

My learning at the plenary meeting about the action and closing of CSW67

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. The CSW is involved in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

To consider the report of the Working Group on Communications (Item 4)

The follow-up to the Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions (Item 5) - *introduction and discussion*

Introduction to draft proposals

Action on draft proposals

Action on draft agreed conclusions

Action on any other outstanding issues:

Provisional agenda for the 68th session of CSW (Item 6)

Adoption of the report of the CSW on its 67th session (Item 7)

Closure of the 67th session

Opening of 68th session

Election of Bureau



Chair of the 67th session CSW - Mathu Joyini (South Africa)

The 17th Plenary Meeting of the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place in Room 4 of the UN headquarters on March 17, 2023. It focused on “Action and closing of CSW67 and Opening of CSW68.”

The priority theme of this year’s CSW was “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” which was the focus of the Commission’s annual two-week session. The commission will be in English as the interpreters have left and since there were no objections from the delegate, it was established by the commission’s chair of the sixty-seventh session, Mathu Joyini (South Africa) that the entire session will be in the English language only.

The session began with the Madam chair asking the delegates to consider Item 4, and the agenda included in the CSW report in its entirety. There were requests for the floor and thus the commission concluded the consideration of Item 4. The follow-up of Item 5, Economic and Social Council resolution and decisions. Since no delegation wanted to take the floor under this item and there was no documentation, the commission has thus concluded its consideration of Item 5. Next, the consideration of Agenda Item 5, since there were comments on this report, the commission approved the CSW 68th agenda as contained in the report and recommended ECOSOC for adoption. There were no objections and so it was decided. Then adoption of the report of the 67th session, which was already provided to each delegate, and the floor was granted to the vice chair and rapporteur to introduce the draft report.

Rapporteur, Chinguundari Navaan-Yunden (Mongolia), then started speaking on the draft report on the status of women wherein the proceedings of this report will be reflected in the final report, including the actions that will be taken to draft agreed

conclusions. Any corrections from the delegation side are to be made before the 24th of March and she recommends the chair for the adoption of the proposal. In consultation with the secretariat, the commission adopts the draft report in the 67th session.



Vice-Chair of the 67th session CSW - María del Carmen Squeff (Argentina)

Next, the Vice-chair, María del Carmen Squeff (Argentina) was invited to the floor for the informal consultation sessions that were facilitated by her. She spoke on improving the methodology of work and improving the process including dealing with a shorter document. Negotiations were requested in all the official languages to make the process more inclusive.



A representative from Pakistan

Pakistan delegate wanted to speak before the adoption of the CSW draft agreed conclusions. She spoke on how the needs of the developing countries especially the humanitarian needs including foreign occupancy have not been included in the final draft and that is been regretted despite several of the proposals made by her delegation, these were not taken on board. She said the two paragraphs which were proposed by her delegation have been deleted and her government cannot accept double standards and politicization of the rights of women under foreign occupation. She feels that the **CSW which is a body supposed to protect the rights of women has failed** because of the objection from a handful of states and it has hurt the self-determination of women living under foreign occupied land. These states threaten the adoption of the draft agreed conclusions. Despite this, her *delegation will not be going ahead to block the final text of the consensual draft agreed conclusion although the delegation is fully aware of the procedures*. She requests the chair to include her foreign occupancy-related topics in the conclusion and thanked the chair.



A representative from Guatemala

The next representative from Guatemala took the floor. Her government is committed to the theme of the 67th session. The government is taking concrete action against the women and children of Guatemala who are victims of sexual violence. While Guatemalans promote and defend human rights without any discrimination within a framework of conventionality control. However, the country has some conditions which contradict explicitly the internal legal system of Guatemala, especially issue suits related to but not limited to the reproductive rights of women. **She says the delegation wants to disassociate themselves from such references** which are in two paragraphs of the proposal.

The next representative from Oman requested the floor before any decisions but he needed the advice of the madam chair and would like to give his statement after the agreed conclusions and some other delegates agreed to follow in the footsteps of Oman as well. There were no further requests for the floor, the **commission then wished to**

adopt the draft-agreed conclusions in the priority theme of the 67th Session which was agreed on 3/18/2023 at 3:27 am, there were objections and so it was decided!



Adoption of the draft-agreed conclusions as per the theme of the UN CSW 67

The floor was then open for delegations to make statements after the address conclusions. Given the late hour, the statements were told to be kept as short as possible.

