NAWO
Connecting Women

NATIONAL WOMEN`S CONFERENCE



HOLDING THE LINE - FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO NATIONAL ACTION:
Civil Society, Accountability and the Future of Women's Rights in the UK

Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London W1C 2DJ

Wednesday, 8th July 2026



WELCOME

Welcome to the inaugural **NAWO UK National Women's Conference.**

This Conference serves as a strategic national platform for dialogue, reflection, and collaboration. It provides an opportunity to bring together diverse perspectives, strengthen collective advocacy, and foster greater alignment across sectors committed to advancing women's rights and gender equality.

The Conference marks a significant moment to reflect on the outcomes of the **70th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70)**, assess three decades of progress since the adoption of the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, and consider the review of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, examining the United Kingdom's progress in fulfilling its international commitments and obligations.

By convening a broad and representative group of stakeholders, NAWO seeks to strengthen collective action, enhance accountability, and promote the effective implementation and monitoring of commitments to gender equality across the UK.

We look forward to thoughtful deliberations, meaningful collaboration, and a renewed commitment to advancing gender equality and the rights of all women and girls across the United Kingdom.

Dr Justina Mutale
Chairperson, NAWO
Founder & President, Justina Mutale Foundation


BPW
BPW UK
Business and Professional Women UK
BPW UK wishes NAWO
a successful and inspiring conference.
May it be filled with meaningful conversation,
valuable insights, and productive connections.
BPW UK supports the empowerment of women
in all aspects of their lives by offering
opportunities to develop their potential and
make a difference.
For more information about BPW UK visit our
website.
www.bpwuk.org.uk

HOLDING THE LINE - FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO NATIONAL ACTION:
Civil Society, Accountability and the Future of Women's Rights in the UK

INTRODUCTION

The UK National Women's Conference brings together women's organisations from across the four nations of the United Kingdom, alongside representatives from government, civil society, youth groups, and other key stakeholders engaged in advancing gender equality and the human rights of women and girls.

The Conference serves as a strategic national platform for dialogue, reflection, and collaboration. It provides an opportunity to consolidate diverse perspectives, strengthen collective advocacy, and foster alignment across sectors working to advance women's rights.

Importantly, the Conference is positioned as a post-CSW70 convening, creating a structured forum to reflect on the outcomes and agreed conclusions of the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70). It enables dissemination of key global priorities and policy messages to national stakeholders who were not able to participate directly in the CSW process.

In addition, the Conference serves as a critical moment to reflect on more than three decades of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, alongside other relevant international and regional commitments. This includes a focused review of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), examining the UK's progress in meeting its obligations, including areas such as substantive equality, non-discrimination, access to justice, political participation, and socio-economic rights.

Speakers and delegate will examine progress made, identify persistent and emerging challenges, and consider priorities for advancing gender equality in the United Kingdom and globally.

RATIONALE

Despite longstanding commitments to gender equality at both international and national levels, significant gaps remain in the realisation of women's rights. Structural inequalities, socio-economic disparities, gender-based violence, and under-representation in leadership continue to affect women and girls across the United Kingdom.

CEDAW provides a comprehensive international legal framework for eliminating discrimination against women and achieving substantive equality. However, gaps between formal commitments and lived realities persist, including challenges in fully implementing CEDAW recommendations and concluding observations within national policy and practice.

At the same time, evolving global and national contexts, including economic pressures, shifting political landscapes, and emerging social challenges require renewed attention, coordination, and accountability.

The UK National Women's Conference provides a timely and necessary platform to:

- Translate global commitments, including outcomes from CSW70, CEDAW obligations, and the Beijing Platform for Action, into national dialogue and action
- Reflect on the UK's progress in implementing CEDAW, including areas highlighted in recent reporting and civil society shadow reports
- Strengthen coherence between international obligations and domestic policy implementation
- Provide space for diverse civil society voices, including grassroots and youth-led organisations
- Facilitate knowledge exchange, learning, and strategic alignment among stakeholders
- Reinforce a coordinated and authoritative civil society voice to influence policy and practice

By convening a broad and representative group of stakeholders, NAWO aims to strengthen collective action, enhance accountability, and ensure that commitments to gender equality are effectively implemented and monitored.

OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the UK National Women's Conference are to:

1. Reflect on and disseminate the outcomes and agreed conclusions of CSW70 to national stakeholders.
2. Review progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and CEDAW obligations in the UK context.
3. Examine key CEDAW principles, including non-discrimination, substantive equality, and state accountability, and their application in national policy and practice.
4. Identify persistent and emerging challenges to the realisation of women's rights and gender equality in the UK and globally.
5. Strengthen alignment between international commitments (including CEDAW) and national policies and practices.
6. Foster inclusive dialogue among government, civil society, youth groups, and other stakeholders.
7. Strengthen coordination and collective advocacy among women's organisations across the UK.
8. Generate actionable recommendations to inform policy, advocacy, and programming, including contributions to future CEDAW reporting and monitoring processes.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The UK National Women's Conference is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Increased awareness and understanding of CSW70 outcomes, CEDAW obligations, and global gender equality priorities among UK stakeholders.
2. A strengthened shared understanding of the UK's progress and gaps in implementing CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.
3. Enhanced coherence between international commitments and national implementation frameworks.
4. Strengthened collaboration and partnerships among women's organisations and key stakeholders across the four nations.
5. A consolidated set of policy and advocacy recommendations reflecting a coordinated civil society perspective, including inputs relevant to CEDAW monitoring and reporting.
6. Strengthened accountability mechanisms and renewed commitment to advancing women's rights and gender equality.
7. A comprehensive conference report documenting key discussions, insights, and agreed actions, including reflections on CEDAW implementation.

NAWO UK NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
REGENT HALL, 275 OXFORD STREET, LONDON W1C 2DJ

Wednesday 8 July 2026 | 11.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

HOLDING THE LINE - FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO NATIONAL ACTION:
Civil Society, Accountability and the Future of Women's Rights in the UK

10:30 – 11:00 | Arrivals, Registration and Networking

11:00 – 11:10 **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**
Itty Bawa, NAWO Young Women's Alliance

11.10 – 11.20 **OPENING & WELCOME REMARKS**
Dr Justina Mutale
Chairperson, National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO)
Founder & President, Justina Mutale Foundation

11.20 – 11.30 **OPENING KEYNOTE**
Dr Roberta Blackman-Wood
Chair of the Board of Governors, University of Northumbria
Former Member of Parliament for Durham

11.30– 12:10 **HIGH LEVEL PLENARY**
FROM CSW70 TO ACTION, GLOBAL PRIORITIES AND UK LEADERSHIP

PLENARY CHAIR:
Cats Sutherland - Co-Chair, UKCSWA
Vice-Chair, NAWO

Key Takeaways From CSW70
Tabitha Morton, Executive Director, UN Women UK

Women's Rights in the EU, The Istanbul Convention and the CSW/UN Situation
Mary Collins - Secretary-General, European Women's Lobby (EWL)

1989 and the Origins of NAWO: How NAWO emerged from the 1980's
Jane Grant, Founder Member of NAWO, Writer and Trustee of Friends of the Women's Library

Strengthening Commitments Through Beijing and CEDAW Frameworks
Annette Lawson, Co-Founder & First Chair, UKCSWA and
Former Chair and Ambassador of NAWO

12:10 – 13:00

PANEL DISCUSSION 1

RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PRACTICE

MODERATOR: Mandy Sanghera - Board Member, Female Advocacy Foundation International

PANEL SPEAKERS
The Hon. Dr Jocelynne Scutt - Chair and Founder, Cambridge Women Parliament
Agness Tolmie - Chair, Scottish Women's Convention
Ramat Sighosime – Co-Founder, Bloomwell Collective
Jane Fenton-May – NAWO Trustee
Cllr Samata Khatoon – Former Mayor of Camden

13:00 – 13:30 | Lunch Break

13:30 – 14:10

PANEL DISCUSSION 2

ECONOMIC EQUALITY, HEALTH AND EVERYDAY REALITIES

MODERATOR: - Antonte Semira - Head of Community & Advocacy UN Women UK

PANEL SPEAKERS

Farhana Ibrahim - Co-Founder, Bloomwell Collective
Dr Sherry Ann Dixon -Board Member, Justina Mutale Foundation
Margaret Owen - Founder, Widows for Peace Through Democracy
Margaret Clark – NAWO Trustee
Yasmin Wilkinson Smith - Member, NAWO Young Women's Alliance

14:10 – 15:00 **PANEL DISCUSSION 3**

LEADERSHIP, INCLUSION AND THE FUTURE OF GENDER EQUALITY

MODERATOR: Fatoumata Diallo , Founder & CEO of Gamaal, NAWO Trustee

H.E. Ambassador Shukria Barakzai - Former Ambassador of Afghanistan
Jackie Jones – Former Chair, Wales Assembly of Women
Nesrin Comert - President, Welcome to London International Club, NAWO Trustee
Dr Leah Hibbs - Lecturer in Social Sciences, Cardiff University
Boikanyo Trust Phenyo - Lecturer, European School of Economics
Sally Spear - NAWO Trustee

15:00 – 16:30 **CLOSING SESSION AND AWARD CEREMONY**

REFLECTIONS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS
Cats Sutherland - Co-Chair of UKCSWA and Vice-Chair, NAWO

NAWO AWARDS CEREMONY
Yasmin Wilkinson Smith - Member, NAWO Young Women's Alliance
Dr Justina Mutale - Chairperson, National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO); Founder & President, Justina Mutale Foundation

CLOSING REMARKS & VOTE OF THANKS
Dr Justina Mutale
Chairperson, National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO)
Founder & President, Justina Mutale Foundation

15:00 – 16:30 | End and Departures



THE HON. ROBERTA BLACKMAN -WOODS
Former Member of Parliament for Durham
Chair of the Board of Governors at Northumbria University

Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods has served as Chair of Northumbria University's Board of Governors since August 2020. A former Member of Parliament for the City of Durham (2005–2019), she held ministerial and shadow ministerial roles focused on higher education, housing, planning, and local government. She helped establish influential higher education forums and has supported global education and governance initiatives through international parliamentary organisations. Before politics, she worked in social services and held senior academic leadership positions at several universities. With strong regional connections, she champions the transformative power of universities in driving opportunity, innovation, economic growth, and community development, while supporting Northumbria's future success.



