



**Summary of the multi-stakeholder hearing on the occasion of the thirtieth  
Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

**24 July 2025, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Introduction**

The President of the General Assembly convened on 24 July 2025 an interactive multi-stakeholder hearing as part of the preparations for the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly to be held in September 2025, commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), following the mandate of General Assembly resolution 79/288 “Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women”. Supported by UN Women, the hearing gathered a diverse range of actors including Member States, the UN System, civil society organizations, youth, parliamentarians, philanthropic institutions and private sector leaders to assess progress, identify persistent gaps and galvanize momentum for the Beijing+30 Action Agenda.

**Opening Segment**

**H.E. Philemon Yang, President of the General Assembly**, in his opening remarks delivered on his behalf by a **Vice-President** conveyed a compelling call for bold, unified action for gender equality. He emphasized that the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action remains a visionary roadmap, with its priorities still highly relevant today. Reflecting on measurable progress over the past three decades, he cited expanded legal protections against violence and discrimination, a rise in women’s political representation from 11% to 27%, and more girls in classrooms. Despite these gains, he warned of growing threats, including policy reversals, shrinking civic space, armed conflict, and backlash against women’s rights, and called for actions to transform norms, structures and institutions, that hinder progress towards gender equality. He stressed that gender equality is not a distant ideal but a vital driver of sustainable development. Commending grassroots leadership and frontline advocates, he affirmed that gender equality is achievable in our lifetime. He concluded with an urgent call



to collaborate, act decisively, and ensure women and girls everywhere can flourish in societies that embrace their talents, value their dignity and support their equal rights.

**Ms. Sima Bahous, UN Women Executive Director**, emphasized that gender equality must be at the heart of global action, not as a secondary goal but as the driving force behind sustainable development. She described a world in crisis—where rights are under attack, inequalities are deepening, and women-led organizations risk collapse due to declining aid, with less than 1% of funding targeting gender-based violence. Yet, she emphasized that the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration is also one of transformative opportunities. The UN80 Initiative offers a chance to rebuild global cooperation to be more inclusive and accountable. She championed the Beijing+30 Action Agenda, drawn from the national reviews of 159 countries, and structured around six transformative priorities: digital transformation, poverty eradication, ending violence, equal leadership, peace and security, and climate justice – while placing adolescent girls and young women at the center of every solution. She reinforced that inclusive multilateralism, women leadership, and coordinated action are essential to delivering on these promises. As an example, she underscored the Generation Equality initiative, and its close to 2,000 policies, 4,500 programmes and 5,700 advocacy initiatives implemented, demonstrating the power of shared leadership and multistakeholder partnerships. As the world looks to the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly in September, she urged action rooted in lived realities, feminist principles, and youth voices. “Let us be judged,” she concluded, “not by our promises, but by the rights fulfilled.”

**Ms. Maka Chikowero, Founder and President of MTC Educate A Girl**, a nonprofit organization focusing on girls and young women in rural areas of Zimbabwe, in her remarks advocated for rural girls’ education and empowerment through sports. MTC provides scholarships, mentorship, and soccer programs to challenge gender norms and reduce school dropouts. Despite notable progress, significant gaps remain: limited funding, low capacity, the digital divide, and persistent gender barriers. She emphasized the power of partnerships with educators, police, cultural leaders, and mentors. Ms. Chikowero called for unlocking funding streams, fostering collective action, and ratifying global agreements like CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol to achieve SDGs 4 and 5. Speaking on behalf of young people, particularly those in rural Africa, she urged leaders to stop rationalizing inequality, empower youth-led initiatives, and take bold, decisive action.

**Ms. Mavic Cabrera Balleza, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)**, stressed the urgent need for cross-sectoral, collective action to



dismantle persistent systemic barriers to gender equality. She highlighted ongoing global challenges such as climate change, conflict, poverty, and the digital divide, that threaten hard-won feminist gains. Advocating for inclusive multistakeholder partnerships, she championed grassroots women's organizations, policies with real implementation, and platforms like Generation Equality and its Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. She called for feminist leadership and full gender parity at decision-making levels, especially within the UN. In her conclusion, Ms. Cabrera Balleza called on everyone to use the Beijing+30 moment to reignite renewed determination and accelerate progress toward a gender-equal world.

### **Panel Discussion**

**Ms. Tulia Ackson, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**, moderated the panel discussion and reflected on the progress made since the 1995 Beijing Conference. She highlighted that, while women's representation in parliaments has more than doubled globally, true gender parity remains distant. She warned of backsliding and the rise of anti-rights narratives targeting women and girls and stressed the critical role of lawmakers in dismantling inequalities, scrutinizing budgets and ensuring inclusive governance. She also emphasized that gender parity in decision-making is not a distant aspiration but a legal obligation under international commitments, including General Recommendation No. 40 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which addresses the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems. She added that global partnerships, as developed through the Generation Equality Forum, have demonstrated what is possible working together across sectors, generations and regions with agency and ambition.

