

Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) Analysis Statement for CSW69: ACCELERATING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

New York

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[Women4GlobalFund \(W4GF\)](#) welcomes the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) that opened at the UN Headquarters, bringing together Member States, International Organisations, Civil Society Organizations and women advocates, present to ensure concrete steps towards gender equality, at a time in which we need to take bold action against the global gender-backlash. This session was held with a specific focus on the implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) and its intersection with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

[W4GF](#) is a global network of 350 advocates from 75 countries, primarily based in the Global South, dedicated to promoting gender equality and equity. W4GF ensures that Global Fund projects are gender sensitive and transformative, and address the specific needs of women and girls in all their diversity. We are committed to empowering women and girls, especially from the youth, advocating for the meaningful participation in decision-making processes, influencing policies, and demanding accountability. W4GF envisions a world where gender equity movements have transformed imbalanced power relations and privilege into equity and equality for all, especially women and girls in all of their diversity. These efforts are crucial for achieving substantive equity and gender equality in all aspects of public health.

Acknowledging that thirty years have passed after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, substantial strides have been made towards gender equality. These, include increased representation of women in politics and leadership positions, as of 1 January 2025, there are 25 countries where 28 women serve as Heads of State and/or Government¹, better access to education and economic opportunities, and advancements in legal frameworks protecting women's rights. However, this progress is limited and the majority of the advances are seen in Global North countries, while low-and-middle income countries are not only not progressing but regressing in guaranteeing women and girls rights. We highlight that progress has been uneven, fragile, and threatened by a range of intersecting crises—including systemic and structural inequalities in health, education, economic disparities, conflicts and the rollback of women's rights in all regions.

¹<https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-womens-leadership-and-political-participation>

Historically and systematically exploited and oppressed populations make up the majority of the world's poorest groups. Women and girls in all of their diversity are frequently overrepresented among the poor across all countries. This is due to societal inequalities that prevent women from having the same rights and opportunities as men². [Globally, 383 million women and girls are estimated to live on less than USD 1.90 a day.](#)

A 2024 global study conducted by W4GF³ to understand the impact of gender backlash on access to health services (HIV, TB, Malaria) revealed significant structural and institutional barriers, including reduced funding for gender-focused programs and restrictive policies or laws, which undermine gender equity efforts. Additionally, decreased community engagement and harmful social and cultural behaviors reflect broader societal resistance to gender equality initiatives. The study also highlighted the dangers faced by those advocating for gender-transformative approaches, with insecurity and violence towards communities posing serious risks, while the shrinking civil society space further restricts activism and advocacy.

Key topics of CSW69 sessions :

The opening of the session⁴ highlighted the urgent need to combat rising misogyny and the persistent barriers to gender equality. Systemic challenges continue to hinder women's and girls' rights, with growing levels of Gender-based Violence, additional challenges to access life saving health promotion and comprehensive healthcare, attacks on gender justice, increased online violence, and the exclusion of women and girls from decision-making spaces. Indigenous and racialized women and girls in all of their diversity, in particular, face disproportionate levels of violence, stigma, and discrimination, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies that recognize and amplify their voices.

Additionally, the slow pace of change remains alarming—at the current rate, eradicating poverty for all women and ending harmful practices such as child marriage could take generations. Addressing these challenges requires immediate and coordinated action, including investing in gender-transformative comprehensive healthcare, education, strengthening legal protections, ensuring women's leadership in all sectors, and prioritizing gender-transformative policies. Now more than ever, the global community must reaffirm its commitment to the promises made decades ago and take decisive steps toward achieving gender equality.

Key Challenges for women and girls

Despite global commitments to gender equality, funding for gender-transformative and women-led initiatives in the health sector remains insufficient. The gender financing gap is exacerbated by economic austerity measures and national debts, and the inadequate

² <https://sdg-action.org/poverty-is-not-gender-neutral/>

³ [Contact angela@women4gf.org for further details and complete information about the W4GF Gender-Backlash 2024 Report.](mailto:angela@women4gf.org)

⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1160951>

prioritization of gender-transformative actions in global health. Women, girls, and gender-diverse communities remain disproportionately impacted by HIV, TB, and malaria. The urgency of addressing these funding gaps is even more critical this year, as the [8th replenishment of the Global Fund](#) presents an opportunity to secure long-term, sustainable financing for gender-transformative programs. However, the current **freeze of funding⁵ and delayed disbursements in key international commitments** threaten to derail progress, further straining women-led initiatives and weakening responses to global health crises. Closing the gender gap in employment and entrepreneurship could also boost global GDP by 20%, according to the World Bank⁶

