



**GlobalMUNers Conference
in New York City
#GMNYC2025**

Background Guide

**Commission on the Status
of Women (CSW)**



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Greetings

Distinguished delegates,

Receive a warm welcome to the III edition of the GlobalMUNers Conference in New York City (GMNYC2025). We are excited to welcome you to the Commission on the Status of Women, a space where your analysis, commitment, and diplomatic skills will be essential to the development of this event. In this edition, the Dias of the Commission on the Status of Women is made up of Olga Issa, who leads as Chair of the committee, Paola Daboin, serving as Vice-President, and Amy Sánchez, who will act as Rapporteur.

This committee requires dedication, research, and collaboration. We will be here to provide you with support, guidance, and the necessary tools to make your experience in this committee enriching and memorable. The stage is set. Take advantage of every debate, every proposal, and every intervention to generate impact and demonstrate the importance of the work you will do here. Be bold, thoughtful, and committed, as your role will be key to giving visibility to gender issues and contributing to the construction of a more equitable future.

This is just the beginning of a great experience. Welcome, we wish you much success on this journey of learning!

Sincerely,

Dias of the Commission on the Status of Women



Olga Issa
Presidency



Paola Daboin
Vice-presidency



Amy Sanchez
Rapporteur

Committee Background

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) established in 1946, operates as a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) It is the principal intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to promoting gender equality, rights, and empowerment of women (*CSW: Advancing Women's Rights Since 1946*, 2024). Annually, the committee reunites the representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations, and UN entities at the UN headquarters in New York, for two weeks to discuss the topics on their agenda. (*Commission on the Status of Women*, n.d.)

After these meetings, Member States commit to taking additional measures to accelerate progress and ensure that women and girls fully enjoy their rights across political, economic, and social spheres. The outcomes and recommendations from each session are submitted to ECOSOC for further action.

Role of the Committee:

The CSW plays a critical role in monitoring global progress on gender equality, particularly in line with international frameworks like the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5: Gender Equality

Membership

The Commission on the Status of Women membership period changes every 4 years when new members are elected. It elects new Member States based on balanced regional representation. It comprises 45 States elected by ECOSOC with the following distribution, 12 members from Africa, 11 from Asia, 9 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 from Western Europe and other States, and 4 from Eastern Europe (*Member States*, n.d.)

Each year, the CSW focuses on a priority theme concerning the protection of women around the world, topics such as ending violence against women and girls, promoting women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, addressing the impact of climate change on women and girls and advancing gender-responsive policies for sustainable development have been heavily discussed in the past year.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is a global policy framework for gender equality and women's empowerment. It was adopted by 189 countries at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995 (United Nations, n.d.). The CSW committee plays a central role in ensuring that countries remain accountable for their commitments under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and reunites annually to monitor the progress the countries and the platform have made.

It set strategic objectives and actions to promote women's advancement and achieve gender equality across 12 critical areas of concern:

- Women and poverty.
- Education and training of women.
- Women and health.
- Violence against women.
- Women and armed conflict.
- Women and the economy.
- Women in power and decision-making.
- Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women.
- Human rights of women.
- Women and the media.
- Women and the Environment.
- The girl-child.

Topic A: Innovation technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

As society introduces itself in the era of the digital revolution. Technological advances have changed people's lives, including access to education. However, the lack of education remains a significant issue for society, and it is necessary to not continue with the existing patterns of gender inequality in education. Innovation and technology can play a vital role in gender equality and sustainable development for all women and girls. While advancements in digital technology offer immense opportunities to address development and humanitarian challenges, growing inequalities are becoming increasingly evident in the context of digital skills and access to technologies. In 2022, it was estimated that only 63 percent of women use the internet, compared to 69 percent of men (*Power on: How We Can Supercharge an Equitable Digital Future* | UN Women – Headquarters, 2023). Women hold just 22% of positions in artificial intelligence. More than a third of women using the internet have personally experienced online violence.

The Commission on the Status of Women remains a vital force in the global effort to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls worldwide. Through its annual sessions, and commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the CSW fosters collaboration among Member States, civil society, and international organizations, ensuring that issues such as gender-related policies remain a priority on the global agenda.