DR JUSTINA MUTALE
Chair, NAWO
Founder & President, Justina Mutale Foundation

Justina Mutale, African Woman of the Year 2012, is a global leader in gender equality, education and public health. She serves as Chairperson of NAWO. She is also Founder and President of the Justina Mutale Foundation and its scholarship programme, supporting underprivileged African women to access higher education worldwide. Justina also founded POSITIVE RUNWAY: The Global Catwalk to Stop the Spread of HIV/AIDS combining fashion with youth empowerment, stigma reduction, and sexual health education. A globally recognised thought leader, she features on multiple international power lists and halls of fame. She serves on global boards and as Ambassador for the International Women's Think Tank. She previously worked in the Gender Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.



CATS SUTHERLAND
Co-Chair, UKCSWA
Vice Chair, NAWO

Cats is a former Police Inspector with more than 30 years' experience leading change across frontline policing, public protection, and strategic policy. She has championed gender equity within the criminal justice system, mentored emerging leaders, and driven systemic improvements through inclusive partnerships. Cats now serves as Vice Chair of the UK Civil Service Women's Alliance and as a CSW delegate for Graduate Women International, contributing to national and global advocacy. Retrained as a certified Health and Wellness Coach, she helps women prioritise wellbeing. Through the UKCSWA and NAWO, Cats combines leadership, public service, and advocacy to advance inclusive, lasting change.



DR JANE GRANT
Trustee, Women's Library
Founding Member of NAWO

Dr. Jane Grant has dedicated over forty years to the women's movement as a practitioner, activist, researcher, and writer. Involved with the Friends of the Women's Library for around twenty years, she also helped establish the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO). Dr. Grant completed her doctorate at the University of Kent on the governance of women's organisations. Her notable works include "In the Steps of Exceptional Women: The History of the Fawcett Society" (2016) and "The Other Emmeline: The Story of Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence" (2023). Recently, she has delivered lectures such as "Mary Stott: Feminist, Journalist, Campaigner," continuing her exploration of key feminist figures in the 20th century. Dr. Grant is currently working on a biography of Mary Stott, showcasing her enduring dedication to documenting women's activism and leadership.



ANNETTE LAWSON OBE
Co-Founder and 1st Chair, UKCSWA
Former Chair of NAWO

Annette is a sociologist, author, charity founder, and prominent advocate for women's rights and diversity. She co-founded and served as the original Co-Chair of the UK Civil Society Women's Alliance and has chaired major organisations including NAWO, the Fawcett Society, and the Women's National Commission. She worked as a Senior Scientific Member of the Medical Research Council Unit at LSE (1962–1969), taught at Brunel University, and was a Visiting Fellow at Stanford and Berkeley. Annette published and edited three major books, notably Adultery: An Analysis of Love and Betrayal. She founded The Judith Trust and received an OBE in 2004.



Tabitha Morton
Executive Director
UN Women UK

Growing up on a council estate in Liverpool, leaving school at 10 years old and living in a deeply conservative family, society's expectations of what Tabitha could be were narrow. The knowledge that these boundaries are only ever someone else's idea of what you can be, or a way to control you drives her activism. In 2023 Tabitha became the Chair of domestic abuse charity Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse, continuing her work to play a part in ending all gendered violence. Before this Tabitha was Deputy Leader of the Women's Equality Party and also led a cross-party organisation campaigning on issues from the climate crisis, equal representation in government and reform of the mental health and care sectors. Her commercial knowledge was honed from 15 years in the construction industry being the first woman on the UK board of her organisation.



MARY COLLINS
Secretary-General
European Women's Lobby

Mary Collins is the Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), with more than 25 years of experience in policy development, advocacy, campaigning, representation, and capacity building. Previously, as Senior Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, she focused on women's economic independence, addressing issues such as gender pay, pension and poverty gaps, work-life balance, gender budgeting, and EU economic governance through a gender lens. She coordinated the EWL Feminist Economics Working Group and authored the PurplePact, promoting a feminist economic approach. Her broader expertise includes gender equality, violence against women, asylum and human rights policy, children's rights, and disability rights.



FUNGISAI MOTSI
Entrepreneur and Business Strategist
Member, NAWO Blak Women's Alliance

Fungisai is a Chief Operating Officer, entrepreneur, business strategist, and leadership development consultant specialising in leadership training, coaching, and organisational development. Using a people-centred approach, she helps organisations strengthen leadership, communication, inclusion, and workplace culture. A seasoned international professional coach and Master NLP Practitioner, she specialises in executive leadership, emotional intelligence, wellbeing, and diversity coaching. Formerly a Macmillan Lead Cancer Nurse with over 23 years' healthcare leadership experience, she remains passionate about supporting cancer patients and carers while tackling health inequalities. A dedicated advocate for women's and girls' rights, she mentors young people and empowers women to thrive.



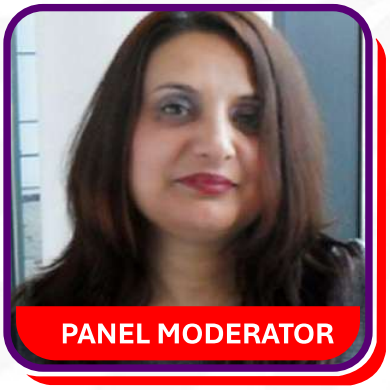
ITIAFA AKEREJOLA
NAWO Young Women's Alliance

Itfy is a British-Nigerian women's rights advocate, mentor, and civil society young leader focused on empowering women and girls into leadership and global decision-making roles. Through NAWO and the Justina Mutale Foundation, she mentors young women in confidence, public speaking, leadership presence, and global readiness. She has led youth advocacy and digital campaigns with NAWO, strengthening engagement and inclusive leadership. She contributes to UKCSWA communications and UN Women UK, ensuring youth voices shape policy and international advocacy. She combines mentoring, campaigning, and global advocacy to advance gender equality through practical, collaborative leadership. Her work bridges grassroots and international platforms effectively.



ATONTE SEMIRA
Head of Community
UN Women UK

Atonte Semira is Head of Community at UN Women UK and a passionate advocate for gender equality. She inspires women, men, and non-binary people to advance equality in workplaces, communities, and everyday life. Active in social and political causes since her teenage years, she previously served in Youth Parliament. Her professional background includes roles in talent management, recruitment, and HR at Xerox Corporation, Resource Solutions, and Compass Group UK & Ireland. Atonte holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Psychology from the University of Roehampton. Her mission is to build a fairer inclusive world where people of genders can thrive.



MANDY SANGHERA OBE
Board Member
Female Advocacy Foundation International

Mandy is a UK-based philanthropist, human rights advocate, TEDx speaker, and global campaigner with over 30 years' experience promoting gender equality, social justice, migration rights, and inclusion. She serves on the board of The Female Advocacy Foundation International and supports women and girls in conflict zones through humanitarian and mental health initiatives. Mandy has addressed the US House of Representatives, participated in the World Economic Forum, and assisted refugees from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Sudan, Syria, and Iraq. She also advises governments on disability rights, modern slavery, and harmful practices while championing ethical AI, women's empowerment, and global collaboration worldwide.



FATOUMATA DIALLO
Founder & CEO, Gamaal
NAWO Trustee

Fatoumata Diallo is Founder and CEO of Gamaal, a FoodTech company supporting women's economic independence. She has served as Trade Advisor to the Government of Flanders, building economic ties between Belgium and the UK, and is a long-standing advocate for gender equality and youth empowerment. Previously with Duke Corporate Education, she supported global leadership development across sectors. Appointed NAWO's youngest trustee in 2018, she led communications and supported intern onboarding, promoting inclusion. She also served on the Samuel Lithgow Youth Centre board in London, supporting disadvantaged youth and BAME communities. A multilingual speaker, she holds degrees in International Relations and Public Administration.



THE HON. DR JOCELYN SCUTT
Barrister and Human Rights Lawyer
Founder, Cambridge Women's Parliament

Dr Scutt, She has served as as President of the CEDAW People's Tribunal 2020, Judge of the CEDAW People's Tribunal 2021, and Chair and Founder of The CEDAW Women's Parliament. She was appointed Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 1996 and inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2001. A prolific author, Dr Scutt's most recent book with publisher Palgrave Macmillan is: “Women, Power and Autonomy: Rights Respect and Representation in Law and Society”. Dr Scutt attends the CSW as a member and delegate of the National Council of Women GB, and member of the Core Group of the UK Civil Society Women's Alliance.



AGNES TOLME
Chair
Scottish Women's Convention

Agnes has been a dedicated campaigner for women's rights, focusing on equal pay and increasing women's representation in politics and public life. She played a key role in a coalition that supported the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and worked with the STUC Women's Committee to achieve a 50/50 gender balance within Parliament. Agnes has held several leadership positions, including Chair of the STUC Women's Committee, Unite the Union Scotland Women's Committee, and UNI Global Women's Committee. She is a former President of the STUC and has received numerous awards recognising her contributions to women's rights, community service, diversity, and anti-racism efforts.



FARHANA IBRAHIM
Co-Founder
Bloomwell Collective

Farhana is a mental health advocate and holds an MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. At Bloomwell, she leads on communications and partnerships while developing accessible, peer-led wellbeing support for women facing emotional distress, burnout and caregiving strain. Drawing on over nine years' experience across United Nations agencies, Farhana combines international development insight with community care expertise. She is an ambassador for The King's Trust and The Queen's Commonwealth Trust, championing youth, gender equity and emotional wellbeing.



PROF. JACKIE JONES
Former Chair
Wales Assembly of Women

Jackie is a leading advocate and academic specialising in violence against women and girls (VAWG), gender equality, and feminist legal studies. A former Chair of Wales Assembly of Women, Trustee of Welsh Women's Aid, and President of the European Women Lawyers Association, she has spent over two decades teaching, researching, and publishing on issues including trafficking, rape as a war crime, prostitution, and international law on VAWG. Jackie has advised the Senedd, European Parliament, and UN panels, and promoted Welsh approaches internationally as an MEP for Wales. She currently serves as a Cardiff Councillor, SaferWales trustee, and Welsh Government Special Adviser on equality and VAWDASV.



