

## The revitalization of the Commission on the Status of Women

### Recommendations by a group of international and regional human rights mechanisms on ending discrimination and violence against women and girls<sup>1</sup>

6 November 2024

**Background:** The [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. During the CSW's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organisations, and UN entities meet at UN headquarters in New York to discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), which is the key global policy document on gender equality, as well as issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The outcomes and recommendations of CSW sessions are forwarded to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for follow-up.

In August 2024, the President of ECOSOC proposed a task force to reform the CSW. Following this, we, the undersigned independent experts from the United Nations and regional mechanisms dedicated to the elimination of discrimination and violence against women, sent a letter to the CSW Secretariat and Chair, as well as UN Women, containing the following recommendations to revitalize CSW, with a view to enhancing the collective impact and effectiveness of CSW in eliminating gender discrimination and preventing violence against women and girls and in responding to the protection needs of survivors of violence.

- 1. Membership:** Mirroring an all-of-society approach, we proposed that the task force include a diverse group of stakeholders, encompassing representatives from civil society, United Nations agencies, academics, and experts of international and regional human rights mechanisms dedicated to combating discrimination and violence against women and girls that are part of the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform). Furthermore, we reiterated our strong interest in acting as members of the task force. To ensure maximum contribution, we recommended creating geographically representative and adequately resourced regional chapters of the task force, whose discussions can feed into the overall work of the task force at a global level and enrich its discussions.
- 2. Timeframe:** We proposed the task force be inaugurated in November 2024, allowing at least four months to prepare for the next CSW session in March 2025. We recommended that the task force assumes its functions initially for a three-year period, leading up to the Beijing +30 discussions, and then for an additional two years to complement and monitor the progress of implementing the agreements arrived at with regard to processes for a revitalized CSW.
- 3. Scope of work:** We recommended that the work of the task force centres around the following issues: (a) developing proposals for the review of Beijing +30; (b) contributing to proposals to strengthen and revitalize CSW; and (c) monitoring the work of a revitalized CSW, noting the general timeframe suggested in the above bullet point.

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<sup>1</sup> The undersigned experts serve in their individual capacity independent from any government or organization.

With a view to strengthening the Commission's working methods and impact, including in regard to its annual sessions and communications procedure, we recommended the widening of the participation of civil society, women and feminist movements, human rights defender organizations and survivor-led organizations from every region. Furthermore, we suggested that the review of countries' commitments on ending inequality and discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls be carried out in a more rigorous manner, covering the economic, social and political spheres, and emphasizing an intersectional perspective.

We further referred the Secretariat and Bureau of CSW to the process of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council, citing it as a good practice that the CSW may wish to borrow from, as it would allow for tabling the concrete track records of countries on advancing the rights of women and girls. Such examinations of the track records of countries, as well as a more global stocktaking exercise, should take into consideration the communications sent by Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and recommendations and positions of the international and regional Treaty Bodies

Moreover, we argued that a revamped CSW would benefit from placing the issue of violence against women and girls as a standing item on the agenda of every CSW session. The CSW would also benefit from a closer and more meaningful engagement with members of the EDVAW Platform, who can share expertise on regional and global trends on gender equality and the advancement of the rights of women and girls. We would like to emphasize that future CSW sessions should adopt concrete and forward-looking action points. Progress made on these action points could be reviewed in detail at the following CSW session.

Finally, we expressed our belief that it is essential to address country situations where there is a significant decline in gender equality to ensure that such deteriorations are discussed, and that collective international action is taken.

**Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Laura Nyirinkindi, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls; Ana Peláez Narváez, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and Gloria Camacho, President of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention**