



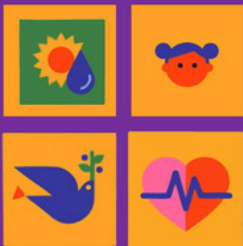
مؤسسة المرأة الجديدة
New Woman Foundation

Organization in Special Consultative
Status with ECOSOC since 2023

Promises Kept, Promises Broken

A critical review of the Latest
Political Declaration - Beijing⁺³⁰

CSW69



BEIJING
⁺30

March 2025



مؤسسة المرأة الجديدة
New Woman Foundation

Organization in Special Consultative
Status with ECOSOC since 2023

Promises kept; Promises broken: A critical review of the Latest Political Declaration from the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women – Beijing +30

March 2025

This paper was Prepared by Nevien Ebied, a researcher in development and gender studies, and the executive director of the New Woman Foundation, and Manar Abdel Aziz, a researcher on combating VAW program.



Introduction

The political declaration issued during the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, aims to provide a non-binding assessment of progress toward achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. While the Beijing Platform is not legally binding under international law, the absence of accountability mechanisms and enforcement tools has led to slow and uneven progress in advancing women's rights, particularly in the Global South. These regions face economic and political marginalization due to imbalanced global power structures, inequitable debt policies, and restrictive conditions.

The declaration underscores the urgent need to reform human rights conventions to ensure they are not merely advisory documents but legally binding commitments that measure progress in implementing gender equality policies and protecting women's rights. Given the persistence of structural violence against women, it is crucial to establish rigorous and measurable indicators that extend beyond vague international rhetoric and hold governments accountable for adopting concrete policies to address systemic inequalities—especially in conflict-affected regions where marginalized groups face deliberate and targeted oppression, as seen in Gaza, Syria, and Yemen.

In this context, advocacy groups have promoted initiatives such as the Every Woman Treaty, a proposed international legal instrument aimed at ensuring robust protections for women from all forms of violence. However, while this treaty seeks to advance legal protections and introduce measurement indicators, its effectiveness remains questionable due to its failure to address the structural barriers preventing women in the Global South from accessing justice. These barriers include weak legislative frameworks, policies that reinforce social and economic inequality, and the lack of political will to impose substantive obligations on states with the worst records on women's rights.



Without a robust enforcement mechanism, such treaties risk becoming symbolic documents with minimal real-world impact.

For international conventions to translate into tangible improvements in women's lives, it is imperative to abandon the Western elite-driven approach to women's rights, which overlooks the structural disparities between the Global North and Global South and imposes policies that fail to consider the effects of neocolonialism and economic inequality. Instead, a global gender justice framework should be adopted—one that ensures the equitable distribution of resources and actively combats the economic and political exploitation that perpetuates gender-based violence in the Global South.

A critical reassessment of this political declaration is necessary, not only to identify gaps and redundancies in international policies but also to push for renewed global commitments and encourage governments to take substantive action rather than merely reiterating non-binding promises. Over the past decades, follow-ups on the Beijing Platform have largely become ceremonial exercises, lacking clear, measurable indicators and enforceable UN mechanisms to ensure state compliance with necessary reforms.

This paper addresses these concerns by raising fundamental questions about the effectiveness of periodic follow-ups and the need to amend existing international human rights and women's rights frameworks. It explores whether updating current commitments or introducing new agreements—such as the proposed Every Woman Treaty—could create a more robust international framework for protecting women's rights. The current global context necessitates an urgent dialogue on how to reflect international commitments into concrete actions and advocate for an updated human rights framework that includes mandatory enforcement mechanisms to ensure the protection of women's rights in all spheres.



Repetitive Political Declarations: A Cycle of Ineffectiveness

Although the UN Commission on the Status of Women issues a political declaration every five years, substantive differences between successive declarations remain difficult to identify. Many themes and statements are repeatedly emphasized, revealing a stagnant policy approach incapable of driving meaningful change in gender equality.

Neglecting the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Political Shifts

The most recent political declaration from the March 2025 session closely mirrors the observations and recommendations made during the 2020 session, which was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Beijing +30 political declaration does not refer to the pandemic's impact on gender equality and fails to introduce any Beijing-related commitments to safeguarding women's and girls' health rights ([Paragraph 14 of the political declaration](#); [Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights](#); Chapter IV, Section C of the Beijing Platform).

Moreover, the pandemic was not the only global crisis in the past five years—numerous political shifts have significantly impacted gender equality. Yet, the political declaration does not stress the importance of ensuring democratic governance, freedom of thought and expression for women, and the protection of diversity and inclusivity ([Paragraph 9 of the political declaration](#); [Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)).

Gender Justice in the Context of Neoliberal Economic Policies and Political Deterioration

Over the past five years, neoliberal economic policies have exacerbated poverty and feminized it, particularly in developing countries. Given the growing global financial crisis, the Beijing +30 political declaration should have addressed the deepening



economic disparities in the Global South and the resurgence of conflicts over natural resources (Paragraph 13 of the political declaration; Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; Chapter IV, Section A of the Beijing Platform).

As political and economic instability forces women out of public life and restricts civil and political freedoms. Thus, poverty rates among women continue to rise. Consequently, the declaration should have offered clear guidelines for governments to reassess and reform gender equality policies in light of these global developments (Paragraph 15; Chapter V, Section 292 of the Beijing Platform).

Additionally, the declaration's reference to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) signals the need for states to lift their reservations on the convention and sign its optional protocol. However, it fails to propose enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance, limiting itself to a mere recommendation (Paragraph 2 of the political declaration; Article 2 of CEDAW).

Failure to Guarantee Women's Protection in Conflict Zones

The political declaration offers a comprehensive review of progress in achieving gender equality while acknowledging the persistent challenges faced by women, particularly in conflict zones such as Gaza, Syria, and Yemen. It also emphasizes the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, focusing on women's fundamental rights, protection from violence, and inclusion in peace and development processes (Paragraph 8 of the political declaration; Chapter IV, Section A of the Beijing Platform).

However, it remains vague and lacks specificity regarding the dire conditions women face in conflict areas. The declaration fails to outline concrete mechanisms to protect



women from sexual violence and targeted attacks during conflicts (Paragraph D of the political declaration; Article 6 of CEDAW; UN Security Council Resolution 1820). Furthermore, it does not provide clear strategies for ensuring women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations, despite recognizing the importance of their inclusion (Paragraphs B and C of the political declaration; Article 7 of CEDAW; UN Security Council Resolution 1325).

In conclusion, a review of the 69th CSW political declaration reveals that non-binding periodic declarations are insufficient to tackle what women confront in deep-root challenges, particularly in the Global South and conflict zones. To effect real change, the following steps must be taken:

- Future political declarations must include enforceable accountability mechanisms linking international commitments to clear, measurable standards.
- International human rights frameworks should be updated to introduce binding implementation tools rather than merely reaffirming existing rights.
- A global gender justice approach must be adopted, recognizing the structural disparities that exacerbate gender inequality in the Global South.
- Women's leadership in peace processes must be prioritized with legally binding commitments ensuring women's participation.
- The UN must take a more active role in enforcing gender equality commitments and imposing sanctions on non-compliant states.

Merely repeating political rhetoric will not achieve gender equality. Without binding commitments, these declarations will continue to reproduce the same structural problems women face worldwide rather than provide real solutions.