HER EXCELLENCY, AMBASSADOR SHUKRIA BARAKZAI
Former Ambassador of Afghanistan to Norway and Women's Rights Advocate

Her Excellency, Ambassador Shukria Barakzai is an Afghan politician, journalist, and women's rights advocate known for her strong stance against gender-based violence and gender apartheid. She served as Member of Parliament and Afghanistan's Ambassador to Norway. As a member of the Afghan parliament and founder of the newspaper Aina-EZan (Women's Mirror), she has fought for women's rights, access to education, and political participation in Afghanistan. Despite facing threats and surviving assassination attempts, Ambassador Barakzai continues to raise awareness globally about the oppression of Afghan women and to advocate for their freedom and equality, challenging systems that perpetuate violence and discrimination. Ambassador Barakzai is a recipient of the International Editor of the Year Award.



DR BOIKANYO TRUST PHENYO
Lecturer
European School of Economics

Dr Boikanyo Trust Phenyo is a leader, philanthropist, educator, and advocate for African women recognised for empowerment through leadership, fashion, and humanitarian service. She holds multiple qualifications including PhD, MSc, BSc, PGDE and PGDSE and is widely respected for her community and cultural work between Europe and Africa. She founded Botswana Community UK, supporting cultural preservation and education, and leads projects such as the School Bus Project providing transport and meals for rural children in Botswana. She also created Boikanyo Model Extraordinaire and Enterprise International Pageants, mentoring young women and models from multiple countries continuously promoting global empowerment



DR LEAH HIBBS
Social Sciences Lecturer
Cardiff University

Dr Hibbs is a Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University, specialising in gender and politics, feminist institutionalism, political representation, and qualitative research. Her work explores women's experiences in political life, focusing on gendered institutions, leadership, equality, diversity, and civic participation. Her doctoral research, developed into a forthcoming book, examines women's experiences as local councillors in Wales and the barriers shaping political participation, earning the Audrey Jones Award in 2020. She also contributed to the Family-friendly and Inclusive Parliament Review of Senedd Cymru, researching gendered abuse and harassment of politicians and its impact on democratic participation.



MARGARET OWEN OBE
Founder
Widows for Peace Through Democracy

Margaret Owen OBE is a distinguished women's rights activist, barrister, and founder of Widows for Peace Through Democracy, the first international organisation dedicated to addressing the human rights of widows. With qualifications in anthropology and social administration from the London School of Economics, she has used her legal expertise to champion vulnerable communities worldwide. Her career includes roles with the UK Immigrants Advisory Service, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, GAPS-UK, and the Kurdish Human Rights Project. Awarded an OBE in 2013, she continues to advise the United Nations on widowhood and women's rights while inspiring global advocacy.



CLLR SAMATA KHATOON
Fromer Mayor of The London Borough of Camden
Councillor for St Pancras and Somers Town

Cllr Samata Khatoon served as Mayor of the London Borough of Camden from 2024 to 2025, following her term as Deputy Mayor (2023–2024). Elected as Councillor for St Pancras and Somers Town in 2010, she has consistently championed housing, education, community safety, and social inclusion. She has been a delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, advocating for gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. Her leadership has earned international recognition through women's leadership awards in 2025. She also works in youth and family services and holds leadership and education qualifications.



DR JANE FENTON-MAY
Retired GP
NAWO Trustee

Dr Jane Fenton-May, FRCGP, is a retired GP and clinical geneticist who championed patient-centred care, gender equity in medicine, and social justice in health systems. Entering medical school when women were discouraged from becoming doctors, her experience shaped lifelong advocacy for women in medicine and wider equality. Her clinical genetics work supported families affected by inherited conditions such as muscular dystrophy, while her GP practice in Cardiff docklands served migrant and homeless communities. She served on national committees for the BMA and RCGP Wales, improving healthcare policy and access across services. In her advocacy work in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, Jane is active in WAW, UN CSW, VAWG, NAWO



SALLY SPEAR
Biochemical Researcher and former Science Teacher

Sally Spear has dedicated her life to advancing justice, unity, and gender equality through science, education, and civic engagement. Trained in biochemical research, she later worked as a science teacher and Environmental Health Education Technician.
A committed member of the Bahá'í Faith, she actively supports interfaith dialogue and international cooperation through UNA-UK, UN Women, and other NGOs. Since attending the 1995 NGO Forum in Huairou alongside the Beijing World Conference on Women, she has followed UN gender equality initiatives, including CSW, CEDAW, the MDGs, and SDGs. As a NAWO trustee since 2019, she helps drive strategic advocacy for equality.



SHERRY ANN DIXON
Founder, Women on the Crossroads
Board Member, Justina Mutale Foundation

Sherry Ann Dixon serves a Board Member at the Justina Mutale Foundation. She is an internationally recognised leadership and empowerment advocate, motivational speaker, journalist, and founder of Women on the Crossroads. With a career spanning public relations, publishing, mentoring, and transformational leadership, she has dedicated her work to empowering women, young people, and diverse communities. She has interviewed global icons including Nelson Mandela, Dr. Maya Angelou, and Baroness Doreen Lawrence, and has shared platforms with world-renowned figures. A keynote speaker at the United Nations, the UK Parliament, and the House of Lords, Sherry Ann continues to inspire positive change through leadership, mentoring, and advocacy for equality and social justice.



MARGARET CLARK
Former BT Globa Business Director
NAWO Trustee

Margaret Clark is a cross-sector leader in education, international development and public policy. She holds an MBA and MSc in Social Research Methods and focuses on UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially gender equality, education and economic empowerment. She represents National Board of Catholic Women, Widows' Rights International, Soroptimist International and NAWO, and contributes to CSW New York, CHOGM, CEDAW reviews and Council of Europe. England representative to UK Joint Committee on Women and former BT global business director and Common Purpose graduate, she links corporate and nonprofit leadership with faith-based advocacy and NAWO trusteeship promoting ethical governance and inclusion globally



NESRIN COMERT
President, Welcome to London International Club
NAWO Trustee

Nesrin Comert is an accomplished interior architect, international advocate and volunteer leader known for resilience, courage and commitment to empowering others. She combines design excellence with social impact, believing well-designed spaces transform lives and communities. She completed the Women's Leadership Development Programme at the University of Oxford and a Philosophy MOOC at the University of Edinburgh. She serves as UN Council Member and representative with WelcomeClubs International, promoting SDG 4 and 5, and is President of Welcome to London International Club. She holds leadership roles in FIWAL, Anglo-Turkish Society, ATWIB and NAWO, and is a member of SBID RIBA



RAMAT SEGHOSIME
Co-Founder
Bloomwell Collective

Ramat Seghosime is a strategy and operations leader with more than a decade of experience spanning consulting and international development. An Oxford MBA graduate and Saïd Business Foundation Scholar, she has led transformation programmes across healthcare, retail, and consumer sectors with McKinsey & Company and global organisations, focusing on data, systems change, and impact. She co-founded Bloomwell Collective, a UK women's wellbeing organisation that has supported over 3,000 women through culturally rooted, peer-led mental health programmes. A 2026 NAWO delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, her work has also been recognised by the University of Oxford.



YASMIN WILKINSON-SMITH
Member
NAWO Young Women's Alliance

Yasmin is an advocate for women's and girls' rights, working through initiatives that help young people recognise and develop their talents. These programmes combine community engagement with character development and life skills alongside learning. She works with One World Development Associates (OWDA) and uses the arts to raise awareness of women's rights issues, including the persecution of Bahá'í women in Iran. Through artwork and poetry contributed to the 'Our Story is One' campaign, she honours women who sacrificed their lives for equality. Her studies in Education, Gender and International Development inform her commitment to addressing gender disparities through education.

NAWO

Connecting Women

NAWO AWARDS



CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS ADDRESSING THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

NAWO AWARD NOMINEES & THEIR WORK

Tackling the 12 Critical Areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

CRITICAL AREA 1: WOMEN AND POVERTY

Addressing the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women

WACUNA

The UNA Women's Advisory Council (WACUNA) is a platform dedicated to promoting dialogue, advocacy and collaboration on issues affecting women within the context of international development, human rights and gender equality. Bringing together women's organisations, community groups, civil society networks and individuals committed to advancing women's rights, WACUNA provides a forum for sharing knowledge, building partnerships and encouraging collective action.

WACUNA works to ensure that women's voices, experiences and perspectives are represented in discussions on social justice, sustainable development and public policy. It encourages women from diverse backgrounds to participate in shaping solutions to the challenges affecting their lives and communities, while fostering greater engagement in national and international debates.

A key focus of WACUNA's work is raising awareness of the barriers women continue to face, particularly those linked to poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion. Through advocacy, dialogue and engagement, the organisation promotes inclusive approaches to policy development and decision-making that reflect the lived experiences of women.

The Council also plays an important role in connecting grassroots experiences with broader policy discussions, ensuring that community perspectives inform strategies for development and social progress. By strengthening collaboration between organisations and individuals, WACUNA helps build a more connected movement for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Committed to equality, representation and inclusion, WACUNA supports women as active participants in shaping their communities and societies. Through its advocacy, networking and collaborative initiatives, the organisation contributes to advancing women's rights, addressing the causes of poverty and exclusion, and promoting sustainable development. Its work continues to strengthen the voices of women and reinforce the importance of gender equality in creating fairer, more inclusive societies.

WIDOWS RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL

Widows Rights International is a global organisation dedicated to advancing the rights, dignity and wellbeing of widows, a group often overlooked in social policy, development frameworks and public discourse despite facing significant discrimination and economic hardship.

The organisation was founded in response to widespread injustices experienced by widows following the death of a spouse, including loss of property, inheritance, housing, income and social status. In many contexts, widows also face harmful traditional practices, social exclusion, stigma, and restricted access to education, employment and healthcare.

