

[CSW64 | As CSW is postponed, a coalition of feminist organisations unite to publish the first Feminist Declaration](#)

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Feminist organisations from around the world came together to launch a Feminist Declaration to address gaps in the Political Declaration adopted by States this week on the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is postponed.



On 9 March 2020, the [UN CSW](#) met for a one-day procedural meeting following the decision to hold a scaled-down, shortened session of CSW - with the remainder of the session being postponed until further notice - in light of the current outbreak of [coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#). CSW sessions are instrumental in bringing together women human rights defenders from across the world to discuss and shape policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

During the one day discussion, States adopted by consensus the [Political Declaration](#) which marks the 25th Anniversary of the [1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), the key global policy document on gender equality.

While we welcome elements in the Political Declaration, including:

- recognising the disproportionate effect of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls; and
- calling for elimination and prevention of all forms of violence and harmful practices against women and girls in public and private spheres, including in digital contexts,

the Declaration contains clear gaps. During its adoption, Ecuador, South Africa, the EU, Mexico, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Uruguay and Argentina voiced concern at the failure of the Declaration to reference sexual and reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. Several of these States also criticised the lack of recognition of the link between gender equality and women, peace and security; as well as a failure to address the important work of women human rights defenders.

'Civil society and human rights defenders are drivers of change. Their activism is crucial to the work of the Commission and strengthening women's human rights,' says ISHR's Tess McEvoy. 'We were disappointed that women human rights defenders were not reflected in the Political Declaration.'

In light of the gaps in the Political Declaration and despite the postponement of CSW and a lack of civil society voices during the procedural meeting, the Women's Rights Caucus - a global coalition of more than 200 feminist organisations, networks and collectives - met that same afternoon to launch an [Alternative, Feminist Declaration](#) which outlines a bold and urgent agenda for gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls.

'The Feminist Declaration focuses on the crucial role of civil society in advocating for accountability in policies meant to protect women's rights,' says McEvoy. 'It provides governments with a roadmap to achieve not only the vision outlined in Beijing, but the transformative change needed for [Generation Equality](#).'

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