience in multilateral and human rights affairs, he has held key diplomatic roles, including Deputy Head of Mission at Saudi Arabia's Embassy in London for over three years and a posting at the Saudi Embassy in Australia.

H.E. Mr. Bob Rae serves as the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations. He has a distinguished career in politics, law, and humanitarian work. A former Premier of Ontario and interim leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, he was elected 11 times to federal and provincial parliaments between 1978 and 2013. Before his UN appointment, he served as Canada's special envoy on humanitarian and refugee issues and worked extensively in governance, Indigenous affairs, and human rights. He has held academic positions at the University of Toronto and served as a mediator and arbitrator.

Ms. Joanne Sandler has been working to strengthen women's rights, gender justice and organizational change strategies in the U.S. and transnationally for more than 40 years. She is a Senior Associate of Gender at Work – a global network of consultants who support organizations to build cultures of equality. Between 2001 and 2010,

Joanne was Deputy Executive Director for the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and then on the transition team for the creation of UN Women. She is on the Board of Directors of The Common Counsel Foundation , UHAI-EASHRI-USA, and Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom and serves as a member of UN Women's Global Civil Society Advisory Group. Joanne hosts the Gender at Work podcast. She has authored numerous books and articles including Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations (Routledge Press, 2015).