Through research, advocacy and awareness-raising, Widows Rights International works to ensure that widowhood is recognised as a critical human rights and development issue. It engages with governments, international bodies, civil society organisations and community leaders to promote legal reforms and strengthen protections for widows and their families. This work has contributed to increasing global recognition of the challenges faced by widows.

A central focus of the organisation is economic empowerment. It promotes equal inheritance rights, access to property ownership, financial inclusion, and opportunities for education and skills development. By supporting widows to achieve economic independence, the organisation helps reduce poverty and vulnerability while enabling long-term stability and wellbeing.

Widows Rights International also addresses stigma and discrimination through public education and community engagement initiatives. These efforts aim to challenge negative perceptions of widowhood and promote greater understanding of widows' experiences. The organisation encourages inclusive attitudes that recognise widows as active contributors to their families and communities rather than passive recipients of support.



Through its advocacy and global outreach, Widows Rights International continues to raise awareness of widowhood as a significant social issue and promote dignity, equality and human rights for widows worldwide. Its work has helped bring visibility to an often neglected population and contributed to meaningful improvements in the lives of widows and their families.

CRITICAL AREA 2: EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

Tackling inequalities and barriers in access to education and training opportunities

JUSTINA MUTALE FOUNDATION

The Beijing Platform for Action identifies “Education and Training of Women” as a critical area for advancing gender equality, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. In alignment with this framework, the Justina Mutale Foundation is dedicated to improving access to quality education and training for women and girls, particularly those from rural and disadvantaged communities across Africa.

Founded by gender equality advocate Dr Justina Mutale, the Foundation addresses the structural inequalities and socio-economic barriers that limit educational opportunities for women and girls. These include poverty, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, harmful cultural practices, and limited access to resources.

A key element of its work is the provision of scholarships for young women from vulnerable backgrounds, enabling them to pursue higher education at universities and colleges globally. These opportunities are designed to support upward social and economic mobility while equipping beneficiaries with the knowledge, confidence and leadership skills needed to contribute to national and community development. The Foundation places particular emphasis on increasing women's participation in STEM fields, where they remain underrepresented.

Beyond academic support, the Foundation promotes vocational training, entrepreneurship development, leadership mentoring, life skills, and digital literacy. It recognises that education must also build practical capabilities, self-confidence and access to networks that support long-term empowerment and economic independence.

The Justina Mutale Foundation also advocates for inclusive education policies, including the retention of girls and young mothers in schooling systems, challenging stigma and discrimination that lead to exclusion. Its work aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 5 on Gender Equality.

Through global platforms such as the World Summit on Women and Girls, the Foundation fosters dialogue, mentorship and collaboration among women leaders, policymakers and young women. Its work highlights that investing in women's education is essential for social justice, economic development and sustainable global progress.

FEMALE ADVOCACY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL (FAFI)

The Female Advocacy Foundation International (FAFI) is a 100% volunteer-led organisation dedicated to advancing the rights, safety and empowerment of women and girls globally. Supported by international experts in human rights, law and trauma, FAFI focuses on addressing systemic inequality through legal advocacy, trauma-informed education and capacity-building initiatives.

A core area of FAFI's work is the education and training of women, particularly in overcoming barriers to access. The organisation delivers legal education and trauma-informed training designed to equip women with knowledge, confidence and practical tools to understand and assert their rights. This work aims to reduce inequality by strengthening women's access to justice, information and professional development opportunities.

FAFI also plays a significant role in addressing violence against women and girls. It promotes integrated approaches to preventing and eliminating gender-based violence, with a particular focus on supporting racial, ethnic and religious minority women who are disproportionately affected. Through legal advocacy, trauma support, research and expert reporting, FAFI works to highlight injustices and strengthen protection systems.

In the field of women, peace and armed conflict, FAFI supports the protection and participation of women in conflict-affected settings. It works across regions including the Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean, North America and parts of Asia, advocating for the rights of women impacted by war, displacement and systemic discrimination.

FAFI is also strongly committed to advancing women's human rights as fundamental human rights. It undertakes legal conferences, research, advocacy and prevention-focused trauma education to support women and girls facing multiple forms of inequality and violence.

A key feature of FAFI's approach is creating safe platforms where women and girls can speak for themselves and share their lived experiences. Through this work, FAFI empowers marginalised women, strengthens global advocacy, and promotes dignity, justice and equality worldwide.





CRITICAL AREA 3: WOMEN AND HEALTH

Improving access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND (SIGBI)

Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) is a registered women's charity, founded in 1934, and part of the global Soroptimist International movement established in 1921. With consultative status at the United Nations, SIGBI is dedicated to empowering women and girls, eliminating discrimination, and advancing equality through advocacy, awareness-raising and practical community action.

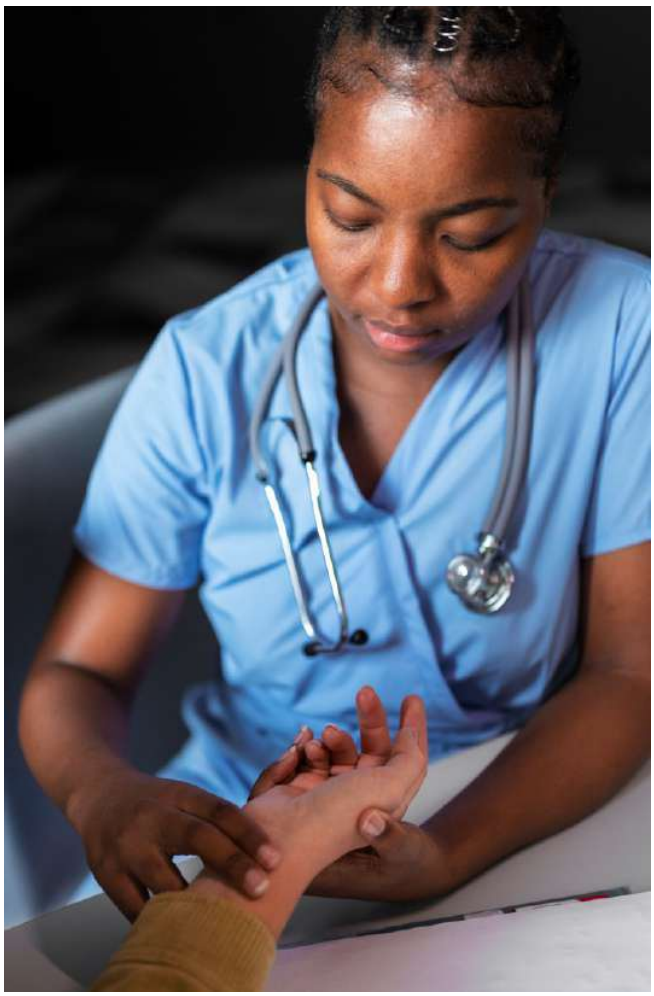
Operating through 248 clubs across the UK, Ireland, Malta, Asia and the Caribbean, SIGBI delivers locally led projects that respond to the specific needs of women and girls within their communities. Its work combines hands-on volunteering with campaigning and policy advocacy to create lasting social change.

SIGBI's activities support a broad range of charitable objectives, including the advancement of education, health and wellbeing, poverty prevention and relief, community development, human rights, equality and diversity. These priorities underpin projects that improve women's access to healthcare, promote healthy lives, reduce social and economic inequalities, and strengthen community resilience.

A key area of SIGBI's work is preventing violence against women and girls. Through awareness campaigns, partnerships, education and advocacy, the organisation promotes women's safety, challenges gender-based violence and supports initiatives that encourage prevention, protection and access to support services.

It also works to influence policy and raise public awareness of the impact of violence and discrimination on women's lives.

By encouraging volunteering and collaboration, SIGBI strengthens communities while promoting the rights, wellbeing and leadership of women and girls. Its combination of grassroots action and international advocacy enables the organisation to make a significant contribution to advancing gender equality, improving health outcomes, tackling violence against women, and creating more inclusive and equitable societies.



CRITICAL AREA 4: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Promoting integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND (SIGBI)

Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) is a registered women's charity, founded in 1934, and part of the global Soroptimist International movement established in 1921. With consultative status at the United Nations, SIGBI is dedicated to empowering women and girls, eliminating discrimination, and advancing equality through advocacy, awareness-raising and practical community action.

Operating through 248 clubs across the UK, Ireland, Malta, Asia and the Caribbean, SIGBI delivers locally led projects that respond to the specific needs of women and girls within their communities. Its work combines hands-on volunteering with campaigning and policy advocacy to create lasting social change.

SIGBI's activities support a broad range of charitable objectives, including the advancement of education, health and wellbeing, poverty prevention and relief, community development, human rights, equality and diversity.

These priorities underpin projects that improve women's access to healthcare, promote healthy lives, reduce social and economic inequalities, and strengthen community resilience.

A key area of SIGBI's work is preventing violence against women and girls. Through awareness campaigns, partnerships, education and advocacy, the organisation promotes women's safety, challenges gender-based violence and supports initiatives that encourage prevention, protection and access to support services. It also works to influence policy and raise public awareness of the impact of violence and discrimination on women's lives.

By encouraging volunteering and collaboration, SIGBI strengthens communities while promoting the rights, wellbeing and leadership of women and girls. Its combination of grassroots action and international advocacy enables the organisation to make a significant contribution to advancing gender equality, improving health outcomes, tackling violence against women, and creating more inclusive and equitable societies.

PROJECT ACCOUNTABILITY CIC

Project Accountability CIC is a lived-experience-led organisation founded by Molly Ellis to prevent violence against women and girls, tackle coercive control, exploitation, grooming, trauma, and address the systemic failures that leave vulnerable young women at risk. Inspired by Molly's own experiences of abuse, time in care, and surviving a life-changing gang attack while pregnant at the age of 16, the organisation is built on resilience, compassion and a commitment to protecting others from similar harm.

The organisation provides trauma-informed support to vulnerable girls and young women affected by domestic abuse, unhealthy relationships, county lines exploitation, coercive control and violence. Its services include mentoring, safeguarding, healthy relationship education, wellbeing programmes, employability support and early intervention designed to prevent abuse and exploitation before they escalate.