Women's and girls' health continues to be marginalized within broader health agendas. Health systems often fail to adequately integrate SRHR into Universal Health Care strategies⁷. This neglect of SRHR has serious consequences for women's and girls' health and well-being, as it limits their access to essential services such as contraception, safe abortion, and maternal healthcare. Furthermore, policies and programs frequently neglect the specific needs of adolescent girls, transgender women, sex workers, women who use drugs, women living and affected with and by HIV, TB, and Malaria, women in human mobility and living in humanitarian and emergency contexts. These groups face unique challenges in accessing healthcare due to stigma, discrimination, and criminalization, and their needs must be addressed through targeted interventions in the Global Fund programs.

Gender-based violence, including violence in healthcare settings, remains a major barrier to achieving health equity. GBV has devastating consequences for women's and girls' physical and mental health and can prevent them from accessing essential health services. Discriminatory laws and practices, particularly in relation to SRHR and HIV prevention, continue to undermine women's access to essential health services and their ability to exercise autonomy over their bodies and lives.

The outcome documents of CSW69 – comprising a review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and platform for Action (BDPfA), a [political declaration marking the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women](#), and a [multi-year programme of work for the Commission](#) – represent an opportunity to drive forward gender equality. **However, W4GF regrets that women's and girls' specific health issues have not been explicitly prioritized as a key working area within these documents. Women's and girls' health is an essential pillar of gender equality and HIV, TB, and malaria issues and needs must be explicitly integrated into the CSW's agenda, with clear commitments to address the structural barriers that prevent women, girls in their diversity from accessing comprehensive, rights-based and gender-transformative healthcare.**

⁵<https://aidspace.org/Blog/view/32359/The%20future%20of%20global%20health%20financing:%20Navigating%20United%20States%20policy%20shifts%20and%20the%20Global%20Fund%E2%80%99s%20sustainability>

⁶<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/01/advancing-gender-parity-in-entrepreneurship-strategies-for-a-more-equitable-future/>

⁷https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/reproductive-health/an-intersectional-feminist-approach-for-advancing-srhr-through-uhc.pdf?sfvrsn=53e778d3_5

W4GF recommendations for CSW69:

We call for :

- **The Political Declaration and its implementation plans must strongly commit to gender-transformative, rights-based healthcare, and recognize health and HTM comprehensive responses, as core elements of gender equality.** This entails completely integrating SRHR and HIV, TB, and Malaria comprehensive responses into Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to guarantee that all women and gender-diverse communities exercise their right to health, having access to HTM comprehensive prevention, treatment, and care.
- **Governments and donors must commit to increased and sustained funding for feminist, women-led organizations** working on health. These groups are at the forefront of service delivery, advocacy, and accountability but remain severely underfunded. This requires moving away from traditional donor-centric models towards a participatory and inclusive approach that empowers women's organizations to set their own priorities and design their own programs.
- We call for the **full integration of comprehensive SRHR services and HTM programmes into Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**, ensuring that health systems address gender-related barriers to access. This includes providing free or affordable contraception, safe abortion services, and maternal healthcare recognizing the intersection of SRHR with HIV, TB and Malaria responses to improve health outcomes for all women and girls in all of their diversity, regardless of their socioeconomic status or location.
- **Addressing the gendered impacts of health crises and barriers to care** – National gender equality policies must include **gender-specific indicators and disaggregated data collection** in monitoring systems. Urgent action is needed to address **gender-based violence, stigma, and discrimination in healthcare settings**, particularly for **women and girls living and affected by HIV, TB, Malaria, women sex workers, transgender women, women who use drugs, racialized and indigenous women.**
- We call governments to recognize and support the leadership of women and girls in their diversity in decision making spaces within global and national health programs.

Conclusion

The review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at CSW69 should serve as an occasion to reaffirm commitments and expedite concrete actions towards gender equality. Women4Global Fund urges governments, multilateral agencies, donors, and international organisations to transcend rhetoric and implement transformative, adequately resourced, and intersectional solutions that center the perspectives and expertise of women and girls in all their diversity. W4GF remains dedicated to advancing gender equality in global health and the Global Fund. We will persist in holding decision-makers accountable to their commitments for a just and equitable future for all women and girls.

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