Fora's Recommendations for the CSW67 Agreed Conclusions

67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67)

Priority Theme

Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

Review Theme

Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls

Overview

On November 4, 2022, Fora hosted the annual Global Summit event, themed 'Innovation for an Equitable Future', and brought together over 200 young leaders from business sectors, civil society and non-profit organizations and government in Toronto, Canada.

Centered around the priority theme for the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), attendees participated in dynamic conversations to address barriers to the advancement of people facing gender-based discrimination in innovation, technology and entrepreneurship, and how social innovation can be used as a tool to break harmful trends and increase the awareness, access and availability of opportunities to advance gender equity. Discussing the need for technology-driven innovative solutions that addresses the needs of folks facing gender-based discrimination, Fora hosted the following panel discussions: 'Young Entrepreneurs challenging the Status Quo', 'Closing the Economic Gender Gap', 'Bridging the Digital Divide', and 'How Youth are Creating Change through Tech'.

As part of Fora's 2022 Global Summit training program, 30 international Delegates received leadership, advocacy, and community-building training to equip them with the tools to champion gender equity objectives in many decision-making spaces of power. The experience of engaging with other thought leaders and experienced professionals at the Global Summit event also broadened the Delegates' understanding of thematic solutions to gender equity issues within the scope of current affairs. Following the event, Fora hosted consultations with the Delegates to compile recommendations for the CSW Draft Agreed Conclusions (the outcome document on that year's priority theme). This enables the Delegates to be able to advocate to their United Nations country representatives and other important stakeholders to influence the negotiations at the United Nations Headquarters and virtually, and to intervene during the two weeks of CSW events. Delegates were equipped with the advocacy tools to hold their own country accountable to the actions recommended in the Agreed Conclusions, and to advocate for incorporating them into national policies and programs. Delegates are also able to incorporate the recommended actions in the Agreed Conclusions into their own work within their local and regional communities.

Advocacy throughout the CSW67, both in-person and virtually, is an impactful way for Fora's Global Summit Delegates to engage with the global goals for gender equity, and to collectively contribute towards change within their communities, countries and across the world.

Position Statement

Fora welcomes the CSW67 draft Agreed Conclusions and express our support for much of the language and suggested actions included so far. In this document, Fora highlights significant gaps of representation and inclusion of youth voices and amplifies key recommendations by our community of international youth activists.

Fora's advocacy strategy is focused on ensuring young leaders traditionally excluded from decision-making spaces of power are able to access these opportunities, while we simultaneously address root causes of inequity, including the barriers, structures, and norms that prevent young women, and everyone facing gender discrimination, from leadership.

Fora urges more opportunities for meaningful engagement and full participation of international youth in the CSW processes and urges member states to ensure that young women, girls and gender-diverse individuals are involved in the decision-making around innovation and technological change and technological advancements that impact them directly.

Fora advocates for a world in which every space of power is considered incomplete without the full participation of young women and people marginalized by their gender.

About Fora: In 2009, Fora, formerly G(irls)20, launched to ensure underrepresented voices were included in, and heard at, decision-making tables. Fora invests in young changemakers experiencing gender-based discrimination, and works to make spaces of power more inclusive and equitable. Through renowned leadership, advocacy, and community-building programs, we help young trailblazers gain new skills, confidence, supportive networks and opportunities to build gender equity movements, advance in their career trajectories, and change the status quo.

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Proposed Language for CSW67 Agreed Conclusions

In regard to the existing language in the draft Agreed Conclusions, we recommend the following changes:

- **Paragraph 11 reads:** "The Commission also recalls the establishment of the women and peace and security agenda and reaffirms that the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding is one of the essential factors for the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. **[ADD: "The Commission further recalls the necessity to enact peacebuilding measures countering (eliminating, preventing and/or remediating to) cyberattacks directed towards initiatives raising awareness and/or fighting the stigma around conflict-based sexual violence."]** (Based on CSW66 (para 15) CSW65 (para 57), CSW62 (para 34))"

- **Paragraph 12 reads:** "The Commission recalls that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recognized that it is essential that women not only benefit from technology, but also **[ADD: "meaningfully engage and"]** participate in **[ADD: "all phases of"]** the process from design to application, monitoring and evaluation. It also recalls that in the Political Declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Governments pledged to harness the potential of technology and innovation to improve women's and girls' lives and to close the development divide and the digital divide, including the gender digital divide, as well as address the risks and challenges emerging from the use of technologies. (Based on CSW64 Political Declaration para 12(g))"

- **Paragraph 14 reads:** "The Commission remains deeply concerned that all women and girls, especially in developing countries, including small island developing States, **[ADD: "persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change"]** and particularly those in vulnerable situations, are often disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, extreme weather events and natural disasters and other environmental issues, such as land degradation, desertification, deforestation, sand and dust storms, persistent drought, floods, sea level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, including disproportionate exposure to risk and increased loss of life and livelihoods, and reiterates its deep concern over the...