A flagship initiative, the **"What's The Point?"** programme, supports young people aged 14–25 through mentoring, sport, music, arts and neuroscience-informed trauma recovery. The programme identifies vulnerabilities early and offers positive pathways away from gangs, exploitation and criminalisation.

Project Accountability CIC also leads the **"Ellis Law"** campaign, which raises awareness of coercive control, grooming, child sexual exploitation and safeguarding reform. The initiative advocates for stronger preventative measures and improved protection for vulnerable women and girls.

Working alongside safeguarding professionals, youth services, local authorities, researchers and police forces, Molly Ellis has become a respected voice in frontline safeguarding. The organisation's work has received national recognition through a BBC Current Affairs documentary examining the underreported sexual and criminal exploitation of girls linked to gangs and county lines. Through lived experience, advocacy and practical support, Project Accountability CIC empowers women and girls to rebuild their lives safely and with dignity.





ADVANCE

Advance is a leading specialist women's organisation dedicated to supporting women and girls who have experienced domestic abuse, gender-based violence and multiple forms of disadvantage. For many years, it has provided practical and emotional support to women facing complex and challenging circumstances, helping them to achieve safety, stability and independence while rebuilding their lives.

Founded with a mission to empower women and girls, Advance delivers trauma-informed, person-centred services tailored to individual needs. A core area of its work focuses on survivors of domestic abuse, offering advocacy, emotional support, practical assistance and specialist interventions. These services are designed not only to protect women from immediate harm but also to strengthen long-term resilience and independence.

Advance is also widely recognised for supporting women involved in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system. It acknowledges that many of these women have experienced trauma, abuse, poverty and social exclusion, and provides tailored interventions to address underlying causes and support positive life changes. Its approach helps women access opportunities, rebuild confidence and reduce reoffending.

The organisation works collaboratively with local authorities, criminal justice agencies, healthcare providers, housing services and community organisations to deliver coordinated and holistic support. This ensures that women receive comprehensive assistance that addresses both urgent needs and longer-term goals.

Beyond direct service delivery, Advance contributes to policy development and advocacy on violence against women and girls. By sharing insights from its frontline work and amplifying the voices of the women it supports, it influences improvements in systems and services at both local and national levels.

At its core, Advance is driven by the belief that every woman deserves to live free from violence, fear and discrimination. Through compassion, expertise and partnership working, it continues to support women in overcoming adversity and building safer, more independent futures.

CRITICAL AREA 5: WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Supporting the protection, participation, and rights of women in conflict and peacebuilding processes

SECURITY WOMEN

SecurityWomen is an internationally recognised organisation dedicated to promoting the inclusion, advancement and leadership of women across the security sector. It works to increase women's participation in defence, policing, intelligence, national security, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, based on the belief that diverse and inclusive security institutions are essential for effective governance and lasting peace.

Through advocacy, research, networking and professional development, SecurityWomen highlights the contributions of women working in security-related fields and promotes greater representation in sectors traditionally dominated by men. It provides platforms such as conferences, forums and leadership programmes where women can share expertise, build professional networks and engage in key policy discussions.

A central aim of the organisation is to inspire and support future generations of women to pursue careers in security. It also contributes to research and policy development by examining barriers to participation, identifying opportunities for reform and promoting best practice for more inclusive institutions. Through this work, SecurityWomen encourages governments and organisations to adopt policies that support women's advancement and leadership.

The organisation is a strong advocate of the global Women, Peace and Security agenda, which recognises the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. It emphasises that women are not only beneficiaries of security efforts but also leaders, decision-makers and agents of change.

By collaborating with professionals, institutions and stakeholders across the sector, SecurityWomen fosters dialogue, innovation and institutional change. Its work challenges stereotypes, strengthens inclusion and promotes equality within security professions. Ultimately, SecurityWomen is helping to build more representative, effective and peaceful security systems worldwide by ensuring women are fully included at every level of decision-making.

CRITICAL AREA 6: WOMEN ANDTHE ECONOMY

Challenging inequalities in economicstructures, employment, and access to resources

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN (BPW)

Business and Professional Women (BPW) is a respected international organisation dedicated to advancing women's economic empowerment, professional development and leadership. For many decades, it has worked to create opportunities for women to succeed in business, employment, entrepreneurship and public life, guided by the belief that women should have equal access to economic resources, leadership roles and opportunities to reach their full potential.

Through its global network of members, affiliates and partners, BPW brings together women from diverse industries and professions, providing a platform for networking, collaboration and mutual support. The organisation delivers conferences, mentoring schemes, leadership training and professional development programmes that help women build skills, expand networks and strengthen their capacity to succeed in a competitive global economy.

A central focus of BPW's work is promoting women's economic independence and financial empowerment, which it recognises as essential to achieving broader gender equality and social progress. The organisation actively advocates for policies that remove barriers to women's workforce participation and promote equal opportunities in employment and business environments.

BPW also works to increase women's leadership across sectors by supporting confidence-building, mentoring and career development opportunities. This contributes to greater representation of women in decision-making roles and positions of influence.

Alongside its individual development work, BPW engages in advocacy on structural inequalities affecting women's economic participation. It promotes issues such as equal pay, access to education and training, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, workplace equality and work–life balance. Its international reach enables cross-border collaboration, knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practice among women globally.

Overall, BPW remains committed to empowering women to achieve professional success and leadership while contributing to stronger communities and more equitable societies. Its work continues to advance women's economic participation and create pathways towards global gender equality and prosperity.

WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP (WBG)

The Women's Budget Group (WBG) is the UK's leading feminist economics think tank, bringing gender analysis into economic policy and integrating economic analysis into feminist advocacy. Its work focuses on how government spending and taxation, key mechanisms highlighted in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), impact women's lives, placing women at the centre of budgetary and policy assessments.

WBG examines the “Women and the Economy” agenda by challenging inequalities in economic structures, employment and access to resources. Its analysis covers a wide range of groups, including marginalised women such as Gypsy and Roma women, who are often excluded from mainstream inequality assessments. Rather than only identifying problems, WBG also proposes structural policy changes to improve outcomes for women.

The organisation's research explores issues such as poverty, lifetime earnings, pensions, and unpaid care work, comparing women's and men's experiences of employment. It highlights how factors such as part-time work, insecure hours, commuting distances, flexible working availability, and childcare responsibilities shape women's economic opportunities and financial security.

WBG's work spans multiple policy areas, from pensions to training programmes, and it actively engages with policymakers through advocacy and evidence-based research. It regularly provides expert testimony to parliamentary select committees, including inquiries into pensions, where it has highlighted how women's lower lifetime incomes reduce pension access and proposed policy solutions.

The organisation also delivers training to grassroots women's groups, supporting them to use local data and funding strategies to strengthen advocacy for women's rights. A key concern in its work is the prevalence of insecure work and variable hours, which disproportionately affect women and widen the gender pay gap.

Overall, WBG argues that strong employment protections and secure work are essential, reinforcing the importance of strengthening rather than weakening employment rights legislation to achieve gender equality and economic justice.

CRITICAL AREA 7: WOMEN IN POWERAND DECISION-MAKING
Advancing women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles

UN WOMEN UK

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls worldwide. Established to accelerate progress towards equality, it works to ensure that women can fully exercise their rights, realise their potential and participate equally in all aspects of society. Through global programmes, policy leadership and strategic partnerships, UN Women supports inclusive social, economic and political development.

Working across countries and regions, the organisation collaborates with governments, civil society, international institutions and local communities to address barriers to equality. Its work focuses on key priorities including women's leadership and political participation, economic empowerment, ending violence against women and girls, peace and security, humanitarian action, and the promotion of gender-responsive policies and institutions.

A core objective of UN Women is increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making. The organisation provides advocacy, technical expertise, research and capacity-building to help women engage in political processes, assume leadership roles and influence decisions affecting their communities. It also supports governments in developing laws and policies that promote gender equality and strengthen institutions that enable women's full participation in public life.

UN Women is internationally recognised for its leadership in advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, promoting women's involvement in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. Through research, advocacy campaigns and global initiatives, it raises awareness of gender inequality and mobilises governments and organisations to take action. By combining global expertise with local partnerships, UN Women continues to drive progress towards a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable world where women and girls have equal opportunities to thrive.



THE TRIPLE CRIPPLES

Kym Oliver and Jumoke Abdullahi are a partnership focused on improving visibility and representation for Black and non-Black People of Colour living with disabilities. Motivated by frustration at the lack of inclusion and the widespread discrimination faced by this group, they created a platform to highlight the experiences of what they describe as an “invisible population within an invisible population.”

Their work combines topical content, video discussions, interviews, workshops, talks and lectures covering a wide range of subjects, including relationships, travel and lived experience of disability. Through this varied approach, they aim to challenge stereotypes and broaden understanding of disability within diverse communities.

The duo has gained increasing recognition for their insight, creativity and engaging style. Their work has been featured across major platforms including the BBC, AJ+, Vogue and Metro, and they have been invited to contribute to discussions in academic and professional settings such as Oxford University, Cambridge University, the Disability Leadership Institute and WOW (Women of the World). Their influence spans both media and institutional spaces, where they are valued for their lived experience and critical perspectives.

Central to their mission is addressing cultural taboos surrounding illness and disability, particularly within Black communities across the UK and the wider global diaspora. They emphasise the importance of recognising the intersections between race, gender and disability, arguing that these overlapping identities are often overlooked within mainstream disability activism, feminist movements and Black liberation discourse. Through their work as “The Triple Cripples,” Kym and Jumoke aim to reshape narratives, challenge systemic exclusion and improve outcomes for disabled people of colour both now and in the future.

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S CONVENTION

The Scottish Women's Convention is a unique and influential organisation dedicated to ensuring that the voices of women across Scotland are heard, valued and reflected in public policy and decision-making. Established as a direct link between women and policymakers, it has become a key platform for engaging women in discussions about the issues affecting their lives, families and communities.

