



TO: Committee on the Status of Women

CSObeijing30@unwomen.org

From: Women's Declaration International (WDI).

DATE: 1/13/25

Re: Parallel reports for the 10 March 2025 meeting

Women's Declaration International (WDI) is an international human rights organization that drafted the Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights ('the Declaration' <https://www.womensdeclaration.com/en/declaration-womens-sex-based-rights-full-text/>). The Declaration has been disseminated worldwide. At the time of writing, the Declaration has 39,079 individual signatories from 160 countries as well as 542 organisational signatories. The organisation is registered in the UK and Wales since 2021.

We understand that the main focus of the sixty-ninth session will be on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. The review will include an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of equality. We wish to address what we believe are some current challenges.

The Beijing Platform under the section of Human Rights of Women paragraph 222 reaffirms that if full human rights are to be achieved, international human rights documents must be applied to take into consideration the systematic and systemic nature of discrimination against women. In section (h) it makes clear that accurate statistics are necessary in all human rights documents to ensure proper analysis and review.

In the 23rd session of the General Assembly, the GA stated under section four "Emerging Issues and Trends" paragraph 24 that reviewing emerging trends was urgent. In paragraph 37, they reaffirmed that actions must be based on clear research with disaggregated data to ascertain short- and long-term goals.

WDI urges UN Women to consider that accurate data for the rights of women cannot be collated or maintained if States do not commit to recording data on sex rather than on self-selected 'gender identity'; and that the rights of women cannot be protected if women are treated as

collections of objectified body parts rather than as complete persons with no ‘female part’ alienable from her.

Accurate data is a human rights necessity for developing appropriate action.

WDI agrees that accurate data is vital for the protection of women’s human rights but submits that the conflation of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ renders data ambiguous and often irreparably corrupted. When States record ‘gender’ instead of sex, the mandate for sex-based rights cannot be met.”

Other international organizations reflect the same theme. States should “[p]romote research, collect data and compile statistics, especially concerning domestic violence, relating to the prevalence of different forms of violence against women and encourage research on the causes, nature, seriousness and consequences of violence against women and on the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and redress violence against women; those statistics and findings of the research will be made public.” (UNDEVW, Article 4 (k)).

Paragraph 42 of The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Act points out the importance of accurate data gathering: Treaty monitoring bodies should include the status of women and the human rights of women in their deliberations and findings, making use of gender-specific data. Steps should also be taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specifically the Centre for Human Rights, to ensure that the human rights activities of the United Nations regularly address violations of women's human rights, including gender-specific abuses.

“Sex-disaggregated data is data that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for men and women, boys and girls. Sex-disaggregated data reflect roles, real situations, general conditions of women and men, girls and boys in every aspect of society. ... When data is not disaggregated by sex, it is more difficult to identify real and potential inequalities.” (UN Women, Gender Equality Glossary). The requirement of having accurate data is being undermined by the conflation of “sex” and “gender.”

Though many international treaties mention the need for accurate data, using “gender” and erasing “sex” eviscerates the ability to collect appropriate statistics. The conflation of sex with “gender” leads to the collection of data on violence against women and girls that is inaccurate and misleading because it identifies perpetrators of violence based on their ‘gender identity’ rather than their sex. The failure to collect accurate data creates a significant impediment to the development of effective laws, policies, strategies, and actions aimed at the elimination of violence against women and girls.

Data collection must include recognition that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women as a sex are forced into a subordinate position compared with men as a sex, and that accurate research and data collection relating to violence against women and girls requires that the identification of both the perpetrators and victims of such violence must be based on biological sex and not social gender. The inability to keep accurate statistical records in every context means that male violence and exploitation against women and girls is hidden. By supporting this language, UN Women is facilitating the avoidance by member States of their obligations.

Women's Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms includes the whole woman.

WDI believes that to protect women's international human rights and freedoms, women must be perceived and treated as whole human beings and rights-bearers. Referring to women as parts and processes violates this fundamental mandate.

