



# US WOMEN'S CAUCUS

*Feminist Advocacy at the UN*

## US Women's Caucus Recommendations for the CSW 68 Zero Draft February 12, 2024

We have several priorities for revisions of the CSW68 Zero Draft that we feel are critical matters for poor women and children. All recommended changes are based on agreed language from previous CSW Agreed Conclusions and the Beijing Platform for Action and are documented below.

1. Unconditional cash transfers
2. Rural women's land rights
3. Equitable banking
4. Marital status disaggregation
5. Indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women, older women, and women of African descent
6. Education for non-traditional occupations
7. Political participation of women
8. Violence against women: torture

### 1. Unconditional cash transfers

Regular cash payments without onerous conditions are a proven way to raise vulnerable families from poverty, with important benefits for women and children.

#### **Insert language into CSW68 para 23(ss) so that it reads as follows (additions in bold):**

23(ss) Establish or strengthen inclusive and gender-responsive social protection systems **for all women and girls, especially those in vulnerable situations such as older women, widows, women heads of households, single mothers, women smallholder farmers, indigenous women and girls, migrants, and women and girls with disabilities, including floors and programs such as food and cash-for-work, cash transfer and voucher programs, school feeding programs and mother-and-child nutrition programs** to ensure full access to social protection for all without discrimination of any kind; **and assess the need for and promote the revision of conditionalities related to cash transfer programs to ensure that they are adequate, proportional and non-discriminatory and that non-compliance does not lead to punitive measures that exclude women and girls in vulnerable situations;** and take measures to progressively, achieve higher levels of protection, including facilitating the transition from informal to formal work.

#### **Agreed language precedents:**

##### **CSW63 Agreed Conclusions para 47(ee), E/CN.6/2019/L.3**

47(ee) Encourage and recognize the efforts at all levels to establish and strengthen social protection systems and measures, including national safety nets and programmes **for all women and girls, such as food and cash-for-work, cash transfer and voucher programmes, school feeding programmes and mother-and-child nutrition programmes,** and increase investment, capacity-building and systems development;

##### **CSW63 Agreed Conclusions para 47(mm), E/CN.6/2019/L.3**

47 (mm) **Assess the need for and promote the revision of conditionalities,** where they exist, **related to cash transfer programs,** inter alia, to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes and exacerbating, women's unpaid work and **ensure that they are adequate, proportional and non-discriminatory and that non-compliance does not lead to punitive measures that exclude women and girls who are marginalized or in vulnerable situations.**

##### **CSW66 Agreed Conclusions para 27, E/CN.6/2022/L.7**

27. The Commission reiterates the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into disaster risk management, taking into account the perspectives of all women and girls, including **those in vulnerable situations and women and**

**girls with disabilities.** It recognizes the need for the inclusive participation and contribution of all women and girls, **older women, widows, indigenous women and girls,** local communities, youth, volunteers, **migrants,** academia, scientific and research entities and networks, business, professional associations, private sector financing institutions and the media, in all forums and processes related to disaster risk reduction, in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

**CSW66 Agreed Conclusions para 62(cc), E/CN.6/2022/L.7**

62(cc) Foster the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women and, as appropriate, girls living in rural areas; increase investment in gender-responsive, sustainable rural development strategies and technological solutions to address climate change, environmental degradation and disasters; and strengthen rural women's economic empowerment, adaptive capacity and resilience and their access to land tenure security, decent work, infrastructure, information and communications technologies, and financial services, in particular for **women heads of households and women smallholder farmers;**

**CSW67 Agreed Conclusions para 86(kk), E/CN.6/2023/L.3**

(kk) Promote and invest in gender-responsive, quality, equitable and inclusive education, lifelong learning, reskilling, and vocational training and studies, and ensure that women and girls diversify their educational and occupational choices in emerging fields, such as science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, and information and communications technology, and acquire digital skills; strive to expand vocational and technical education for all women and girls, including pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as **single mothers,** to enable them to continue and complete their education, and provide catch-up and literacy education, including digital literacy education, and education for those who did not receive formal education, as well as special initiatives for keeping girls in school through early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education, to ensure that they acquire the knowledge and skills to attain high-quality jobs in the digital and sustainable economy;

## **2. Rural women's land rights**

There is very little mention in the Zero Draft about rural women's land rights, a key factor in their continuing impoverishment. CSW62 has some pertinent paras that can be used verbatim for CSW68.