The organisation works with women from diverse backgrounds across Scotland, creating opportunities for them to share their experiences, concerns and aspirations. Through conferences, consultations, roundtables, community events and research, it gathers evidence and insight on a wide range of social, economic and political issues.
A core strength of the Scottish Women's Convention is its commitment to inclusivity, particularly in reaching women whose voices are often underrepresented in policymaking. This includes women from rural areas, minority ethnic communities, disabled women, older and younger women, and those experiencing social or economic disadvantage. By amplifying these perspectives, the organisation promotes more inclusive and representative public policy.

The Convention addresses key issues affecting women, including employment, education, health, social care, transport, housing, childcare, violence against women, poverty and community development. Its engagement work provides policymakers with valuable insight into lived experience, helping to shape more responsive and effective policies.

It also plays an important role in strengthening civic participation and democratic engagement by connecting women directly with elected representatives, government officials and public institutions. This encourages greater involvement of women in decision-making processes at both local and national levels.

Widely respected within Scotland's policy landscape, the Scottish Women's Convention is recognised for its evidence-based approach, commitment to inclusion and ability to amplify women's voices. Through consultation, advocacy and engagement, it continues to strengthen women's participation in public life and contribute to more effective governance and social progress.



CRITICAL AREA 8: INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
Strengthening policies, institutions, and systems that promote gender equality

WALES ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN

The Wales Assembly of Women is a respected organisation dedicated to advancing gender equality and strengthening women's participation in public life, policy development and community leadership across Wales. Through advocacy, collaboration and engagement, it provides a platform for women, women's organisations and community leaders to share experiences and contribute to building a more inclusive society.

The organisation works to ensure that women's voices and perspectives are reflected in social, economic and political decision-making. It brings together individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds, creating opportunities for dialogue, networking and partnership between grassroots organisations, public institutions and policymakers. This collaborative approach helps ensure that a wide range of women's experiences are represented in decision-making processes.

A key part of its work involves raising awareness of issues affecting women and encouraging active participation in public policy. Through conferences, consultations, workshops, campaigns and community events, the Wales Assembly of Women enables women to discuss challenges, identify priorities and contribute to practical solutions. This helps ensure that policy development is informed by lived experience.

The organisation also plays an important role in promoting leadership and civic engagement among women. By supporting women to participate in public life and develop leadership skills, it helps improve representation across sectors and strengthens equality in decision-making structures.

The Wales Assembly of Women is committed to inclusion, participation and partnership, recognising that gender equality requires collective effort across communities and institutions. Through its work, it builds stronger connections between women and the systems that shape public life.

Overall, the organisation continues to advance women's voices in Wales by promoting dialogue, encouraging participation and influencing policy. Its long-standing commitment to equality and representation contributes to social progress and a more balanced and inclusive society.

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Cardiff Council is the first European CEDAW City. In 2023, following a council motion, it formally endorsed CEDAW and began embedding its principles across all areas of policy and service delivery. This includes organisations managed by the Council, such as schools, colleges and social services, as well as external providers commissioned through procurement processes. Information about CEDAW is also made available through Community Hubs to support wider public awareness and engagement.

In March 2026, Cardiff Council hosted a major conference in Cardiff titled *"From Global Convention to a City for CEDAW"* to mark the 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The event brought together international and national stakeholders, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the CEDAW Committee, who attended in person.

The conference provided a platform for sharing good practice and showcasing the work of other local authorities across Wales in implementing CEDAW principles. It encouraged collaboration and learning between councils and highlighted different approaches to embedding gender equality into local governance.

A key feature of the event was a series of workshops focused on practical implementation. These explored how CEDAW can be integrated into council policy-making, service design and organisational practice. Discussions also covered workforce engagement, employee involvement and monitoring systems to ensure accountability and progress.

Overall, Cardiff Council's work as a CEDAW City demonstrates a commitment to advancing gender equality through structured policy integration, cross-sector collaboration and community engagement. Its leadership in this area positions it as a model for how local government can translate international human rights frameworks into practical action at a city level.



CRITICAL AREA 9: HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Promoting and protecting women's rights as fundamental human rights

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

Zonta International is a leading global organisation dedicated to building a better world for women and girls through advocacy, education, service and leadership development. Founded in 1919, the organisation has spent more than a century working to advance gender equality and promote the rights, wellbeing and empowerment of women across the world. Through its international network of members, clubs and partners, Zonta International has become a respected voice in the global movement for women's rights and social justice. The organisation was established on the principle that women should have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of society and to contribute their skills, knowledge and leadership for the benefit of their communities.

Over the decades, Zonta International has remained steadfast in its mission to create a world in which women and girls are able to realise their full potential and enjoy equal rights, opportunities and freedoms. A significant aspect of Zonta International's work involves advocacy at local, national and international levels. The organisation actively promotes policies and initiatives that advance women's rights, eliminate discrimination and address barriers that prevent women and girls from achieving equality. Through collaboration with governments, civil society organisations and international institutions, Zonta International works to influence positive change and strengthen protections for women and girls worldwide.

Education has long been a cornerstone of the organisation's mission. Zonta International supports educational opportunities, scholarships and leadership development programmes that empower women and girls to pursue their ambitions and contribute to their communities. By investing in education and personal development, the organisation helps create pathways to economic independence, professional success and civic participation. The organisation is also widely recognised for its efforts to address violence against women and girls. Through awareness campaigns, advocacy initiatives and community engagement programmes, Zonta International works to challenge harmful practices, promote gender equality and support safer environments for women and girls. Its commitment to ending violence reflects a broader vision of a society based on dignity, respect and human rights.

Through its extensive international network, Zonta International has created opportunities for women to connect, collaborate and lead. Its members contribute their expertise, experience and passion to projects that improve lives and strengthen

communities. By fostering leadership and encouraging service, the organisation empowers women to become agents of positive change. Today, Zonta International continues to inspire and mobilise individuals across the world in support of gender equality and human rights. Its enduring commitment to advocacy, education and service has enabled it to make a lasting contribution to the advancement of women and girls and to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive world.

THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

WHO We Are

Founded in 1989, the **National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO)** is the leading umbrella organisation representing over 140 organisations and individuals across England committed to advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality.

Our members are united by a shared commitment to ensuring that all women and girls can realise their human rights and participate fully and equally in every aspect of society. NAWO's diverse membership includes specialist women's organisations, single-issue campaigns, faith-based organisations, health and wellbeing providers, arts and cultural organisations, researchers, advocates, and community groups working across the broad spectrum of issues affecting women and girls.

By bringing together this collective expertise and experience, NAWO amplifies women's voices, influences public policy, and strengthens collaboration across the women's sector. Members benefit from a vibrant network of organisations across the UK, opportunities to shape national advocacy priorities, and increased engagement with government, international institutions, and key decision-makers.

OUR Vision

NAWO's vision is a world where all women and girls are able to participate in and influence the decisions that impact on their lives.

OUR Mission

NAWO's mission is to promote the human rights of all women and girls, with a special focus on gender equality in the UK, Europe and internationally.

OUR Core Values

NAWO functions within a set of core values that enable women and girls to access their rights and achieve gender equality throughout society.

Equality

Equality means ensuring every woman has fair access to opportunities, support, and participation, regardless of her background, identity, or circumstances. NAWO is committed to challenging barriers, promoting equal treatment, and creating a community where every woman is respected, valued, and able to contribute with confidence and dignity.

Justice

Justice means standing up for fairness, protecting rights, and addressing inequalities that affect women and their communities. NAWO works to amplify women's voices, advocate for positive change, and promote policies and practices that uphold dignity, respect, and equal opportunities for everyone, particularly those facing disadvantage or discrimination.

Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of creating lasting community impact. NAWO values strong partnerships with members, volunteers, charities, public bodies, and local organisations. By working together, sharing knowledge, and listening to diverse perspectives, we strengthen our collective ability to support women and build resilient, inclusive communities.

Inclusion

Inclusion means creating welcoming, accessible, and respectful spaces where every woman feels valued, heard, and able to participate. NAWO celebrates diversity and actively works to remove barriers to engagement. We believe stronger communities are built when everyone has the opportunity to belong, contribute, and thrive together.

Integrity

Integrity means acting with honesty, openness, and fairness in everything we do. NAWO is committed to ethical leadership, responsible stewardship of resources, and transparent decision-making. We build trust by honouring our commitments, respecting those we serve, and ensuring our actions consistently reflect our values and charitable purpose.

Accountability

Accountability means taking responsibility for our decisions, actions, and use of resources. NAWO is committed to strong governance, transparency, and continuous learning. We listen to our members, partners, and communities, evaluate our impact, and ensure our work delivers meaningful public benefit while remaining true to our charitable mission.

Empowerment

Empowerment means supporting women to build confidence, develop skills, and make informed choices about their lives and communities. NAWO creates opportunities for learning, leadership, and participation, enabling women to influence decisions, overcome barriers, and become active contributors to positive change for themselves and others.

Solidarity

Solidarity means standing together with compassion, respect, and shared purpose. NAWO believes lasting change is achieved through mutual support, collective action, and community partnership. By championing one another, embracing diverse experiences, and working towards common goals, we strengthen our communities and advance equality for all women.

WHAT We Do

OUR WORK WITH PARLIAMENT

NAWO works closely with the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and the wider UK government, hosting regular events with parliamentarians and creating opportunities for members to share knowledge, experiences and expertise.

The EOE leads on policy relating to women's equality, LGBTQ+ rights and wider equalities legislation. Its work focuses on improving equality and reducing discrimination in public life, the workplace and beyond, while also upholding the UK's international commitments such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Key priorities include tackling the gender pay gap, supporting women's career progression and representation in leadership roles, addressing discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, preventing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and helping to end violence against women and girls.



OUR WORK IN EUROPE

The UK Joint Committee on Women (UKJCW) brings together women's organisations from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure the UK has a strong voice in Europe. As the UK's representative to the European Women's Lobby (EWL) – the largest network of women's organisations in Europe – the UKJCW works to influence policy, share information, and champion gender equality.





Through this partnership, the UKJCW connects UK women and organisations with European campaigns on key issues such as equality, justice and ending violence against women, ensuring that women's voices from all four nations are heard at the highest levels.

