**5 Key Recommendations for CSW71**

NGO Committee on the Status of Women/ New York Advocacy & Research Group

**"Women and Girls Will Not Wait Another 171 Years"**

We present these recommendations for consideration for the 71st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women Zero Draft on behalf of women and girls in all their diversity, throughout the life course: from girlhood and adolescence to young womanhood, adulthood, and older age. With four years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, not one target under Sustainable Development Goal 5 is on track, and at the current pace, that Goal is 171 years away. Our consultations point to five priorities: ending violence against women and girls; decent work and economic empowerment; leadership and decision-making; quality education and lifelong learning; and peace, security, and prosperity. Adolescent girls and young women, too often left out, must be included in each.

2026 has been a year of polycrisis: wave after wave strikes before the last has receded, and each one deepens inequality. Armed conflict, climate change, economic shocks, the pandemic's aftermath, the digital and artificial intelligence revolution, migration and displacement are colliding, and all women and girls pay the highest price in their health, safety, livelihoods and rights. Compounding this injustice, women remain largely excluded from the spaces where power and resources are allocated: the boardroom, the courtroom and the legislature. They pay the highest price, yet hold the fewest keys to success. Meanwhile, pushback against gender equality is growing, civic space is shrinking, and austerity and aid cuts are decimating the women's organizations and services that respond first. The promises of Beijing and the 2030 Agenda must now be matched by financing, accountability, and women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in every decision that shapes their lives.

**Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Accountability, Survivor-Centered Care, Sustained Funding**

Strengthen survivor-centred, integrated and adequately financed systems for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, ensuring accessible healthcare, protection, psychosocial support, justice and longer-term rehabilitation, including in technology spaces, conflict-affected, displacement and resource-constrained settings. Health services, especially antenatal, obstetric and primary care, are often survivors' first point of contact and must be safe entry points, backed by measurable implementation and accountability.

1. Strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, ensuring timely justice, protection, and confidential, trauma-informed care.
2. Accelerate national and international regulation of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, including Artificial Intelligence harms, holding big tech, state and non-state actors and platforms accountable.
3. Enhance national response to femicide, intimate partner violence and disappearances, with trained health workers, financial independence for survivors and particular attention to intersecting discrimination.
4. Ensure dedicated, sustained, flexible funding to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, especially in conflict and displacement, with international cooperation and data collection.

**Valued, Empowered, Supported: An Economy that Works for Women and Girls**

Women's economic rights are central to the 2030 Agenda, yet women and girls remain overrepresented in poverty, unpaid care work, and work in informal, low-paid jobs with little social protection. Globally, young women are twice as likely as young men to not be in employment, education, or training. At today's speed, economic equality is 129 years away. With Aid funding falling 28% in one year, the roadmap to decent work and economic empowerment remains elusive. Member States should repeal discriminatory laws, enforce equal and living-wage pay, invest in care and social protection, and guarantee women's equal access to finance, technology, and decision-making.

1. Ensure universal labor rights and social protection for women in formal and informal work, and protect livelihood programs in crisis and displacement settings.
2. Close gaps in land ownership, inheritance, and financial products, including credit and venture capital, while expanding young women's access to education, training, and employment, including high-value technology jobs beyond data-labelling work.
3. Enforce measurable targets with transparent selection and retention of women in leadership positions in government,

state-owned companies, and private sector firms.
4. Reverse aid cuts and guarantee sustained investment and funding to women's enterprises and entrepreneurship training.

**Women's Agency for Sustainable Transformation Beyond 2030: Leadership Across Systems**

Women and girls in their full diversity lead change at every level. From roles in multilateral forums and global movements, in governments, boardrooms and institutions, to roles in cultures, communities, research, education, sports, arts, grassroots and families. Accelerating the sustainable agenda means supporting distributed leadership and removing structural barriers to equitable participation. Leading effectively through climate, technological, and conflict-driven disruption requires resources, equity, peace, and rights.

1. Enable and institutionalize women's leadership in the boardroom and beyond, across homes, communities, cultures, research, and sectors including agriculture and grassroots movements.
2. Finance women-led community, social enterprises, and innovation initiatives through dedicated, multi-year funding, and build proven practices into public policy.
3. Enact comprehensive legal, institutional, and investment reforms to dismantle systemic inequality, guaranteeing equal remuneration for work of equal value, equal rights, and safety in public life.
4. Protect women's access to education, networks, resources, and decision-making roles during polycrises including climate, Artificial Intelligence, and armed conflicts.

**Women's Empowerment: From Education to Decision-Making throughout Their Life Course**

Education and lifelong learning are fundamental to women's empowerment and meaningful participation in decision-making. When all women and girls have equal access to quality education free from violence and barriers such as those related to menstrual health, they gain the knowledge, skills, confidence and opportunities needed to shape their lives and communities. Yet education alone is not enough. Women must also be able to translate education and skills into leadership, economic independence and influence in decision-making at all levels, from households and communities to workplaces, parliaments and international institutions.

1. Ensure universal access to quality, inclusive and violence-free education and lifelong learning for all women and girls in all their diversity;
2. Equip all women and girls with skills, resources and opportunities that foster leadership and economic independence;
3. Enable women's full participation by removing structural barriers and challenging discriminatory gender norms across institutions and societies.
4. Ensure women's equal representation, voices, and meaningful influence in decision-making at all levels of the educational system.

**No Peace Without Women: Agency, Accountability, and Justice in an Age of Conflict**

In a world fractured by armed conflict, economic collapse, and systemic inequality, women bear the heaviest burdens and are excluded from peace processes and justice mechanisms. Redefining security beyond militarization and state security through women's perspectives and human security is key to Peace, security, and justice. These cannot be achieved without survivors in leadership roles and women shaping protection efforts and community-led conflict prevention. Their full engagement with international accountability instruments, the proposed Crimes Against Humanity Treaty, is essential to advancing peace and justice.

1. Guarantee women's meaningful political agency, redefine security around civilian protection, human rights across conflict prevention, early warning systems, and peacebuilding governance at all levels.
2. Establish survivor-centered legal, political, and economic reparations frameworks for women and girls in conflict-affected settings.
3. Ensure the endorsement and implementation by all Member States of the Secretary-General's Common Pledge on women in peace processes to ensure women's substantive inclusion in negotiating, ratifying, and implementing peace.
4. Strengthen gender-responsive interpretation, implementation and enforcement in international humanitarian law and ensure enforceable accountability for sexual and gender-based crimes committed during conflict.