



Commission on the Status of Women - CSW 67



It seemed appropriate that the three-year anniversary mark of the COVID pandemic was marked by the very UN event whose cancellation was deeply mourned as the UN doors closed in March 2020 and much of the world went into lockdown. Held in hybrid format this year, the **67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women** brought some 6,000 women to the UN in person for the two-week session with many more attending sessions online. The UN and surrounding area was full of life! **The priority theme of CSW 67** was “*Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*”. The review theme focused on empowerment challenges and opportunities facing rural women and girls.

Informative panels and articulate speakers gave voice to concrete experiences of gender inequality around the world and creative efforts to address it. Great energy and passion for gender justice characterized the marathon of side events, parallel sessions and special events where many good practices and creative initiatives were shared and relationships developed. A few of the many vibrant threads running through **CSW 67**:



- Technology is a **two-edged sword**. Whereas it can broaden opportunities and empower, it can also serve to widen inequality, erode valued traditional norms and practices, victimize and abuse women and girls in online spaces and influence young minds while they are still developing their own belief systems.

Examples were shared of **successful work with traditional leaders** using their influence to help change mindsets, and implement child-friendly courts. Positive experiences exist of **‘champions’** who can help to influence opinion, push for implementation of laws, serve as whistleblowers, and report cases of girls being kept out of school because of **“period poverty”** and **child marriage**.

- Creative **support networks** and **campaigns** help address violence against women, showing the value of strengthened collaboration across borders of language, ethnicity, religion and geography. [➡ Watch the video](#)

At the end of the two-week session, after lengthy negotiations by Member state delegations and input and advocacy from NGOs, a final statement in the form of **Agreed Conclusions** was adopted by the Commission in the early hours of March 18th.

UN Water Conference

Coming two generations after the last global UN Water Conference held in 1978, great expectations surrounded the **Water Conference “Uniting the World for Water”** held at the UN HQ from **22nd – 24th March**. After an intense three days it concluded with the adoption of a **Water Action Agenda** in the form of an action plan, still to be finalized, with almost 700 water-related voluntary commitments to protect *“humanity's most precious global common good”*. Emphasis was placed on urgent action and the sharing of concrete initiatives that have the potential to be scaled up and replicated in view of addressing the global water crisis during the remainder of the Water Action decade and achieving **SDG 6**.



[➡ Watch a short video](#) [➡ Commit to personal actions](#)

Hearing the Unheard - The Human Right to water and Sanitation.



In 2010, the **United Nations General Assembly** formally recognized the right to water and sanitation as a basic human right. Advocacy by NGOs helped to have this as one of the few to be explicitly named in the Agenda 2030 - in SDG 6. That right cannot be realized if we treat water as a commodity; privatize it and make it accessible only to those who have the means to purchase it. This was a key message of the **UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Water and Sanitation** who spoke in many different sessions during the Water Conference. This was clearly illustrated by the videoed testimony given by women from around the world. The digital campaign **#Hearing the Unheard HRWS** is organized by a coalition of some 20 NGOs aim to give voice to marginalized people fighting for their rights to health and sanitation by bringing the voices of the unheard to the halls of power and tables of decision making.

[➡ Watch the videoed testimony](#) [➡ and another video](#)

Fair Water Footprint

The **Fair Water Footprint** partnership was launched at the end of the COP 26 Climate Conference in Glasgow in November 2021. It is a unique partnership of governments, private sector companies and NGOs working towards shared water security and helping to deliver sustainable water and sanitation for all by 2030. The results of a recent study presented during the UN Water Conference showed the shocking dependence of high income countries on countries in the Global South to produce the food and other commodities they consume. The report demonstrates that **50% of the external water footprint** of high income economies is **unsustainable**, contributing towards the depletion of water resources, the degradation of ecosystems and contributing to developing countries' vulnerability to climate disasters and conflict. The Partnership is working to establish a responsible **Water Stewardship standard** and to be implemented and enforced in order to avoid and reverse the damage being done.  Watch the [short video](#)



Fast Facts on Water

- **A quarter of the global population** use unsafe drinking water sources; **half of humanity** lives without safely managed sanitation
- **4 billion people** - half of the world's population - experience severe water scarcity for at least one month of the year.
- **More people die each year from lack of clean water** and sanitation than killed by all forms of violence, including war.
- **Water related hazards** in the form of floods have increased by **134 % since 2000**, and the **duration of droughts by 29%**.
- **Over 40% of Europe's water footprint** lies outside its borders.
- **A typical pair of jeans** takes **10,000 litres of water** to produce, equal to what a person drinks in **10 years**.

The Freshwater Challenge



Rivers, lakes and wetlands are central to tackling the world's worsening water, climate and nature crises. One third of the world's wetlands have been lost over the past 50 years and the restoration of degraded ecosystems is vital. **Zambia was one of a coalition of 6 countries** that launched the **Freshwater Challenge** at the **UN Water Conference**, aiming to restore 350 million hectares of wetlands by 2030 and an extension of 300,000 km of rivers (equivalent to seven times around the earth). The urgent need to protect and restore ecosystems the need to protect and restore them build resilient societies, economies and ecosystems was highlighted in the recent IPCC report.

 Watch the [UNICEF video](#).




RSHM BRIEFS

Colegio Sacro Cuore de Maria in Fatima held its 3rd Sagrado MUN (**Model UN**) day on 10th March. This year, the Human Rights Committee discussed the living conditions and welcome of refugees and access to quality education as being key to development. A letter addressed to the students from **Veronica RSHM, NGO representative at the UN**, was read during the opening ceremony. Students representing different member states established a climate of dialogue and cooperation, and joined their efforts, committing to implement transformative actions towards a more inclusive future, free of discrimination.



 [Read more.....](#)

Historic UNGA Resolution

On March 29th the UN General Assembly approved by a consensus a milestone resolution requesting an **Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice** on the legal obligation of countries under international law to address climate change. The final resolution was the fruit of months of consultations, negotiations and advocacy initiated by the small island state of Vanuatu, joined by 17 other climate vulnerable nations and inspired by the research and advocacy of young law students in the cyclone-battered island state. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, warmly welcoming the "**landmark resolution**", noting that it "**could be an important catalyst for the urgent, ambitious, and equitable climate action that is needed to stop global heating and to limit and remediate climate-induced human rights harms**".  [Read more....](#)



UNICEF is the UN Fund for Children, the UN agency that responds to the needs of children in crisis situations around the world. UNICEF partners with groups on the ground to address emergency needs, promoting children's health, education, protection and respect for their rights. Following a recent generous donation from the **RSHM Solidarity Fund**, the Institute was recognized as a valuable faith-based partner and invited to a special interfaith Iftar dinner at the **UNICEF headquarters in NY** during the month of Ramadan. Representing the RSHM at the event, Veronica RSHM was delighted to meet a graduate of Marymount School of New York who currently works for UNICEF.



Distribution

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