OUR WORK INTERNATIONALLY

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the United Nations' annual gathering dedicated to advancing gender equality and women's rights. Held each March in New York, it brings together government ministers, UN representatives, NGOs, and grassroots activists from around the world. Over two weeks, participants discuss progress and challenges, share expertise, and shape global commitments on issues ranging from child marriage to equal pay. Each session concludes with an agreed policy document that guides future action by member states.

CSW plays a central role in monitoring progress on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the landmark agenda for women's empowerment adopted in 1995. The Platform identifies 12 critical areas, including poverty, education, health, violence against women, women in leadership, human rights, the media, the environment, and the rights of the girl child. It continues to serve as a global framework affirming that women's rights are human rights, and that achieving equality benefits everyone.

Through CSW and the Beijing Platform for Action, the international community works collectively to advance women's rights, hold governments accountable, and push forward progress for women and girls worldwide.

NAWO plays an active role in CSW by coordinating the UK civil society delegation, ensuring women and girls from across the UK can participate and be heard on the global stage. We organise and support side events, connect our members with international partners, and provide opportunities for young women to engage directly with UN processes. By bringing grassroots voices into international discussions, NAWO helps shape the agenda and hold governments to account on their commitments to gender equality.



CRITICAL AREA 10: WOMEN IN MEDIA

Addressing the under-representation of women in media and challenging harmful stereotypes

THE MEDIA DIVERSITY INSTITUTE (MDI)

The Media Diversity Institute (MDI) is a UK-based charity working nationally and internationally to promote fair, accurate and inclusive media. Since its establishment in 1997 by journalist Milica Pešić, MDI has championed freedom of expression while addressing the under-representation of women and challenging harmful stereotypes relating to gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, class and sexual identity.

Through advocacy, research, training and media development, MDI works to improve media and information literacy, combat disinformation and online hate speech, and encourage responsible, balanced reporting across diverse communities.

MDI delivers practical training for journalists, editors, media owners, academics, students, civil society organisations and government bodies, equipping them with the skills to strengthen diversity and inclusion in media. It also partners with international organisations to develop recommendations for governments, regulators and broadcasters, ensuring marginalised voices are represented and reflected in public discourse. MDI's unique MA in Diversity and the Media, delivered with the University of Westminster, combines academic study with practical applications in journalism, campaigning and public relations.

Through its international conferences, partnerships and innovative programmes, MDI continues to be a leading voice in advancing diversity, inclusion and ethical media practice worldwide.



CRITICAL AREA 11: WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Encouraging women's participation and leadership in environmental decision-making

THE WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK (WEN)

The Women's Environmental Network (WEN) is the UK's leading charity dedicated to advancing gender equality through environmental action. For over three decades, WEN has championed the vital connection between gender, health, equity and environmental justice, recognising that the climate and ecological crises disproportionately affect women, particularly those from marginalised and low-income communities. Guided by an intersectional feminist approach, WEN works to ensure that environmental solutions are inclusive, equitable and responsive to the diverse experiences of women and communities across the UK.

WEN delivers practical, community-led programmes that empower women to take action on climate change while improving health, wellbeing and social resilience. Its work includes promoting sustainable and affordable food systems through community growing projects, supporting local food security initiatives, reducing waste, and encouraging environmentally responsible lifestyles. The organisation also campaigns for healthier homes and neighbourhoods by raising awareness of the harmful effects of toxic chemicals found in everyday products and advocating for stronger environmental health protections.

Alongside its grassroots work, WEN influences public policy, collaborates with local authorities, charities and community organisations, and amplifies the voices of women in climate decision-making. By combining research, education, advocacy and community engagement, WEN demonstrates that environmental sustainability and social justice are inseparable. Its programmes empower individuals and communities to become agents of change while promoting healthier, fairer and more resilient societies. Through its leadership, partnerships and evidence-based campaigning, WEN continues to play a significant role in shaping a future where environmental justice, gender equality and community wellbeing are recognised as fundamental to achieving lasting climate action.

TEACH A GIRL TO SWIM

Teach a Girl to Swim is a London-based initiative founded by Malini Mehra that focuses on the intersection of climate change, gender inequality, and survival skills for women and girls. The campaign highlights how climate-related disasters, particularly flooding, rising sea levels, and tsunamis, disproportionately affect women and girls due to existing social roles, mobility patterns, and inequalities in access to life-saving skills such as swimming.

In evidence presented to the CEDAW in Law People's Tribunal, Malini Mehra explained that women and girls are often more exposed to water-related risks in everyday life, as they are frequently responsible for tasks such as washing clothes, collecting water, or caring for young children near rivers, lakes, and coastal areas. In contrast, men are often engaged in agricultural or inland work, which can place them at a comparatively lower level of exposure during sudden flooding or sea surges. In emergency situations, the inability to swim can have fatal consequences, particularly when individuals must also protect or carry children to safety.

Teach a Girl to Swim responds to this critical gap by delivering swimming education as a practical climate resilience and life-saving intervention. The programme has supported women and girls in India, equipping them with essential survival skills that enhance safety, independence, and confidence in flood-prone regions. Beyond physical training, the initiative also raises awareness of gendered climate vulnerability and advocates for inclusive disaster preparedness strategies that recognise the specific needs of women and girls.

Through its work, Teach a Girl to Swim demonstrates how targeted, community-based interventions can save lives while advancing gender equality in the context of climate justice. It continues to highlight the importance of integrating gender-responsive approaches into climate adaptation policies and humanitarian responses worldwide.



CRITICAL AREA 12: THE GIRL CHILD

Tackling harmful practices and violence affecting girls, including child marriage and FGM

WIDOWS RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL

WRI works to prevent child widowhood by addressing its root causes, particularly early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Through advocacy at the United Nations and other international forums, WRI raises awareness of the experiences of child widows and the daughters of widows while promoting solutions that recognise their resilience, knowledge and leadership. As one of the first members of the Global Fund for Women, WRI has helped bring these issues to the attention of governments, businesses and civil society.

At the grassroots level, WRI partners with Naserian, a Tanzanian organisation that has grown from a small group of widows in one village to more than 1,000 widows and their daughters across 15 villages. WRI supported the women to understand their legal rights and develop practical initiatives that strengthen their communities. Through dialogue and capacity building, they gained the confidence to challenge harmful practices, prevent child marriage, and reduce FGM/C.

Together, they established a school that prioritises girls' education and created income-generating activities, including soap production, enabling families to fund girls' education. Many girls have gone on to become teachers, nurses and other professionals, returning to support their communities.

Naserian has prevented numerous forced child marriages and has virtually eliminated FGM/C in its villages through community education involving both women and men. WRI has also enabled Maasai widows to speak directly at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, ensuring their voices shape international discussions. Through conferences, presentations and partnerships, WRI continues to promote community-led solutions that empower widows and girls as agents of lasting change.



A GIRL AT A TIME SIERRA LEONE

A Girl At A Time Sierra Leone is a survivor-led organisation founded by Alimatu Dimonekene MBE, a UK-based survivor of female genital mutilation (FGM) and long-standing women's rights advocate. The organisation works to end violence against women and girls, including FGM, child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, and other harmful traditional practices. It also promotes safeguarding, mental health, youth leadership, and the rights of women and girls.

The organisation operates across Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom, and the United States through advocacy, survivor engagement, policy influence, and international partnerships. In Sierra Leone, it engages communities and young people through community dialogues, school outreach, youth leadership programmes, safeguarding training, mental health awareness initiatives, and campaigns aimed at ending FGM, child marriage, and violence against women and girls.

A Girl At A Time has led survivor-centred advocacy campaigns, raised awareness nationally and internationally, and contributed to policy discussions on protecting girls and women. It has participated in international forums and collaborated with partners advancing women's rights and safeguarding. During recent public debates about FGM in Sierra Leone, the organisation amplified survivor voices, engaged international partners, used media advocacy, and called for stronger protections for girls and women.

The organisation works closely with community leaders, health professionals, women's organisations, survivor networks, and international partners to strengthen protection and support services. Its work is grounded in the recognition that FGM is a human rights violation, a form of gender-based violence, and child abuse, driven by harmful social norms rather than religious requirements.



OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES



DR JUSTINA MUTALE
CHAIR



CATS SUTHERLAND
VICE CHAIRPERSON



MARGARET CLARK
VICE TREASURER



SAMA TANHAI
SECRETARY



FATOUMATA DIALLO
MEMBER



DAISY TIPPING
MEMBER



FUNGAI SAMUSONGA
MEMBER



JANE FENTON-MAY
MEMBER



SALLY SPEAR
MEMBER



LEMONA CHANDA
MEMBER



NESRIN COMERT
MEMBER

OUR AMBASSADORS



PAT BLACK
Past International Head
of Advocacy
SI
Former Chair, NAWO



ZARIN HAINSWORTH
Vice-President NGOCSW Geneva
Chair Widows Rights International
Trustee, Equally Ours
Former Chair, NAWO



WENDI MOMEN OBE
Member, National Spiritual
Assembly of the Bahais, UK.
Trustee, Ashworth Trust, BASED and
Widows Rights International
Former Chair, NAWO



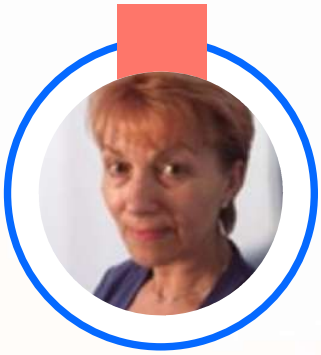
ANNETTE LAWSON
Trustee, René Cassin
Former Trustee, Judith Trust
Former Chair, NAWO



JULIET COLMAN
Director & Founder
SecurityWomen
Former Chair, NAWO



JANE GRANT
Writer and Trustee,
Friends of the Women`s Library
Founding Member, NAWO



BARBARA CLEARLY
Trustee, Equally Ours
Former Vice-Chair, NAWO

REFLECTIONS ON CSW70



March 2026 marked an important milestone in the global movement for gender equality with the convening of the Seventieth Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Bringing together governments, civil society organisations, academics, advocates and women's rights leaders from across the world, CSW70 served as the principal global forum for reviewing progress on gender equality and identifying priorities for future action.