**Insert verbatim CSW62 paragraph on women's land rights after Zero draft para 12:**

16. The Commission recognizes the important role and contribution of rural women as critical agents in the eradication of poverty and in enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development, as well as sustainable fisheries. It underlines that meaningful progress in those areas necessitates closing the gender gap, introducing appropriate gender-responsive policies, interventions and innovations, including in agriculture and fisheries, and women's equal access to agricultural and fisheries technologies, technical assistance, productive resources, land tenure security and access to, ownership of, and control over land, forests, water and marine resources, and access to and participation in local, regional and international markets.

**Insert verbatim CSW62 paragraph on land rights after Zero draft para 23(s):**

46(e) Enact legislation to promote women's, including rural women's, land registration and land title certification, regardless of their marital status, and address practices and stereotypes that undermine their land rights, including in the context of customary and traditional systems, which often govern land management, administration and transfer in rural areas.

## **3. Equitable banking**

The Beijing Platform for Action has useful language about increasing women's access to financing, especially for women entrepreneurs, that would strengthen the Zero Draft.

**Insert language about women's access to financing in para 23(x) as follows:**

23(x) Implement policies to support women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses, including by ensuring equal access to finance; **and mobilize the banking sector to increase lending and refinancing through incentives and the development of intermediaries that serve the needs of women entrepreneurs and producers in both rural and urban areas, and include women in their leadership, planning and decision-making;**

**Agreed language precedent: Beijing Platform for Action para 167(b) A/CONF.177/20**

167(b) Mobilize the banking sector to increase lending and refinancing through incentives and the development of intermediaries that serve the needs of women entrepreneurs and producers in both rural and urban areas, and include women in their leadership, planning and decision-making;

**4. Marital status disaggregation**

The need to disaggregate marital status in data collection has been highlighted in recent CSW documents, as a way to track the special challenges faced by widows, women heads of household, and single mothers.

**Insert “marital status” into CSW68 para 23(mm) so that it reads as follows:**

23(mm) Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and government institutions to collect, analyse, disseminate and use data on multidimensional poverty, disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, **marital status**, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics;

**Agreed language precedent: CSW67 Agreed Conclusions para 86(hhh), E/CN.6/2023/L.3**

86(hhh) Strengthen the capacity and coordination of national statistics and data production offices, government institutions and other research organizations to collect, analyse, disseminate and use gender statistics and data disaggregated on the basis of income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, **marital status**, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics”

**NOTE** that “marital status” is already included in the CSW68 Zero Draft para 19. We feel it should be included in the para on statistics as it was in CSW67.

19. It also acknowledges that women and girls in poverty experience multiple and compounding deprivations that are intensified by other dimensions of inequality including race, ethnicity, disability, location, **marital** and migrant status, among others, and their experiences of poverty are shaped by gender norms and stereotypes.

**5. Indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women, older women, and women of African descent**

We feel these categories of women are especially vulnerable to poverty and their particular situations should be addressed specifically. The CSW63 Agreed Conclusions has paragraphs relating to these categories that should be included in the Zero Draft, following paragraph 23(aa) which comes directly from CSW63 para 47(r).

**Insert verbatim CSW63 para 47(s) on indigenous women**

47(s) Promote and protect the rights of indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, health care, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and women’s access to decent work, and promoting their meaningful participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, recognizing that indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas, regardless of age, often face violence and higher rates of poverty, limited access to healthcare services, information and communications technologies, infrastructure, financial services, education and employment, while also recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including to climate change mitigation and adaptation;

**Insert verbatim CSW63 para 47(t) on women with disabilities:**

47(t) Promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring their access, on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education and productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, as well as by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes;

**Insert verbatim CSW63 para 47(u) on migrant women:**

Adopt national gender-responsive migration policies and legislation, in line with relevant obligations under international law, to: protect the human rights of all migrant women and girls, regardless of migration status;

recognize the skills and education of women migrant workers to promote their economic empowerment in all sectors and, as appropriate, facilitate their productive employment, decent work and integration into the labour force, including in the fields of education and science and technology; recognize the importance of protecting labour rights and a safe environment for women migrant workers and those in precarious employment, including preventing and addressing abuse and exploitation, protecting women migrant workers in all sectors and promoting labour mobility; provide newly arrived migrant women with targeted, gender-responsive, child-sensitive, accessible and comprehensive information and legal guidance on their rights and obligations, including on compliance with national and local laws, obtaining work and resident permits, status adjustments, registration with authorities, access to justice to file complaints about rights violations, as well as access to basic services; encourage cooperation among various stakeholders, including countries of origin, transit and destination, in ensuring that migrant women and girls have adequate identification and the provision of relevant documents to facilitate access to social protection mechanisms; and facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrant women and girls by providing them with equal access to social protection and services;

