



KEY TAKEWAYS

67th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) 6-17 March 2023

Priority theme: “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”

- In his [opening remarks](#) at a “[Town Hall with CSOs](#)”, Secretary-General (SG) Antonio Guterres “committed to raising **\$300 million over the coming three years for women's organizations and human rights defenders in crisis situations**”. Thus far there is no additional information on the recipients, the entities involved, or how it will be channeled to the respective organizations.
- CSW67 featured an **interactive youth session for the first time** that included young people, youth representatives of delegations, civil society and UN entities. However, the focus was largely on youth, not children. This **sidelining of children and de-facto “backsliding” of their rights** (i.e., not explicitly mentioning “children” as a distinct group with special needs, or using the catch-all term “youth” in various UN documents and across UN agencies) is a worrying trend the Alliance Secretariat has been closely observing. It is also the reason why **reinserting “children” as a distinct group of individuals into UN documents is a major priority of the Alliance Secretariat’s advocacy** endeavors at the UN and with member states.
- Similarly, throughout CSW67 both in-person and virtual participants lamented the **difficulty that coming to New York poses to primarily children and youth**, mostly due to visa issues with the host country. The SG promised to engage the US government on this issue in order to **facilitate more in-person participation of children** in the future.
- **Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV)** appears to have become a **definite priority among stakeholders**, not only for the CSO community but also UN agencies and member states. The most prominent panel on this topic – thus emphasizing its relevance – included the Executive Directors of UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA, which is rare. Surprisingly, however, the term **TFGBV is notably absent from the CSW67’s [Agreed Conclusions](#)**.
- The [SG’s Envoy on Technology](#), stressed that **technology is not neutral but rather reflects the feelings and values of its creators** (predominantly men). He also emphasized the **importance of “agency preservation”** (i.e., that humans not cede too much decision-making power to AI – from lethal military strikes that dodge accountability under international humanitarian law to decisions on parole). This is crucial because **international humanitarian law is triggered when digital/cyber acts have consequences in the analog/real world**. It is also why the SG’s Envoy on Technology labels the UN’s [Global Digital Compact](#), which is expected to outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all, as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. (According to the SG, the Compact will lay out a framework for what kind of legislation is



needed in the digital space. It will be presented at the [Summit of the Future](#) in the fall of 2024.)

- A much-voiced concern at CSW67 was **digital access** (in terms of both physical accessibility to a computer/the internet and digital literacy skills). The SG noted that a big obstacle to achieving a global open internet is certain member states; specifically those that misuse (take advantage of) the lack of both physical accessibility and digital skills to stifle freedom of expression.
- Panelists’ and participants’ calls to action frequently referred to the **urgency to engage the tech industry to make the internet a safer place for children (esp. girls) and women**. The most obvious reason is that tech companies are responsible for writing the algorithms and AI used by today’s internet (both of which are biased against women and can be harmful to children).
- A more subtle, yet no less important, reason to engage the tech industry now is the **opportunity for proactive collaboration to devise protections and guardrails against abuse of women and children in the next digital space** (i.e., the next version of the internet). To better understand what the SG and his team are doing in this regard, the Alliance Secretariat submitted a question in writing for which we are presently awaiting the SG’s response.
- An all-day side event convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) brought together parliamentarians from across the world and emphasized the **positive impact that national parliaments can have once they take up the issue of advancing gender equality**. (This is a vindication of Alliance members’ advocacy efforts at the national legislative level.) A Tanzanian deputy called upon UN Women to categorize online abuse as a form of gender-based violence (GBV); a German MP noted that the best protection and insurance against GBV is the attention of the public via open discussions in parliament; and an Irish deputy called on the EU to designate a focal point on violence against women and girls.
- The Chair of the United Kingdom’s Government Equalities Office insisted that the country’s [Online Safety Bill](#) (currently making its way through the House of Lords) **will “make the UK the safest place on earth to be online”**.

CSW68 (2024)

- **The Philippines will chair and Argentina and Latvia will co-chair** (with co-chairs from Africa and Western Europe yet to be designated).
- **CSW68 Priority theme:** “Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.”