

No Borders on Gender Justice: Platform of Principles

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This year's UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York comes as multiple governments have succumbed to a dangerous right-wing populism and authoritarianism, unleashing resurgent anti-migrant, misogynist, racist, neocolonialist, and neoliberal policies.

In the face of this, and at a time of ongoing wars, refugee crises and attacks on human rights, women civil society and gender justice advocates from around the globe are coming together in New York to develop and share strategies of resistance, and to reassert that women's rights are human rights.

Platform of Principles

We stand together for gender justice and migrant rights. Inspired by the March 8th International Women's Strike, we call for civil society actions during the CSW to ignite resistance to the conditions that have produced right-wing populism and given rise to authoritarian governance. These conditions include neocolonialism, neoliberalism and the wars that have been waged to uphold those systems. We stand in solidarity with women and our allies who have been blocked from coming to New York to lobby the world's governments by anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee policies of the United States. We seek to highlight the voices of these missing civil society actors during the CSW and to demand their access to this and other UN spaces.

We unite around the following principles:

Freedom of Movement and an End to Border Imperialism

We recognize that the rights of refugees and migrants are endangered by racist and xenophobic border policies, and that women face particular gender-based threats. We know that migration is driven in significant part by policies that place corporate profits over the lives and wellbeing of people and the environment. We call for governments to respect the rights of all refugees, including those fleeing war, poverty, gender-based violence and climate disasters. We call for governments to remove barriers to migrants seeking safety and economic stability, for an end to criminalization of migration, and for an end to raids, arrests, deportations, detentions and other police actions against immigrant communities. We further call for governments to respect the rights of women and girls to move freely within their own countries, to go to work or school, and to socialize and organize with their communities, without hindrance from state or private actors.

Civil Society Access to the UN Commission on the Status of Women and All UN Spaces

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For too long, the inter-governmental meetings at CSW have sidelined and ignored the voices of civil society, and failed to recognize the expertise and leadership of grassroots women activists. We demand that CSW become a space for civil society feminist policymaking that unites women and gender justice advocates from all parts of the globe while centering the needs of those women who have been historically marginalized and are today on the frontlines of our global crises. As the only nominally democratic institution of global governance, we demand that the UN system live up to its promise of upholding the full range of human rights for all people.

An End to Gender-Based Violence

We demand governments take measures to prevent and to ensure justice and reparations for all forms of gender-based violence, whether committed by private actors, police, soldiers, border agents or other state actors. We call on states to grant legal status and lives of dignity to refugees fleeing gender-based violence. We demand that governments refrain from using women as human shields when they cite women's rights violations to justify imperial wars. We call on governments to consult with and lend support to civil society women's organizations, particularly local, grassroots women's groups that fight for gender justice and provide necessary services to people fleeing gender-based violence in war and disaster zones. We further call for women human rights defenders and their families to be protected and to receive justice and reparations for violence, forced disappearance or murder committed against them.

Reproductive Justice for All

We affirm reproductive justice as a cornerstone of human rights for all women, cis and trans. We assert the full range of reproductive rights as fundamental to women's autonomy and self-determination, and we stand in defense of every mother's right to raise her child in a safe and healthy environment. This vision includes the right to choose whether or not to have children, the freedom to determine the number and spacing of those children, and the financial and material support to ensure wellbeing. To realize this vision, we call for full protections for the rights to abortion, contraception and universal health care for all, irrespective of income, race, nationality, sexuality, gender identity, HIV/AIDS status, or other status.

LGBTIQ Rights

We recognize that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, gender non-conforming and queer-identified people are disproportionately subject to discrimination and violence. We demand the full spectrum of human rights protections for LGBTIQ people and call on governments to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Labor Rights and Full Social Benefits

The world's wealth is based largely on women's labor, paid and unpaid. As states have abdicated their responsibility for social and economic rights through neoliberal

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austerity measures, women – already the primary caretakers for everyone – are forced to absorb the unpaid work burden of defunded public services. We demand living wages and full labor protections for women working in formal and informal sectors. We call on governments to end austerity and to ensure women’s full access to all social welfare benefits necessary to live free of poverty.

Environmental Justice for All

While poor, rural and Indigenous women are made especially vulnerable to climate change by discrimination and poverty, they are more than victims: they are sources of solutions. Women leverage their roles as stewards of natural resources to devise innovative, locally-rooted responses to climate change. Yet the voices of women are routinely excluded from policymaking—despite the visionary solutions they offer. This results in climate policies that further marginalize women, undermine human rights generally and reinforce assumptions that created the climate crisis in the first place. We call for meaningful consultation with women, with Indigenous Peoples, and all others who are modeling sustainability, acting as environmental stewards, and standing up to pollution and resource exploitation. We furthermore call for consistent global enforcement of the principles of free, prior and informed consent to combat expansion of extractive industries and other environmental destruction.

Gender justice is central to realizing a world where all people enjoy the full range of human rights. Women and allies joining together in New York during CSW understand that our international networking, our collaborative organizing and our creative change strategies are more necessary than ever. We will gather at CSW to:

- Renew strategies to reclaim international democratic spaces, address the current global political climate, and defend the full range of women’s human rights and the international norms and institutions meant to uphold them.
- Protest the racist and Islamophobic policies that bar access for many to UN Headquarters. Amplify the demands of those who have been excluded, and reassert our commitment to the human rights of migrants and refugees, without discrimination.
- Deepen a process of consultation and collaboration rooted in international solidarity with women who have been historically marginalized and those who are most at risk from the authoritarianism of a growing number of countries, particularly Muslim women and migrant and refugee women.