**Insert verbatim CSW 63 para 47(x) on older women:**

Promote the effective and meaningful participation of older women, where relevant, in the design and implementation of normative and political frameworks related to social security and social protection systems, public services and infrastructure that benefit them;

**Insert verbatim CSW 63 para 47(y) on women and girls of African descent:**

Promote access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure and mainstream a gender perspective when designing and monitoring public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of women and girls of African descent and bearing in mind the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024);

**6. Education for non-traditional occupations**

While much of the education paras in the Zero Draft are good, we feel there should be mention of expanding occupational choices for women beyond traditional, often low-paid categories.

**Insert language on non-traditional occupations into para 23(bb) so that it reads as follows:**

23(bb) Promote and respect the right to education for women and girls throughout the life course and at all levels, especially for those who have been left furthest behind, and address gender disparities, including by investing in public education systems and infrastructure, eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, providing universal access to inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, including free and compulsory primary and secondary education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy and promoting financial and digital literacy, ensuring that women and girls have equal access to leadership training, career development, scholarships and fellowships; strive to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary and secondary education and expand vocational and technical education for all women and girls, and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all; and address negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, **taking positive measures to promote training for the full range of occupational choices of non-traditional careers for women, including the development of multidisciplinary courses for science and mathematics teachers to sensitize them to the relevance of science and technology to women's lives;**

**Agreed language precedent: Beijing Platform for Action para 82(g) A/CONF.177/20**

82(g) take positive measures to promote training for the full range of occupational choices of non-traditional careers for women and men, including the development of multidisciplinary courses for science and mathematics teachers to sensitise them to the relevance of science and technology to women's lives.

## 7. Political participation of women

We feel that increased political participation by women is essential in developing policies that support pro-poor legislation. We suggest a new para on women's political participation following para 11 on women, peace, and security, drawing on CSW65 paras 15 and 16 as follows:

### **Insert new paragraph on women's political participation following para 11:**

**The Commission recognizes that gender inequality continues to be reflected in imbalances of power between women and men in all spheres of society and acknowledges the need to significantly accelerate the pace of progress towards ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making in executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and the public sector. The Commission also recognizes the need to implement international, regional and national commitments and obligations aimed at achieving gender equality, including through temporary special measures, as appropriate, and create an enabling environment to promote women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and strengthen the voice, agency and leadership of women and girls.**

#### **Agreed language precedent: CSW65 Agreed Conclusions para 15, 16 E/CN.6/2021/L.3**

15. **The Commission recognizes that gender inequality continues to be reflected in imbalances of power between women and men in all spheres of society** and that, while there has been progress in the number of women elected or appointed to decision-making bodies, administrative posts and other public bodies and commissions, and temporary special measures, including quotas, have substantially contributed to increasing women's representation in national and local legislatures, progress towards gender balance is not sufficient. **It also recognizes the need to significantly accelerate the pace of progress towards ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making in executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and the public sector.**

16. **The Commission also recognizes the need to implement international, regional and national commitments and obligations aimed at achieving gender equality, including through temporary special measures, as appropriate, and create an enabling environment to promote women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and strengthen the voice, agency and leadership of women and girls.**

## 8. Violence against women: torture

Women's economic participation is impaired when they are faced with violence. The paragraph on gender-based violence should be strengthened by including a prohibition against torture as affirmed in CSW51 Agreed Conclusions.

### **Insert torture in para 23(ff) as follows:**

(ff) Eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spaces, online and offline, such as sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicides, all harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, **torture**, as well as trafficking in persons and modern slavery and other forms of exploitation, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence and end impunity, and take appropriate measures to create a safe, enabling and violence-free working environment for women, including by ratifying key international treaties that provide protection against gender-based violence and sexual harassment;

#### **Agreed language precedent: CSW51 Agreed Conclusions para 14.9(a)**

Condemn all forms of violence against girls and take effective legislative and other measures to prevent and eliminate all such violence, including physical, mental, psychological and sexual violence, **torture**, child abuse and exploitation, hostage-taking, domestic violence, trafficking in or sale of children and their organs, paedophilia, child prostitution, child pornography, child sex tourism, gang-related violence and harmful traditional practices in all settings;