

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Civil Society (CSO) Guide

A short primer to help you make the most of your experience

What

The annual meeting within the United Nations (UN) system that prepares reports and makes recommendations on matters concerning gender equality and the rights of all women and girls. The CSW brings together representatives from UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities to collaborate around written Agreed Conclusions to an annually chosen theme. Each CSW session also devotes a small amount of time to review the priority theme from a previous year. This is known as the Review Theme.

Priority Theme:

"Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls"

Review Theme:

"Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls"

Emerging Issue:

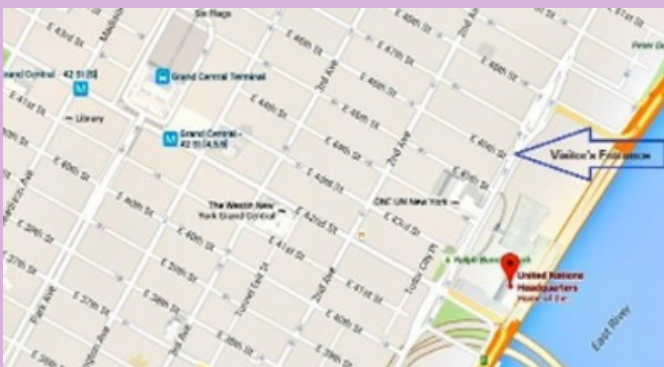
"Getting back on track: Achieving gender equality in a context of overlapping emergencies"

When

March 6th-17th 2023

Where

405 E 42nd St. (46th St & 1st Ave), New York, NY 10017



Accessible via public transportation from the **4, 5 and 7 trains** at Grand Central Station.

A Brief History

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was founded in 1946 and is a "functional commission" of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It advises ECOSOC on issues related to gender and sexuality alongside UN Women (More details [here](#)).

In 1996, the Commission became the lead monitor in assessing progress and gaps in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. (Read more on this [here](#)).

The Bureau of the Commission

The Bureau of the Commission plays a crucial role in facilitating the preparation for, and in ensuring the successful outcome of the annual sessions of the Commission.

For this year's CSW, South Africa will serve as the Chair with Argentina, Germany, Latvia, and Mongolia serving as Vice-Chairs. Argentina, as one of the Vice-Chairs, will be facilitating the negotiations for the main outcome document of the CSW, the Agreed Conclusions.

Technology and Innovation at the CSW

Since the 1995 Beijing Declaration, technology and innovation have been at the centre of critical areas of concerns related to gender equality. This will be the main focus during this year's CSW.

Closing the gender digital divide, providing education and economic empowerment opportunities through technology, improving online safety and privacy, innovating, and increasing women's participation represent **key priorities**. (More details on this can be found [here](#)).

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) at the CSW

Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LBTIQ) women and transgender and gender non-conforming persons experience human rights violations because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC). These violations perpetrated against individuals based on their real or perceived SOGIESC include killings, violent attacks, torture, arbitrary detention, forced marriage, and nonconsensual surgical interventions, in addition to denial of freedom of assembly, association, and expression as well as discrimination in accessing health care, education, employment, and housing. These factors, combined with others such as broader notions of patriarchy and negative aspects of dominant economic models, work to erode all women's human rights.

LBTIQ women and transgender and gender non-conforming persons around the world are often excluded from the benefits of international development and have also suffered from a narrow definition of "women" in the CSW. We must recognize that LBTIQ women, transgender, and gender non-conforming persons face gender-based violence and discrimination.

We advocate for an inclusive and non-binary definition of gender. We include people with diverse sex characteristics in our work. We challenge harmful gender norms, stereotypes, and roles that exist in society and we address the exclusion of people who transgress those norms. We advance a definition of "women" that is intersectional and multifaceted, and therefore includes LBTIQ women and transgender and gender non-conforming persons.

Side Events: They're Important

Limited numbers of CSOs are included in public sessions or asked to make statements to the Commission. The primary involvement of many CSO representatives comes in the form of side events outside of the formal UN sessions, which are organized by civil society or member states.

This year, some side events will be held in-person and others in a virtual format. These events offer vital opportunities for CSOs to contribute to the overall dialogue, even if their areas of expertise and focus are not included in the current CSW theme or outcome. Do not underestimate the importance of networking and side events. Building solidarity is a critical part of the mission of the CSW. Set realistic goals for your advocacy during the session and focus on building relationships. (More details [here](#) and [here](#)).