The representative of Oman then continued his talk, about the Gulf corporation council countries facilitating gender equality in many sectors of their countries and making efforts to reduce the gender gap. However, regarding the universally agreed terms contained in the text of conclusions, sexual-related reproductive terms, and reproductive rights, he emphasizes these terms to be within their cultural, societal, and legal frameworks so that the values don't contradict in the GCC countries.

The representative of Nicaragua also spoke in the paragraph that mentions, sexual and reproductive health and also reproductive rights as well as health care services related to reproduction. the reports should take into consideration abortion rights as every living as the right to life from the moment of conception. And he requests the chair to include this text in the official text of this meeting.

The representative of Mauritania spoke about her country working towards the priority theme. However, her delegation confirmed their position from any intersecting form of discrimination and dissociates themselves from the agreed texts of this CSW which is not considered by her country's national and Islamic legislation.



A representative from the Syrian Arab Republic

The representative from the Syrian Arab republic spoke on the priority theme which was promising and ambitious given the background of the country she represents. Despite all efforts to make women and girls less vulnerable and oppressed in Syria, the document was a handful short of fulfilling Syrian women's high ambitions and promised outcomes. She spoke on **partiality in the agreed texts on how it prioritizes the requests of some delegations and neglects others**. The forceful occupation which impacts women and girls was unjustly removed from the agreed text. Her team is looking forward to more openness on any documentation on foreign occupation. She request the chair to restore the moral and ethical obligation of women related to foreign occupancy and that the statement be made an official part of the text.



A representative from China

The representative of China spoke on how the Chinese government has always promoted and protected human rights and has several human rights programs under the national legal framework. Since there is no unified definition of human rights as such amongst human rights defenders which has been negotiated by governments and thereby every member state has a different point of view on it. He urges that the human rights defender shouldn't be given the status of a special group and privilege along with legal status. Individuals who in the face of defense are doing illegal work, crimes should be punished according to international law. Thus, China will not join the consensus with the paragraph containing human rights defenders. Requests the chair to make changes to the official record. He also mentions that **the consultations on the agreed conclusions are too slow and lengthy and end up taking a lot of energy from the member state and urges the other member states to keep their language concise and simpler to understand.**



A representative from Chile

A representative of Chile spoke on how The Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries, or GRULAC agrees on the priority theme of this session and how they are working on the empowerment of women in digital space and maintaining the language which speaks gender equality and reducing sexual and gender-based violence. She spoke about how much they value honesty, flexibility, and compromise in negotiations and deals. Some deals were worth more than others and because of this, some deals suffered collateral damage from controversies that go beyond this commission. She urges the chair to the deletion of a paragraph that addresses the impact of the gender digital divide on different groups of women and girls especially those who are facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. She concludes her speech by saying that will continue to advocate for the priority of an unproportionate share of unpaid care to be included in the text.

The representative from Libya noted that he understands the priority theme on CSW 67. However, his delegation has the consensus on the inclusion of non-consensual language and the text, thus they want to disassociate themselves from paragraph 16,

sub-par x, which contains texts related to controversial terms - multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and from 67 and 69, that contains controversial terms of sexual and reproductive health.



Representative from Morocco

The representative from Morocco spoke on how the priority theme is important to the global south and everyone in multilateral globalization. She continued speaking on how women are still vulnerable across the world including poverty, food security, and many others. There were forced marriages before covid as well but got exacerbated during the pandemic and led to unwanted pregnancies. The body conditions of young girls during pregnancy threatened their own life. They need to invest in creating a supportive environment for these young people as they transition to adulthood. She concluded her speech by confirming the human rights of women in Africa and morocco and how they are working towards a priority theme day and night to reach the fundamental freedom of all women and girls.

Then, the representative from the United States spoke about **she is deeply concerned about the working of this commission and how it would have been helpful if the agreed conclusions were dropped several hours ago and had some handful of time to properly review the text.** Negotiations over these texts progressed in non-germane matters that were neither agreed upon nor more importantly improving the status of women and girls. She also felt that her delegation and that of other member states have sacrificed much of their time to get ultimately the deletion of some paragraphs that were of utmost importance to them. The USA will be moving forward in a strong way carrying the priority theme in gender-based violence, the digital gender divide, the gender-based gap in digital space most importantly indigenous women, women from remote and rural areas, and island states who face the problem of accessibility of tech. She expressed her regret that the agreed text did not include the new language of

comprehensive sexuality education related to priority themes, and sexual and reproductive rights and could have included direct references to sexual orientation and women and girls of other diversity. The USA has also included a youth leadership team in the delegation and the new leader has joined this team.