The increased participation of women and girls in digital technology and innovation, and their engagement as students and professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, is crucial for economies around the world. Globally, only about half of women (50%) participate in the labor force, compared to 80% of men. Inside this percentage, women are less likely to hold formal employment and continue to face limited opportunities for career advancement or business growth as well as, earning lower wages in comparison to men. (Female Labor Force Participation - World Bank Gender Data Portal | World Bank Gender Data Portal, n.d.).

The CSW Agreed conclusions call for developing comprehensive approaches to prevention of violence, especially by addressing structural and underlying causes of such violence, transforming social norms, developing appropriate education programs, working through media to eliminate gender stereotypes and conducting awareness raising campaigns. All of these measures mirror the firm approach in the Istanbul Convention that violence against women cannot be

eradicated without investing in gender equality and the Convention's solid framework for prevention (*Chapter III - articles 12-17*).

The Commission expresses concern that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and that the feminization of poverty persists. It notes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, social justice, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and their human rights; and recognizes the importance of taking positive action, including in the form of policies and partnerships, at the local, national, regional and international levels, that address existing inequalities, among and within countries in the distribution of and access to services, resources and infrastructure, as well as access to food, water, health, quality education, training and opportunities for employment and decent work in urban and rural, remote and maritime areas and other human settlements in order to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and vulnerability.

Women In STEM

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) are fields of study in which women are found extremely underrepresented. Today, women make up only 35% of STEM graduates worldwide, a figure that has remained unchanged for the past decade, highlighting the slow progress toward gender equity in these disciplines (UNESCO, 2023). Societal stereotypes, and cultural norms, often compromise the quality of the learning experience for female students and limit their educational choices, particularly in rural areas, which restricts their academic and professional choices, further widening the gender gap in STEM fields (*Power on: How We Can Supercharge an Equitable Digital Future | UN Women – Headquarters, 2023*).

Globally, only about half of the women participate in the labor force, compared to 80% of men. Within this percentage, women are less likely to hold formal employment and continue to face limited opportunities for career advancement, having a lower salary than their male counterparts (World Bank, 2024). The gap in pay between genders is noticeable, as women in technology roles earn 21% less than men in similar positions.

It is important to mention how several initiatives aim to reduce this gap and encourage female participation in STEM. Examples such as the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI),

which is a nonprofit organization providing free coding education and mentorship to young women globally. Moreover, charitable efforts have emerged to support women in STEM. In 2024, Australian tech billionaire Robin Khuda donated \$100 million to the University of Sydney to establish a 20-year science and engineering pathway program for young women. The initiative will mentor up to 40,000 high school students and provide scholarships to over 300 young women pursuing STEM careers (University of Sydney, 2024)

Women in Africa

Around the world, 129 million girls are out of school due to poverty, gender-based violence, and child marriage. The implementation of digital education allows girls to study from home, enabling personalized learning by allowing teachers to track student progress and tailor instruction. With emerging technologies like AI and virtual reality, students have the potential to learn and enhance education through interactive experiences (World Bank Group, 2022).

In the Horn of Africa, the adoption of digital technologies remains slow due to insufficient investment in infrastructure and skills development, with women being disproportionately excluded. Despite progress in innovation and access, Sub-Saharan African women are 37% less likely than men to use mobile internet, the largest gender gap globally. Many women and girls lack the necessary digital skills, further perpetuating their economic exclusion. Affordability, literacy, and awareness remain critical barriers, making it essential to address these obstacles and empower women with leadership capacities in the digital space.

However, even when women gain digital access, they often face gender-based cyberbullying, online harassment, hate speech, and disinformation, particularly in advocacy, election campaigns, and conflict settings. These digital threats compound existing inequalities, undermining women's efforts to build more inclusive societies. In the Horn, female public figures and women's rights advocates are disproportionately targeted, facing reputation and privacy attacks during elections and conflicts, highlighting the urgent need for digital safety and the protection of women's rights online. (*Horn of Africa: Using Digital Technologies to Advance Women, Peace*, 2023)

Research Questions:

1. What are the main barriers preventing women and girls from accessing digital technologies and the internet in different regions of the world?
2. How do socioeconomic factors influence the gender gap in digital literacy and access to technology?
3. How does gender-responsive policy-making in digital education contribute to sustainable development and economic growth?

