



MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TÜRKIYE

AHEAD OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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

#CSW68

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

I. Background

The sixty-eighth session of the [Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW68\)](#) will take place from 11 to 22 March 2024. Representatives of [Member States](#), [UN entities](#), and [ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations \(NGOs\)](#) from all regions of the world are invited to contribute to the session. The CSW, a functional commission under the [United Nations Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#), is dedicated to advancing global gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The [Agreed Conclusions](#) are the primary outcome document of the CSW. The Agreed Conclusions are negotiated in an inter-governmental process between United Nations Member States. Most of the negotiations occur during the second week of CSW, although important parts of the process occur in the lead-up as well. The final document includes an analysis of the CSW priority theme and a set of concrete recommendations on the theme and gender equality for governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders to be implemented at the international, national, regional and local level.

The priority theme for CSW68 is ["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."](#) The outcome of the Commission's consideration of the priority theme during its 68th session will take the form of agreed conclusions to be negotiated by all Member States.

This thematic focus underscores the critical intersectionality [between economic well-being and governance practices](#) that are responsive to gender dynamics. The discussions will be informed by the [Secretary-General Report on the Priority Theme](#). Concurrently, the session will review progress under the theme, "Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girl", which was the priority theme of CSW63 and its [agreed conclusions](#).

Recognizing the imperative to engage in substantive and inclusive dialogues that span diverse sectors of society, UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina will collaboratively convene a subregional multistakeholder consultation for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye.

These consultations are strategically positioned as a preparatory initiative for CSW68, seeking to foster comprehensive discussions and collaboration among various stakeholders to address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities central to advancing gender equality in the region, and more specifically on the priority theme.

The consultations will specifically address challenges and opportunities in accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) by focusing on poverty alleviation, strengthening social protection, unveiling and addressing unpaid care work, women's participation in the labor force, and financing and investing with a gender perspective.

II. Objectives of the Consultations

The subregional multistakeholder consultations have the following key objectives:

1. To assess the status of gender equality in relation to the priority theme in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, considering the unique challenges and opportunities of the region.
2. To identify regional priorities and strategies for advancing and financing GEWE in relation to care economy, unpaid care work, social protection and labor force.
3. To facilitate a dynamic exchange of ideas among various stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society, academia, and the private sector.
4. To contribute to the development of concrete messages and recommendations for the CSW68 session.

¹ All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

III. Outcome

The half-day consultations are expected to produce a document with a comprehensive set of messages, best practices, and concrete recommendations that will inform the subregion's (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye) contribution and participation to CSW68.

The document will be shared with all delegations, participants, and relevant stakeholders, contributing to a more inclusive and impactful global conversation on advancing gender equality ahead of the meeting and serve as basis for discussions and review for endorsement.

IV. Target audience

The consultations will bring together a diverse group of participants, including:

1. High level officials and technical staff responsible for gender equality and women's empowerment and involved in the topics addressed by the priority theme, including poverty, social protection, unpaid care work, women's participation in the labor force, and financing and investing in gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Representatives from civil society organizations, including youth-led organizations with a proven track record on the topic.
3. Academics and researchers specializing in issues pertaining to the priority theme.
4. Private sector representatives committed to promoting gender equality and economic empowerment of women.

The discussion will be informed by background documents listed in Annex I.

V. Content and format of the consultations

The consultations will consist of two interactive panel discussions focusing on the priority theme. Participants will have the opportunity to share best practices, discuss challenges, and propose innovative solutions. Emphasis will be placed on fostering collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders to accelerate progress towards gender equality.

The discussions will focus on the following sub-themes:

- Embracing Intersectionality in Addressing Poverty, Strengthening Institutions, and Financing with a Gender Perspective.
- Bridging Financing Gaps for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Building Capacities and Spaces to Influence Policies and Budgets for Gender Equality.
- Tackling Disproportional Burden and Unpaid Domestic and Care Work: Shifting Towards Care Economies.
- Social protection systems and services.

List of key documents in Annex I.

Format

The half-day session will be undertaken in a hybrid modality with host country participants in person to the extent possible and participants from all the rest of countries connected online.

Translation

The working language will be English. Simultaneous translation will be provided in Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian, Macedonian, and Turkish.

ANNEX I. LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Regional resources:

Keep the promise, accelerate the change: Taking stock of gender equality in Europe and Central Asia 25 years after Beijing available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/10/keep-the-promise-accelerate-the-change>

Regional assessment of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Europe and Central Asia available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/regional-assessment-of-implementation-of-the-beijing-declaration-and-platform-for-action>

UNECE - UN Women series: Rethinking care economy and empowering women for building back better available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/6/unece-un-women-series-rethinking-care-economy-and-empowering-women>

Embracing Gender Responsive Budgeting in Western Balkans, Initiatives in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/09/embracing-gender-responsive-budgeting-in-western-balkans-initiatives-in-albania-bosnia-and-herzegovina-kosovo-north-macedonia-and-serbia>

Social entrepreneurship as a potential for development of responsible and sustainable women's initiatives available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/10/social-entrepreneurship-as-a-potential-for-development-of-responsible-and-sustainable-womens-initiatives>

Global resources:

Background on CSW available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

CSW68 Expert papers available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw68-2024/preparations/expert-group-meeting>

CSW67 agreed conclusions available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N23/081/71/PDF/N2308171.pdf?OpenElement>