

# ECHOES FROM THE 69TH COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW69)

## EXPERIENCES FROM SACRED HEART REPRESENTATIVES, ASSOCIATES & FRIENDS AT CSW69

»»» March 2025



SISTER IRENE



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHANNA, MAKI, YANNINA,  
MARGARET & APOLLINE

### »»» INTRODUCTION TO CSW69 - MARGARET MWARILI RSCJ UN-NGO REPRESENTATIVE

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China was the most important of the four conferences on women held between 1975-1995, because it built on political agreements that had been reached at the three previous global conferences on women, and it consolidated five decades of legal advances aimed at securing the equality of women with men in law and in practice.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries, set strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality.

CSW69 focused on the evaluation of the Beijing Conference. Click [here](#) if you want to learn more about CSW.

### »»» YANNINA SAMILPA - SACRED HEART DNA YOUTH - MEXICO

‘THE DREAM OF A LIFETIME’

CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YANNINA’S  
EXPERIENCE OF CSW69.

### »»» JOANNA CHUDZIK - RSCJ POLAND

‘AN EXPERIENCE OF AGENCY AND COURAGE’  
CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JOANNA’S  
EXPERIENCE OF CSW69.

### »»» MAKI SAITO - ALUMNA (USA/JAPAN)

‘REDEFINING LEADERSHIP AT THE UN: A GLOBAL SHIFT’

CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MAKI’S  
EXPERIENCE OF CSW69.

### »»» IRENE O’NEILL - PRESIDENT OF SISTERS RISING WORLDWIDE

‘REFLECTIONS FROM MY UN VISIT—THE POWER OF  
SISTERS’

CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IRENE’S  
EXPERIENCE OF CSW69.

### »»» APOLLINE BOUTS - INTERN UN-NGO FROM FRANCE

‘EMPOWERED BY THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE BEIJING  
DECLARATION!’

CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT APOLLINE’S  
EXPERIENCE OF CSW69.

# ECHOES FROM THE 69TH COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW69)

»»» MARGARET MWARILI RSCJ UN-NGO REPRESENTATIVE

»»» March 2025



The 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) was held in New York from March 10–21, attracting over 13,000 participants, including three Deputy Presidents and representatives from over 90 civil society organizations. A strong youth presence infused discussions with fresh perspectives, and 283 side events enriched the forum’s agenda.



OPENING OF CSW69 BY SECRETARY GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES



WEBINAR CO-ORGANISED BY THE SACRED HEART

## »»» WHAT SETS CSW69 APART?

CSW69 conducted a comprehensive review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. Despite advancements, no country has fully achieved gender equality. Rural areas, in particular, face unfulfilled commitments. Over 150 national reports were analyzed, emphasizing economic empowerment and gender equality.



WEBINAR CO-MODERATED BY THE SACRED HEART & SND

## MAJOR MILESTONES IN WOMEN’S RIGHTS

- Greater access to voting rights, employment, and leadership.
- Record-breaking of enrollment of girls in schools.
- More countries criminalizing domestic violence since 1995.
- Improvements in maternal health and legal protections for women.



ECOSOC CHAMBER: EVENT WITH PRESIDENT OF ICELAND, DISCUSSING ACHIEVEMENTS IN WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP

## ONGOING CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

- A global backlash against women’s rights.
- The resurgence of patriarchal structures, slowing momentum.
- Gender pay gaps, economic inequality, and horrific sexual violence in conflict zones.
- Early marriages and increased attacks on reproductive rights worldwide.
- The rise of digital platforms enabling abuse and violence against women and girls.



GERMAN MISSION: EVENT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING CONFLICTS

## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR LASTING CHANGE

Addressing gender violence, reducing inequalities for **Indigenous** people, women and girls with disabilities & **engaging men** and boys in gender equality efforts.

As CSW69 concluded, participants committed to bringing their CSW69 insights back to their communities, upholding the Beijing Declaration’s principles, and continuing to advocate for gender equality and women’s rights.

## »»» YANNINA SAMILPA- SACRED HEART DNA YOUTH- MEXICO



YANNINA, AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OPENING OF CSW69

Summarizing the dream of a lifetime—participating in CSW69, one of the year's most significant events—is no easy task.

The CSW in March 2025 provided invaluable opportunities to acknowledge and address the realities women face worldwide. Overall, the conference promoted the well-being of girls and women, and empowered them.