The Representative of the United Kingdom spoke on how gender equality is one of the UK's key priorities. Women and girls are put at the center of all foreign development policy. Nevertheless, this has given rise to major new challenges relating to the digital gender divide. He says that his government is privileged to not only provide access to technology for all women in girls not only as users but also leaders in management positions. This leads to gender-based violence through or exemplified by technology. **His team would like to have seen new language in the agreed conclusion of comprehensive sexuality education as well as sexual health and reproductive rights, particularly with the given CSW theme.** Also, there is no mention of inclusive sexual orientation and gender identity.

The representative of Senegal mentioned clarification from her delegation that the words in the greed text, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, sexual and reproductive health, and rights, do not give their support. The concept of gender only refers to Senegal's reference to the understanding of social relations between men and women.



A representative from Guyana

The representative of Guyana took to the floor next and she spoke on behalf of the representation of 14 members of the Caribbean communities (CARICOM). Innovation and technological change have revolutionized how we live and work and along tags significant challenges and risks. Unfortunately, she wishes to not consider a significant text, a concern that CARICOM expressed at the very outset of this process. **Many good proposals which are relevant to the theme were not considered or not accepted and**

many such languages were in closed paragraphs. CARICOM requests to keep the discussion open. CARICOM representative very smartly also **suggests the chair make use of the technology to improve the process of CSW, perhaps track the negotiations using a digital tool** and digital screen showing our agreements. She concluded her remarks by saying until an hour ago, no one knew what the final text would look like, which shows delayed processes.

The representative of Indonesia spoke on how this year's theme contributes directly to the empowerment of women and girls, especially in developing countries. The elements that they consider relevant with reference to Indonesia in this year's agreed text are support for women in interplanar-ship, empowerment of migrant women workers through digital capacity building, and empowerment of women teachers. However, **the effort of including closed paragraphs has added length to the agreed conclusions, the mandate decide last year's CSW must be reflected in this year, which isn't and avoid duplication in the texts, the UN including CSW must include straightforward and easy to understand documents text in conclusions**, the work on agreed documents should be to bring more balance outcome documents including development and human rights prospects. It disassociates itself from multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and the regarding gender-based violence, it will be implemented in accordance with the national context.

The representative of Malaysia spoke on how the theme of the CSW comes at a crucial juncture given the immense impact of technology on all both positive and otherwise, particularly women and girls. Since the beginning of the process, **Malaysia had proposed its concern regarding the closed paragraph introduced this year which was decided without consultation with member states of the commission**. Many delegates, including his, had expressed strong reservations in these paragraphs. But, they welcomed this approach with faith and without having any objections to this approach even though his delegation was not happy with the satisfactory approach.

The representative of Iran expressed how great the importance of this year's priority theme is to women and her country as a whole. Her team expresses concern that the proposed approach in selectively closed paragraphs coupled with a lack of intention to negotiate these led to unsatisfactory for her delegation. She understands the intention was to avoid prolonged text in agreed conclusions, but **she feels closed paragraphs failed to achieve their goal as they contained several controversial elements to the agreed texts**. Iran was vocal about it from the start and such an approach will not be taken in the upcoming sessions in coming years. The delegation will interpret the agreed conclusions in accordance with not only national laws and priorities and policies but also Islamic principles and teachings, cultural traditions, and norms of Iranian society.

Many other representatives spoke next and informed about their acceptance and reservations about the adopted text.

Later, on the opening of its sixty-eighth session for a brief period, the Commission elected for its sixty-eighth session, Antonio Manuel Revilla Lagdameo (Philippines) as Chair, and María del Carmen Squeff (Argentina) and Māris Burbergs (Latvia) as Vice-Chairs.

As per the [UN press](#), there is no mention of the empowerment, development, or education of women in mountainous regions which we from the Utah International Mountain Forum advocated for in this 67th session. We will continue to stand up for the women in the mountain regions in the next session i.e., CSW68.

-Priyanka Prem Kumar, UIMF Member