Topic B: Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts.

Women and children are among the most vulnerable in armed conflicts, often taken hostage or unlawfully imprisoned by both state and non-state actors. They are frequently used as bargaining tools, human shields, or subjected to forced labor, indoctrination, and gender-based violence. The Geneva Conventions (Geneva Conventions, n.d.), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and UN Security Council Resolutions such as 1325 and 2427 emphasize their protection and call for their immediate release (UN Security Council, 2000; UN Security Council, 2018). However, the reality remains that their liberation is often delayed due to political negotiations, security concerns, and the refusal of armed groups to comply with international law.

Despite legal frameworks prohibiting hostage-taking and mistreatment, securing the release of women and children remains a complex challenge. Governments and armed groups often use them as leverage in ceasefire agreements or political negotiations, prolonging their captivity. Even after release, reintegration into society presents significant challenges, including trauma, stigma, and continued threats to their safety (Save the Children, 2023). International organizations such as UNICEF, the International Red Cross (ICRC), and Save the Children work tirelessly to negotiate their release, document abuses, and provide post-release support, but progress is slow and uneven due to ongoing conflicts and geopolitical tensions.

Recent cases highlight the urgency of this issue. In 2023, armed groups in Burkina Faso abducted 27 women and 39 children, who were later rescued by the military (Aljazeera, 2023). Similar to the 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict, a temporary ceasefire facilitated the release of Israeli hostages underscoring the role of political negotiations in hostage situations (WSJ, 2023). These incidents reflect the broader global issue where women and children remain pawns in armed conflicts, their fates tied to complex geopolitical interests rather than humanitarian priorities.

Addressing this crisis requires stronger enforcement of international laws, enhanced negotiation mechanisms to ensure the unconditional release of all hostages, and comprehensive rehabilitation programs for survivors (UNICEF, 2023). Holding perpetrators accountable through legal channels is also essential to prevent future violations. The release of women and children taken hostage is not just a humanitarian concern, it is a mortal and legal imperative that demands immediate sustained global action.

The Protection of Civilians (PoC) Agenda/Mandate

In times of armed conflict, the protection of civilians remains a fundamental concern for the international community. The United Nations created an extensive plan to protect those who find themselves in vulnerable situations. The Agenda for Protection of Civilians (PoC) was first recognized officially by the United Nations Security Council in 1999, to declare the distinction and vulnerability of the non-combatant groups in combat zones. This agenda consisted of two major resolutions, the first one, Resolution 1265, was adopted in September 1999, emphasizing the need to secure non-combatants and remind countries under armed conflict to preserve and protect civilians (UN Security Council, 1999).

The Geneva Convention defines the Protection of Civilians Agenda under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), outlining how civilians must be treated with humanity at all times and without any form of discrimination. They are entitled to protection from all acts of violence and inhumane treatment, including torture and killing (*Protected Persons: Civilians*, 2024).

Kigali Principles:

These principles surged up in 2015, after the Rwandan Massacre failure. It is a set of non-binding rules for countries stating the protocol of armed forces towards protecting civilians in armed conflicts. These principles were made so that countries could train their troops in war conflicts and train the peacekeeping personnel to handle complex and evolving conflicts (*The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians - Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect*, 2020).

Endnotes/Recommendations:

It is crucial to use the Protection of Civilians Agenda with this topic, as it provides significant information to aid in the making of a resolution that aligns with the committee's responsibility as well as those of the United Nations. The abuse these civilians, specifically women, and children, suffer during conflicts is of high importance to the maintenance of human rights and protection, the use and mention of this mandate and the Kigali Principles during the committee activities are highly recommended by the Dias.

Research Questions:

1. How can the international community improve the enforcement of humanitarian laws protecting women and children in conflict zones?
2. What strategies can enhance coordination between governments and humanitarian organizations in hostage rescue efforts?
3. What role should the CSW play in holding armed groups accountable for violations?

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