The side events underscored that, despite significant progress, achieving gender equity remains a relentless fight, with much still to be done. Attending CSW69 reaffirmed by belief that a more just world for women is non-negotiable and undeniable.

CSW69 emphasised that the global response to gender equality has not been entirely favorable, often facing setbacks and backlash. Therefore, the organization, involvement, and commitment of every member of civil society are essential to fully eradicating all forms of violence against women.

Justice systems and governments must be held accountable for their actions towards women. They must also be aware of women's needs and experiences in today's digital, globalized world to navigate its challenges effectively.

Women must have access to safe spaces, health, leadership positions, freedom, pride and peace. We must have the freedom to fully develop our potential—without always being placed second, without barriers or patriarchal stereotypes, and, most importantly, without fear of embracing who we are.

We cannot afford to continue sustaining infrastructures, systems, cultures and realities that subjugate and violate women's rights and dignity. In a world where approximately half of the population is women and the rest are their descendants, **taking action is no longer necessary but it is an obligation to achieve a just and sustainable world.**

**As gender equality faces backlash, the time to give up is not today, nor tomorrow.** Many of the women that spoke at CSW69 reaffirmed my conviction that now is the time to imagine, promote, believe, and create all together. It is time to unite, persist, and overcome everything that seeks to silence us. I hope the demands of a thriving feminist movement will become reality—not only for those of us here today but for those who will come after us.

Building on the words of Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the UN, and with the conviction that this message must reach every corner of the world: **“Women always have to be very clear about their place. Their place is here, it is there, it is everywhere and anywhere; it is now and will always be wherever they want it to be”.**

»»» JOANNA CHUDZIK- RSCJ POLAND

»»» March 2025



Participating in the sixty-ninth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) was an experience of **agency and courage**.

I witnessed women's perseverance and responsibility in NGOs and state bodies to achieve the goals set thirty years earlier in Beijing. Our meeting in the UN was an expression of our solidarity.



Image created by AI presented at CSW69. AI can reinforce gender inequalities

As a person from the region where the war in Ukraine is taking place, I experienced this **solidarity** through all the voices condemning warfare and the ideas that recognize that everyone exists for themselves, and everything is allowed.

Recognizing who in any conflict is the aggressor and who is the victim brings the hope of a peace that can be negotiated with the participation of women who are the direct victims of the conflict.

Among the many meetings I attended, some touched me deeply. I stand in solidarity with the women of **Gaza**, who, despite the lack of hope and loss of livelihood, courageously defend their families, children, and dignity.

I was disturbed and saddened to hear about the slow but systematic disenfranchisement of Afghan women. I was surprised by the scale of the phenomenon of forced marriage, reproductive violence and female genital mutilation.

I participated primarily in the side events, due to their thematic diversity and informative nature. Many of the issues raised do not appear in the local media and thus are not in the consciousness of many people.

Many of the meetings highlighted the achievements of recent years in the areas of gender equality, parity, **women's leadership** in the political and business spheres, climate change, and greater accessibility to the health care system for women and girls. We were all able to rejoice in the presence of President Halla Tomasdottir and congratulate other great women on their successes like Claudia Sheinbaum, President of Mexico.

We heard about **new technologies** that are not only being used to help humanity but are also becoming a new means to oppress and exploit women, sometimes on an unprecedented scale. Many of the guests and speakers emphasized the intense reactions against women's inequality caused by geopolitical changes and the return of the patriarchy.

On one hand, growing in awareness of the setbacks women are experiencing globally is discouraging: humanity is not willing to learn from its past **mistakes**. On the other hand, meetings of this nature, which I was privileged to be a part of, are a source of strength, determination, selflessness and compassion and can be the basis for great hope.

## >>> MAKI SAITO - ALUMNAE (USA/JAPAN)

>>> March 2025



### Redefining Leadership at the UN: A Global Shift

Over the past two weeks, I had the privilege of attending and speaking at the 69th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women—a **powerful gathering** of leaders from around the world. From the President of Iceland and the UN Deputy Secretary-General to cabinet ministers, CEOs, and even a 13-year-old SDG youth advocate, over 12,000 women showed up and spoke up.

At the same time, Namibia and Tunisia appointed female presidents and prime ministers, and the IOC welcomed another woman president. These are not just symbolic wins—they mark a **global shift** in how we define leadership.

The old model—based on dominance and hierarchy—no longer serves us. Today, we need **collaboration** over control, empathy over ego, resilience over rigidity. And women bring these essential skills to the table.