**Ms. Assel Sarsenbayeva, Chairwoman of the Board, Economic Research Institute**, shared examples of national efforts to advance gender equality. In 2023, Kazakhstan updated its Concept on Family and Gender Policy including measures to eliminate discrimination, promote women's political and economic participation, prevent violence and strengthen family institutions. A new Action Plan on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men was adopted in 2024 including new legislation to increase accountability for domestic violence and better protect victims and a legal requirement for 30% representation of women, youth and people with disabilities on parliamentary candidate lists. Gender budgeting and gender-sensitive analysis have informed recent policymaking, including the 2022 Voluntary National Review. The country was ranked by the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index as having a low level of discrimination against women.



**Ms. Ulrike Spangenberg, Head of the Secretariat of the Federal Government's Fourth Gender Equality Report, Federal Foundation for Gender Equality in Germany,** described the institution's strong role in promoting feminist leadership, supporting gender-responsive legislation and providing tools for assessing gender impact in policymaking. The Foundation complements government structures, offering support to both institutional actors and civil society, including evidence-based knowledge and tools to address gender inequality or training on gender impact assessments. The Foundation also contributes to the federal government's gender equality reports, including the most recent one on gender and climate change. Such entities require adequate and sustained financial support to remain effective, especially in times of pushback against gender rights. It advocated for institutionalizing feminist infrastructure, protecting civic space and ensuring that gender equality policies are responsive, evidence-based and co-owned by society.

**Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights and Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York** reaffirmed that gender equality is central to the fulfillment of all human rights and emphasized that none of the SDG5 indicators have been met to date. Gender inequality is deepening in many regions due to conflict, rising authoritarianism and democratic shrinking. She warned that gender equality is being weaponized and called for urgent redress through coordinated global action. OHCHR is actively working in close collaboration with UN Women including on the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan and the Clarion Call for UN leadership. As a co-lead of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, Ms. Brands Kehris also emphasized the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach and meaningful, safe participation of civil society, especially women's organizations. OHCHR is advancing the implementation of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40 on inclusive representation in decision-making. Its upcoming Human Rights Council report in September on applying a rights-based approach to eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity will include updated technical guidance on sexual and reproductive health and rights. She also urged governments to eliminate discriminatory laws, invest in justice and protection mechanisms and leverage national human rights institutions and civil society to accelerate implementation of the Beijing commitments.

**Ms. Hanin Ahmed External Relations Officer for Sudan Emergency Response Rooms** underscored the deplorable conditions that have developed since the outbreak of conflict in Sudan in 2023 and how, despite minimal resources and protection, a grassroots movement of over 20,000 Sudanese women and youth volunteers have mobilized. These volunteers are organizing community kitchens, providing medical care, distributing aid and evacuating civilians. Operating under extreme threats, these women are delivering lifesaving assistance



and demanding to participate in decision-making. Their critical contributions remain underrecognized and underfunded. She also stressed that international actors must stop viewing women as mere observers and passive recipients but rather as leaders, planners and visionaries, aligning with the Beijing+30 framework.

**Mr. Martín Abregú, Vice President for International Programs at Ford Foundation,** emphasized the organization's long-standing commitment to gender equality, beginning with its active engagement in the Beijing Platform for Action and continuing today through its support for the SDGs and the Beijing+30 process. As a social justice philanthropy, the Foundation sees its core role as facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships and securing long-term, sustainable collaborations across sectors. He also stressed that feminist movements are underfunded and vulnerable despite being at the center of transformative change. He pointed to Generation Equality and the Global Alliance for Feminist Movements as models of multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving governments, civil society, youth, private sector, academia and philanthropy in a unified effort. Mr. Abregú noted that true change requires local-global linkages and long-term, flexible funding, and acknowledged persistent obstacles to gender equality progress including insufficient funding, limited political will and ongoing backlash.

### **Key points from the panel discussion**

#### **Persistent and new forms of violence against women and girls**

Participants highlighted how fear and insecurity in public spaces limit women's freedom of movement and participation in social life. They called for urgent public policies to ensure safe, accessible urban environments. Human trafficking was highlighted as one of the most severe forms of violence against women and concern expressed about related practices such as reproductive trafficking and the transnational abuse of women's bodies. Some stakeholders condemned forced sterilization, forced abortion and coercive contraception, reaffirming the commitment to protect life, both born and unborn, while underscoring that pre-natal sex selection undermines the intrinsic value of women's lives.

#### **Implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through national priorities**

Contributions from Member States and other stakeholders showcased diverse approaches to translating the Beijing+30 commitments into national action, reflecting the variety of political, cultural, and socio-economic contexts. Many emphasized the importance of embedding gender equality into national planning, budgeting, and service delivery systems,



supported by legal and institutional reforms to eliminate discrimination, prevent violence, and strengthen accountability.