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- **Paragraph 14 (cont.):** …challenges posed by climate change to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It recalls that the parties to the Paris Agreement acknowledged that they should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and intergenerational equity and, in this context, also recalls the adoption of the second gender action plan by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-fifth session. (Based on CSW65 (para 13), CSW63 (para 20), CSW62 (para 33), CSW61 (para 22), CSW60 (para 14))"

- **Paragraph 19 reads:** "The Commission further condemns technology-facilitated gender-based violence and the emergence of **[ADD "pre-existing and"]** new harmful forms of societal narratives which undermine women's online expression, forcing women and girls to self-censor, de-platform or reduce their interaction in online spaces, limiting their participation in public life and the enjoyment of human rights. (Based on E/CN.6/2023/3, paras 35–38)"

- **Paragraph 34 (pp) reads:** "Strengthen the capacity of government actors, including policymakers, law enforcement officials, the judiciary, health and social workers and educators, **[ADD: "of private sector entities"]** and of civil society organizations to develop knowledge and skills to prevent and eliminate technology-facilitated violence against women and provide survivor-centered support; (E/CN.6/2023/3, para 45(cc))"

- **Paragraph 37 (rr) reads:** "Ensure that the perspectives of women, and girls as appropriate, are taken into account in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in humanitarian emergencies and that they effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. **[ADD: "Ensure the cyber-protection of victims of conflict-based sexual violence from technology-facilitated stigma and violence."] [DELETE: "as well as"]** Take into account the perspective of women and girls who are internally displaced and who are refugees; and ensure that the human rights of all women and girls are fully respected and protected in all response, recovery and reconstruction strategies and that appropriate measures are taken to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls in this regard; (Based on CSW65 (para (n)), CSW62 (para (mmm)))"

Fora's Recommended Actions

We recommend that the following actions be added to the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women draft Agreed Conclusions, to be carried out by the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, for all women, girls and gender-diverse individuals facing gender-based violence:

1. Adjust the language used in the Agreed Conclusions to include "all women, girls and gender-diverse individuals* facing gender-based violence".

2. Develop a framework to mandate the meaningful engagement and full participation of young women and girls the formulation, design and development of policies and programs that prioritize digital literacy skills, online safety, and STEM education for young women, girls, gender-diverse individuals and other marginalized groups.

3. Develop a framework to increase community autonomy and collaboration in policy decision-making to address issues affecting all persons facing gender-based discrimination, inclusive and sensitive to difference of class, race, sex, gender identity, sexuality, ability and ethnicity.

4. Enact policies and allocate financial commitments to mitigate inequitable availability, accessibility & affordability to technological resources and digital services for women and girls, with a prioritization of intersectional perspectives, especially that of Indigenous, migrant, and rural populations globally, and those living in conflict-affected areas.

A note on language: The language used throughout these recommendations are based terms used in the CSW67 Agreed Conclusions. We use the terms "young women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals" specifically in this context because this language is broadly used in the international context. We acknowledge this conversation includes people who are non-binary and trans women.

Fora's Recommended Actions

5. Establish financial commitments for the design and development of programs that prioritize digital literacy skills, online safety, and STEM education for young women, girls & gender-diverse individuals, and other marginalized groups.

6. Establish financial commitments to develop service compatibility across all technological and digital services to improve accessibility for persons with visible and invisible disabilities.

7. Develop global partnerships, including with civil society and private sector entities, to address and eliminate technology-facilitated violence experienced by young women, girls and gender-diverse individuals.

8. Develop regulatory frameworks that commit to data disaggregation of data by gender on use and access of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies; and meaningfully engage with young women and girls in the development of governance over artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

9. Implement measures to eliminate gender-based cyberattacks and sexual violence in technological environments, and to protect vulnerable groups, especially individuals who have experienced conflict-based sexual violence, from technology-facilitated gendered violence.

10. Implement protection policies for cyber-attacks and online violence targeted at women human rights defenders, women and gender-diverse individuals involved in politics and advocacy, and initiatives raising awareness around conflict-based sexual violence.

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