Women's character strengths are shaping a more sustainable, peaceful, and prosperous future. And the data backs it up:

- Companies with women in leadership outperform by 25%
- **Gender parity** could add \$28 trillion to global GDP
- 42% of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) fund managers are women
- Women-led firms donate 25% more to social causes
- Digital transformation thrives 38% more under female leadership
- Workplaces with women leaders are fairer, more engaged, and more collaborative

Yet barriers remain. Cultural stereotypes and systemic obstacles continue to hold women back. These aren't just women's issues—they're missed opportunities for our shared future.

So how do we grow more women leaders? Here's what I took away from the conference:

- **At Home:** Encourage decision-making. Celebrate character—resilience, curiosity, and compassion—not just achievement. Share the stories of strong women.
- **At School:** Empower girls with leadership roles, mentorship, and emotional intelligence.
- **At Work:** Build mentorship networks, invest in leadership training, and reward inclusive leadership—empathy and team success.



As **Madeleine Sophie Barat**, founder of the Sacred Heart, believed: women must be raised as changemakers. That vision still matters today.

Because when women thrive, the world thrives—with more peace, stronger communities, and shared prosperity.

Let's keep the momentum going sparked by the Beijing Declaration—not just at summits, but in our homes, classrooms, and workplaces.



Irene & Margaret at the UN headquarters during CSW69

### Reflections from My UN Visit —The Power of Sisters

What an exciting week for SRW at the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women! New York City was buzzing with women from all over the world, gathering to share ideas and solutions.

What struck me most was that **Sisters were everywhere**—bringing women together, ensuring their voices were heard, and leading discussions on poverty, education, human trafficking, and homelessness. Sisters continue to play a critical role in building peace and justice, and their presence was unmistakable.

During the opening session at UN Headquarters, Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the women leaders in the room, including many Sisters, saying, "In the face of immense obstacles, you strive to make our societies **more just, more fair**, more representative – and as a result, more resilient and more prosperous for everyone."

His words affirmed what I witnessed all week: **Sisters have their finger on the pulse of global issues**. They are quietly and effectively lifting up communities, amplifying voices, and offering real solutions to systemic poverty. They are the backbone of hope in the world, and because of supporters like you, Sisters Rising Worldwide provides the framework that allows them to connect, collaborate, and act.

I also had the privilege of visiting the office space where our PeaceRoom Coordinator, Beth Blissman, works, inside the Church Center at the United Nations. It was a powerful reminder of how **our global network** is deeply connected to these critical conversations at the UN.

One inspiring moment for me was meeting with **high school student leaders** and witnessing their eagerness to be part of real change. They were captivated and moved by the power of the stories of Sisters' work. These young people were inspired, hopeful, and eager to be part of something **bigger** than themselves.

After this incredible week, I am filled with **renewed hope** and conviction about the ability of Sisters to shape a more just and peaceful world. Knowing too, that we align with nine of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reaffirms my deep commitment to empower many more Sister-led projects around the world and add their measured successes to the whole.

Thank you for being part of this movement—for **believing in the power of Sisters**, for championing their leadership, and for helping create a more just world.

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## >>> APOLLINE BOUTS - INTERN UN-NGO FROM FRANCE

>>> March 2025



Apolline at the UN General Assembly - Townhall meeting

Empowered by the follow-up of the Beijing Declaration!

As a young woman I felt **empowered** seeing women coming from the whole world to discuss politics of gender equality.

Townhall meeting where civil society exchanged with the Secretary General also emphasised the role and efforts of NGOs in their advocacy for women.

I was pleased that many countries, including less prominent ones, organized and participated in side events, demonstrating their commitment to engaging in discussions with the UN and civil society.



Side Event by Armenia, next host of cop17 in 2026

Many side events highlighted the relation between **gender and climate change**, and the need to involve more **men** in the fight for gender equality.



Side Event by Brazil at Columbia University: gender equality in care and climate change

Many events included **youth voices**, speaking up about the importance of their role in advancing gender equality. As a young person, I felt represented at CSW69, thus more valued.



A young girl reciting a poem in front of the Secretary General



Youth speech at CSW69 Youth Forum

Unfortunately, some few countries are now **standing against** key notions such as “gender equality”, “development” and “inclusivity”. CSW69 highlighted that we need to fight against backlash all together! To succeed, civil society, the UN and countries need to create more **alliances**.