Examples highlighted during the discussion included policies to expand women's political participation through quotas and representation targets, reforms to promote economic empowerment and labor market inclusion, and initiatives to protect women and girls in public spaces. Some participants pointed to intersectional approaches that address the needs of marginalized groups, including women with disabilities, rural women, and LGBTQ+ populations. Others underscored their commitment to feminist foreign policy and to integrating the Beijing+30 commitments into broader national development strategies.

Participants also stressed the importance of international cooperation in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action while underscoring national sovereignty, cultural context and respect for national specificities. Several examples were shared of how member states are implementing the Beijing+30 commitments, for example, policies to support families, increase women's participation in the labor market, ensure protection for mothers, measures to promote women's representation in parliament, embedding gender equality in national planning, budgeting and service delivery, legal and institutional reforms guided by the Beijing Platform for Action.

### **Strengthening health systems and advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights**

Many contributions stressed that gender equality is integral to building equitable and resilient health systems. Achieving gender-responsive health care was described as central to the SDGs, with participants calling for gender to be systematically integrated into Universal Health Coverage planning and implementation.

There was a strong call for strengthening gender-disaggregated data collection to inform policy and monitor progress. Some participants highlighted the expansion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, the elimination of harmful practices such as child marriage, and the importance of culturally appropriate and intersectional health service provision. The linkage between gender equality, health, and broader climate resilience agendas was also emphasized, as was the importance of financing these services sustainably.

### **Harnessing technology for equality and addressing the gender digital divide**

A recurring theme was the transformative potential, and growing risks, of technology in advancing gender equality. While digital tools can expand access to education, employment, and civic participation, they can also be weaponized to perpetuate harm. Participants drew attention to the rise of technology-facilitated gender-based violence and



the urgent need for stronger digital accountability, inclusive digital literacy as a prevention measure, and survivor-centered solutions.

Evidence was shared of persistent gender gaps in Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy and workforce participation, with women disproportionately at risk of job displacement due to automation. Large-scale initiatives are being launched to promote AI and digital skills for women, youth, and underserved communities, but participants stressed that closing the gender digital divide must be a central element of Beijing+30 implementation.

### **Centering grassroots, feminist, and youth-led movements**

Speakers consistently called for feminist, youth-led, and grassroots organizations to be placed at the center of decision-making processes and financing strategies. There was a strong consensus that sustainable change cannot be achieved without the leadership of those closest to the challenges on the ground.

Stakeholders highlighted the vital contributions of women's rights organizations, youth-led networks, and movements operating in humanitarian, conflict, post-conflict, and refugee contexts, often under extremely difficult conditions. They called for safe and enabling civic spaces, the protection of human rights defenders, and the dismantling of structural barriers to participation. Youth representatives in particular pressed for time-bound, measurable actions to avoid repeating cycles of inaction between Beijing+30 and future milestones.

### **Advancing inclusive governance and accountability**

Ensuring that governance systems are inclusive and accountable was a central concern. Participants advocated for feminist legal and institutional reforms, the institutionalization of gender audits across government ministries, and mechanisms to ensure that women's representation in leadership meets international commitments.

There was emphasis on maintaining transparency in decision-making, embedding gender equality in governance at all levels, and strengthening national and regional platforms to promote joint accountability. Inclusive governance was viewed as essential not only for implementing the Beijing+30 Action Agenda but also for safeguarding the universality of human rights.

### **Responding to backlash and safeguarding gains**

Multiple interventions warned of the growing backlash against gender equality, the rollback of rights, and the shrinking of the civic space. Concerns were raised about the weakening credibility of multilateral systems, the exclusion of feminist voices from policy processes, and the increasing influence of private sector interests in shaping global governance.



Recommendations included adopting concrete tools and accountability mechanisms to ensure the participation of feminist and human rights defenders in global governance, defending SRHR language and commitments, and securing sustained funding for gender equality initiatives. Safeguarding hard-won gains was seen as an urgent priority in the Beijing+30 context.

### **Strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships for transformative change**

Throughout the discussions, participants affirmed that multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to driving transformative change. The Generation Equality initiative was widely cited as an example of how collaboration across governments, civil society, youth, the private sector, philanthropy, and the UN system can accelerate progress.

Participants urged that partnerships be designed to strengthen the connection between global commitments and local realities, ensure that resources reach grassroots actors, and foster innovation while maintaining robust accountability. The Beijing+30 Action Agenda was seen as a vital opportunity to embed this collaborative approach into future implementation frameworks.

### **Conclusion**

The multi-stakeholder hearing reaffirmed that the vision of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains as relevant and necessary today as it was three decades ago. The conversations demonstrated a shared understanding that gender equality is both urgent and achievable, but only if met with decisive, inclusive, and coordinated action backed by sustained political will and financing.

The perspectives and priorities articulated during the hearing and captured in this Summary will inform the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Beijing+30 in September 2025. This will be a critical moment to galvanize commitments, accelerate progress, and position the Beijing+30 Action Agenda as a central framework for closing the gender equality implementation gap and delivering on the SDGs in the decade of action.