Beijing Platform 210 reiterates in paragraph 210 that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings and the first responsibility of governments. Paragraph 218 makes it clear that women's human rights as defined by international human rights instruments must be fully recognized and protected. Paragraph 214 reaffirms that all international human rights include sex as one of the rights that must be upheld. Paragraph 220 makes it clear that women and girls are often left out in the allocation of economic and social resources. The failure by institutions, governments, and organizations to specifically name women and girls in their documents, policies, and mandates harms the ability to ensure that women and girls obtain a fair allocation of economic and social resources.

A second trend that is a violation of women's international human rights and fundamental freedoms and that is harming women is the practice of referring to women as body parts and processes rather than as full human beings. A rising tide of health care institutions, organizations, and other communications refer to women by their body parts or biological processes e.g. people who menstruate, people with uteruses, bleeders, breeders etc. This use of body parts or biological processes to describe women denies them their full humanity and specifically harms them as recipients of health care. UN women has been consistent in using the "women" and "girls" but for a few instances.

International human rights documents make it clear that everyone deserves the right to be addressed and referred to with dignity and respect. Women must be treated as full human beings with all human rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights not referred to as body parts or processes.

The following examples show the international consensus to recognize women and girls on their own terms with their own agency. In the Charter of the UN, countries reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, ... :

- The principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples was recognized as critical to maintain friendly relations. (Article 1.2),
- Encouraging respect for human rights without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion is also essential. (Article 1. 3),
- Article 8 specifically says that no restrictions shall be placed on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and reaffirms that there shall be no distinction based on sex,
- Article 55 repeats that language of respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- Article 76(c) emphasizes it again.

Yet another current challenge is to recognize the specific human rights of women and girls and the challenges facing them based on sex and culture rather than substituting the rights of those who have not experienced the same challenges and culture.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the preamble reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, dignity and worth of each human and equal rights of women and men:

- All human beings are born free and equal. (Article 1),
- Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms without distinction as to sex and political or other opinion among other distinctions. (Article 2),
- Everyone has a right to life, liberty and security. (Article 3),
- Everyone has a right to recognition under the law. (Article 6),
- All are equal before the law. (Article 7),
- Everyone has a right to an effective remedy. (Article 8),
- No one should be subject to attacks on her privacy, family, home, or honor and reputation. (Article 12),
- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, or religion. (Article 18), Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. (Article 19),
- Everyone has the right to freedom of assembly and association and cannot be forced into an association they do not want. (Article 20),
- Mothers are entitled to special care. (Article 25).

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action has a lengthy outline of expectations in addition to reiterating the universal policies. Paragraph 18 says: The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community.

The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution addressing Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity (Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council A/HRC/RES/17/19 Distr.: General 14 July 2011 17/19) Again they repeat that: “*Recalling* that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” International documents outlining human rights from the International Declaration of Human Rights to the Convention on Civil and Political Rights to CEDAW to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking all use the term sex to mean biological sex.

International law, as outlined above, bases fundamental rights on sex. These rights are founded on the recognition of women and the struggles women and girls have gone through and are going through. Yet there is a move to conflate sex and gender and to eliminate sex from the vernacular in favor of the undefined and culturally based gender. To eliminate the use of “sex” and “women” and “girls” violates the Charter of the UN, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and the Human Rights Council’s resolutions A/60/L.48 AND A/HRC/RES/17/19.

Failure to clearly focus on women and girls or to conflate sex with gender makes it impossible to meet strategic goal 1.1 to protect the human rights of women by full implementation of all human rights instruments.

We urge the Committee on the Status of Women to rededicate themselves to the principles of international human rights for women and girls and particularly to the international bill of rights for women and girls i.e. CEDAW. The challenges mentioned above affect the implementation of the Beijing Platform as they are harmful to the ability to gather appropriate statistics, to reinforce women's full humanity and human rights, and to use the international documents for their protection and advancement.

For more information contact
Jo Brew, Coordinator,
WDI on info@womensdeclaration.com

Womensdeclaration.com
Women's Declaration International Ltd
Company number 12039415
Registered in England and Wales
Registered address: Suite A, 82 James Carter Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7DE UK