LGBTIQ Identities and the Digital Space

Digital spaces may offer emancipatory tools for LBTIQ women, transgender, and gender non-conforming persons and at the same time may reinforce societal oppression. While they play a crucial role in terms of access to information and building communities, they also expose LBTIQ people to surveillance, censorship, and online gender-based violence, including cyber bullying, hate speech, sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. These abuses may transpose to offline violence, thus increasing stigma and discrimination.

The ability to safely connect virtually and access online information is essential to empower and organize marginalized communities. Therefore, we argue for stronger, more inclusive, and more protective legislation, strategies, and policies, which address digital exclusion and the specific realities of LBTIQ women and transgender and gender non-conforming persons, ensure their well-being, and promote safe and inclusive digital spaces.

Civil Society Organizations at the CSW

At the CSW, you will be able to collaborate with like-minded organizations and partners, such as progressive sexual and reproductive health and rights, environmental, indigenous and digital rights organizations, to create coalitions centered on specific topics. These collaborations could have a significant impact as a group resulting from shared networks, expertise, resources, and influence. These coalitions play an important role in contributing to the Agreed Conclusions and advocating for key priorities with UN Member States. These interactions at the national level also help to hold governments accountable for their international obligations.

It should be noted, however, that there are also many CSOs that attend the CSW that may have different or even opposing views than our networks. It is important for all those attending to understand this reality and prepare themselves for encounters with these organizations. Activists should prioritize personal safety and well-being at the CSW and, when possible, should look out for one another to ensure that the CSW is a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Making the Most of your CSW

1. Relate your advocacy back to the CSW Theme

- To maximize your impact, it is essential that you familiarize yourself with the priority theme and keep it in mind.
- Make sure that your advocacy is connected with the impact of technology and digital spaces on LGBTIQ women, transgender persons, and gender non-conforming persons.
- Align your advocacy with the theme so that it fits into the context of this CSW.

2. Contact your Foreign Ministry and Ministry for Women/Gender

- If it is safe and possible for you, contact your Foreign Ministry and Ministry for Women/Gender, or any other governmental body you have access to, to let them know that you will be attending the CSW.

3. Become familiar with the CSW proposed organization of work and advocacy entry points

- General Written Statement
 - *Deadline* - October 14th 2022
- Speech during General Discussion
 - *Deadline* - Early February
- Intervention during Interactive Expert Panels
 - *Deadline* - Early February
- Intervention in Ministerial Roundtables
 - *Deadline* - As soon as possible

4. Establish contact and arrange meetings with Ministerial Delegation and UN Mission representatives

- Find out about your country's CSW delegation and key priorities. It will help you make your work known.
- The UN Bluebook for contact information can be found [here](#).
- Questions for you to ask
 - What are the country's key priorities?
 - Who is on the country's CSW delegation?
 - Who is the country's chosen representative on the CSO delegation?
 - Can we arrange a meeting?

CSW 67 Regional Consultations

Ahead of CSW 67, Regional Offices convene regional consultations with both Member States and stakeholders to collect input and prepare the session.

Africa Regional Consultation:

- Took place virtually between 29 November and 1 December 2022
- Common position can be accessed [here](#)

Arab States Regional Consultation:

- Takes place late January or early February 2023

Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation:

- Takes place 8-9 February 2023 at UN HQs in Bangkok (virtual participation possible)
- For more information, contact hulda.ouma@unwomen.org

Americas and Caribbean Regional Consultation:

- Takes place virtually 8-9 February 2023
- For more information, contact barbara.ortizvicente@unwomen.org

Europe and Central Asia Regional Consultation:

- Takes place across three consecutive weeks in February 2023 (hybrid format)
- For more information, contact zdenka.loncar@unwomen.org

A Few More Useful Links

[CSW 67 Official Page](#)

[UN Women's Expert Report](#)

[UN Secretary General's Report on CSW 67 Priority Theme \(release 2023 January\)](#)

[Prior Agreed Conclusions](#)

[Information Side Events for CSW 67](#)

[Proposed Organization of Work](#)



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Outright is dedicated to working with partners around the globe to strengthen the capacity of the LGBTIQ human rights movement, document and amplify human rights violations against LGBTIQ people, and advocate for inclusion and equality.

Founded in 1990, with staff in over a dozen countries, Outright works with the United Nations, regional human rights monitoring bodies and civil society partners. Outright holds consultative status at the United Nations where it serves as the secretariat of the UN LGBTI Core Group.

For more information:

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<https://www.youtube.com/lgbthumanrights>