



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
11 November 2024

English only

---

## Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-ninth session

10–21 March 2025

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

### Statement submitted by Women’s Health and Education Center, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

---

\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Improving Higher Education Accessibility for Women, Girls, Minorities and Migrants**

69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will review the success of adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). The review will include an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of The Platform. Achievement of gender equality, empowerment of women and accessibility to higher education and participation in STEMM (Science, Technology Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) programs, is still a challenge for women, girls and minorities. According to 2024 Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity (UNW/2024/2), extreme poverty has declined over the last three decades but is still pervasive. Based on current trends, over 340 million women and girls will still live in extreme poverty by 2030 and 1 in 4 will experience moderate to severe food insecurity. Educational level of women particularly are affected by income equalities. In 2023, the world was rocked by the eruption of fresh conflicts, and women and girls, are continuing to suffer disproportionately from crisis not of their making.

Affordable and sustainable higher education is essential everywhere, for everyone, with special focus on women, girls, minorities and migrants to improve their living conditions, eliminate extreme poverty and hunger in the world.

Women's Health and Education Center's projects and programs bring governments and the health, education and development sectors closer together to develop solutions. These initiatives are even more important now, than before. We must implement comprehensive and inclusive policies, change our way of thinking, and prioritize efforts to eliminate poverty and bridge the digital divide. It is crucial for governments to integrate social, economic, and environmental policies to promote social justice. These initiatives provide the solutions needed by governments to increase investment in education and health facilities modernization efforts. For too long, a lack of reliable power has prevented people in underserved parts of Africa and Asia from accessing the quality healthcare and education they need. Despite education being a key input for positive health outcomes, many rural clinics across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are completely without or have irregular basic services. Ensuring and improving higher education sustainability for women, girls, minorities and migrants saves lives, and improves standard of living for all.

Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) Chair Program for Research and Educational Organizations/Networks, was launched in 2022, in collaboration with the UNESCO and Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), to improve sustainability literacy for all, with special focus on women, girls and minorities. It is fostering collaborative research partnerships/networks in both developed and developing countries. The e-Learning, e-Health, and e-Government Global Platform of The Women's Health and Education Center is accessible in 227 countries and territories and has established new teaching programs, generated novel ideas through research and dialogue, and contributed to the enrichment of existing higher education partnerships.

### **Advocacy and Capacity-Building Projects of Women's Health and Education Center**

With conflicts on the rise, Women's Health and Education Center has continued to advocating for women, children and minorities has increased and meaningful participation in peace-building. With increasing humanitarian crises, surging global migration and forced displacement, Women's Health and Education Center and its

partners' active engagement, has been crucial to securing consistent focus on crisis-affected women and girls in humanitarian decision-making processes. To further accelerate progress on the gender dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our projects and programs will continue to use the opportunities of the Summit of the Future and the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to ensure that gender equality is well positioned as the world enters the home stretch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Our Global Reach and Strategic Plan 2025–2030**

Women's Health and Education Center has expanded and deepened partnerships with the UN System, especially with World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), governments, civil society, private sectors and United Nations partners to increase its global reach. Work on gender equality and affordable access to higher education and quality health services is of utmost importance. To address this, our focus will be on expanding UNESCO Chair Program. Initiatives will be planned, developed and implemented to improve, monitor and mitigate opportunities towards equal access to quality education and income inequalities for women, girls and minorities.

As a multistakeholder and intergenerational platform for collective action for gender equality, our global initiatives will be asset to Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Generation Equality fosters strong alliances across sectors and in-between stakeholders. Young people see Generational Equality as an opportunity to connect with stakeholders, who share their goals, however their meaningful engagement is yet to be achieved. More systematic means of tracking financial investment is also needed.

No one lives in healthcare systems – we all live in our homes, with our families and communities. Gender equality and understanding, included in education and health, is a precondition for development. The connection between education, health and earning capacity is better understood. Ensuring that our surroundings are conducive to good physical and mental health means, directing efforts at all levels, with-in and in-between all sectors of society.

Poverty impairs learning, health and development. The low social status and illiteracy, of women in some countries, limit their access to economic resources, and health-education information. This, in turn, limits their ability to make decisions about their health and nutrition. Decision made in one sphere, affect those in the other.

Women's Health and Education Center aims to help build back better by taking action to deliver transformative policies for girls, women, minorities, migrants and refugees. This segment of population face discrimination on multiple fronts, such as barriers erected by hostile communities and/or families, governments, including not being allowed to education, healthcare and decent work with equal pay. The equality of opportunity and treatment for all human beings is essential. We advocate using the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Framework, as a vehicle to help promote better future to the marginalized population.

Building Sustainable Partnerships, through WHEC's e-Learning, e-Health, and e-Government Initiative: Improving Global Partnerships for Education and Health | High-Level Political Forum 2022 (un.org), will offer a way forward. While obligations to promote the rights of women and children are protected by international conventions, but difficulties in moral obligation into practice still abound.

The United Nations should play a more active role in supporting gender equality and strengthening international exchanges and cooperation. In the age of digital interdependency, the following five sets of recommendations from the Women's

Health and Education Center on how best we work together, to optimize the use of digital technologies, and alleviate the risks recommendations are:

1. Build and inclusive digital economy and society.
2. Develop human and institutional capacity.
3. Protect human rights and human agency.
4. Promote digital trust, security, and stability; and
5. Foster global digital cooperation.
6. Expanding UNESCO Chair Program. Promoting global collaboration. Fostering social justice is a collective responsibility.

---