For seven decades, the Commission on the Status of Women has provided a unique platform for international cooperation on women's rights and empowerment. CSW70 was particularly significant as it took place at a time of growing global uncertainty, increasing economic pressures, rising conflict, climate challenges and concerns about setbacks in gender equality in many parts of the world. Against this backdrop, delegates gathered with a shared commitment to advancing the rights, opportunities and wellbeing of women and girls worldwide.

The priority theme for CSW70 focused on ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and addressing structural barriers that prevent women from fully exercising their rights. This theme reflected growing recognition that justice is fundamental to achieving gender equality and that legal protections alone are insufficient if women cannot access or benefit from them in practice.

Throughout the session, governments and civil society representatives highlighted the persistent barriers faced by women in accessing justice. Discussions focused on discriminatory legislation, unequal access to legal representation, economic obstacles, gender based violence and the challenges faced by women from marginalised communities. Particular attention was given to ensuring that justice systems are responsive to the needs of women and girls and that institutions are equipped to address inequalities that continue to undermine women's rights and opportunities.

One of the most important outcomes of CSW70 was the adoption of agreed conclusions calling for stronger action to promote equal access to justice and remove structural barriers that prevent women and girls from realising their rights. The conclusions emphasised the need for inclusive legal systems, stronger protections against discrimination and greater investment in institutions that support women's access to justice. These commitments reinforced the central role of legal and policy frameworks in advancing gender equality and protecting the rights of women and girls. CSW70 also revisited progress on women's participation in public life and decision making, alongside efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Delegates acknowledged that while progress has been made in some areas, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions across politics, business, public administration and peace processes. Discussions highlighted the importance of increasing women's representation at all levels of decision making and ensuring that women are actively involved in shaping policies that affect their lives and communities.





Another notable aspect of the session was the continued emphasis on the interconnected nature of women's rights. Participants recognised that issues such as poverty, violence, education, health, economic opportunity and political participation cannot be addressed in isolation. Instead, a comprehensive and integrated approach is required to achieve meaningful and lasting progress. This holistic perspective reflects the enduring relevance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which remains the most comprehensive global framework for advancing women's rights and gender equality. Civil society organisations played a vital role throughout CSW70.

Representatives from women's organisations across the globe brought forward evidence, lived experience and practical recommendations to inform discussions and influence outcomes. Their contributions reinforced the importance of ensuring that women from diverse backgrounds, including those facing multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, are included in decision making processes at every level.

Among the significant developments emerging from the session was increased attention to groups whose experiences have often been overlooked within international policy discussions. The inclusion of concerns relating to women in detention and imprisonment within the agreed conclusions was widely regarded as an important step towards recognising the complex relationship between poverty, violence, discrimination and access to justice. This reflected a broader commitment to ensuring that no woman or girl is left behind.

For the United Kingdom, the outcomes of CSW70 provide both encouragement and a call to action. The themes discussed during the session resonate strongly with many of the challenges and opportunities currently facing women across the UK. While significant progress has been made in advancing women's rights, issues such as violence against women and girls, economic inequality, barriers to leadership, unequal caring responsibilities and access to justice remain important public policy concerns.

The emphasis placed on women's participation in decision making is particularly relevant to the UK. Greater representation of women in politics, business, public services and community leadership remains essential if institutions are to reflect the diversity of the populations they serve.

The discussions at CSW70 reinforce the importance of creating pathways that enable women from all backgrounds to contribute fully to public life and leadership. The focus on access to justice also has important implications for the UK. Ensuring that women can effectively access legal protections, support services and remedies when their rights are violated remains a fundamental aspect of building a fair and inclusive society. Continued investment in services that support survivors of abuse, strengthen legal protections and reduce barriers to justice will be critical in delivering meaningful progress.

For organisations such as the National Alliance of Women's Organisations and its members, CSW70 provides renewed momentum and a valuable framework for advocacy. The session highlighted the importance of partnership between governments, civil society and communities in driving progress on gender equality. It also demonstrated the continuing power of collective action in advancing women's rights and shaping a more equitable future.

As the global community reflects on the outcomes of CSW70, one message emerges clearly: *progress cannot be taken for granted.* The pursuit of gender equality requires sustained commitment, strong institutions, inclusive leadership and the active participation of women and girls in all aspects of society. The discussions and commitments made during CSW70 offer both inspiration and direction as we continue the journey towards a world in which every woman and girl can live with dignity, opportunity, safety and equal rights.



REFLECTIONS ON CEDAW

Advancing Women's Rights Through International Accountability

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, widely known as CEDAW, remains one of the most important international instruments for advancing women's rights and gender equality. Often described as the international bill of rights for women, CEDAW provides a comprehensive framework through which governments are expected to eliminate discrimination against women and promote equality in political, economic, social, cultural and civil life.

Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and entering into force in 1981, the Convention continues to shape policies, legislation and advocacy efforts across the world. CEDAW was created in response to the recognition that despite the existence of universal human rights protections, women continued to experience discrimination in virtually every sphere of life. The Convention defines discrimination against women broadly, recognising that inequality can arise through laws, policies, institutions, cultural practices and social attitudes. It places a clear responsibility on governments to take proactive measures to eliminate discrimination and to create conditions in which women can enjoy their rights and freedoms on an equal basis with men.

What distinguishes CEDAW from many other international agreements is its comprehensive approach. Rather than focusing on a single issue, the Convention addresses the full range of factors that affect women's lives. It covers political participation, education, employment, healthcare, economic opportunity, legal equality, family life and protection from discrimination. The Convention also recognises the specific challenges faced by rural women and acknowledges the need for targeted measures to address inequalities that persist in practice, even where formal legal equality exists.



Over the decades, CEDAW has served as a powerful tool for driving legislative reform and policy development around the world. Governments that ratify the Convention commit themselves to reviewing laws, eliminating discriminatory practices and reporting regularly on progress. This reporting process creates an important mechanism for accountability, enabling independent experts on the CEDAW Committee to assess implementation, identify gaps and make recommendations for improvement. While the Convention does not directly enforce national laws, its influence has been substantial in shaping debates, encouraging reform and strengthening international standards relating to women's rights.

The continued relevance of CEDAW was evident throughout the discussions surrounding the Seventieth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2026. Many of the themes highlighted during CSW70, including access to justice, participation in decision making, protection from violence and the removal of structural barriers to equality, reflect the principles embedded within CEDAW. The Convention provides the legal and normative foundation upon which many global commitments to gender equality continue to be built. In many respects, CEDAW remains the benchmark against which progress on women's rights is measured internationally. One of the most significant lessons emerging from decades of CEDAW implementation is that legal equality alone is not sufficient.

Many countries have introduced laws prohibiting discrimination, yet women continue to face barriers in accessing opportunities, resources, representation and justice. This reality has reinforced the importance of addressing the structural and cultural factors that contribute to inequality. CEDAW recognises that meaningful equality requires not only changes in legislation but also changes in institutions, attitudes and practices. Another important reflection concerns the role of civil society. Women's organisations have been central to the success of CEDAW from its inception. Across the world, civil society groups monitor implementation, raise awareness, contribute evidence and advocate for change. The Convention has provided an important framework through which women's organisations can engage governments, influence policy and hold institutions accountable.

The relationship between civil society and the CEDAW process remains one of the Convention's greatest strengths. From a United Kingdom perspective, CEDAW continues to provide an important framework for assessing progress and identifying areas where further action is required. The United Kingdom ratified the Convention and has periodically reported on measures taken to advance gender equality and eliminate discrimination. Government departments across the UK have developed mechanisms to monitor implementation and respond to recommendations issued by the CEDAW Committee.

The UK has made significant progress in many areas covered by the Convention. Advances in legal protections, employment rights, educational attainment and political participation have contributed to improving opportunities for women. There has also been increased public awareness of issues such as violence against women and girls, workplace discrimination and gender representation in leadership. These developments reflect important achievements and demonstrate the value of sustained commitment to equality.

However, challenges remain. Women continue to experience disparities in earnings, representation in senior leadership positions and caring responsibilities. Violence against women and girls remains a serious concern, while access to justice and support services continues to be an important issue for many communities. Women from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled women, migrant women and those experiencing poverty may face additional barriers that require targeted responses.

These challenges highlight the ongoing relevance of CEDAW and the need for continued efforts to translate commitments into practical outcomes. For organisations such as the National Alliance of Women's Organisations and its members, CEDAW remains an invaluable advocacy tool. It provides a recognised international framework that can be used to promote accountability, encourage policy reform and strengthen campaigns aimed at advancing women's rights.

The Convention also reinforces the principle that gender equality is not merely a social aspiration but a fundamental human rights obligation. Looking ahead, the importance of CEDAW is likely to grow rather than diminish. As societies confront new challenges including economic uncertainty, technological change, demographic shifts, climate pressures and global conflict, ensuring that women's rights remain protected and promoted will be essential. The Convention offers both a vision and a practical framework for achieving this goal.

Nearly half a century after its adoption, CEDAW remains one of the most powerful international instruments for advancing women's rights. Its enduring significance lies not only in the principles it sets out but also in its ability to inspire action, promote accountability and provide a common language for those working to create a more just and equal world. For governments, institutions and civil society alike, the Convention continues to serve as a reminder that equality requires vigilance, commitment and collective effort. As we reflect on its achievements and ongoing relevance, CEDAW remains a vital foundation for building a future in which every woman and girl can live with dignity, opportunity, safety and equal rights.





REFLECTIONS ON THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION





Thirty Years + of Advancing Women's Rights

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains one of the most significant and influential global frameworks for advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality. Adopted by 189 governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the Platform for Action represented a historic commitment by the international community to address the structural inequalities affecting women and girls and to accelerate progress towards equality, development and peace.

Three decades later, the Beijing Declaration continues to provide a powerful vision and a practical roadmap for governments, institutions, civil society organisations and communities working to advance the rights of women and girls. It remains the most comprehensive international agenda for gender equality ever agreed and continues to shape national policies, international commitments and advocacy efforts throughout the world.

At its heart, the Beijing Platform for Action recognised that women's rights are human rights and that achieving gender equality is essential for sustainable development, democracy, social justice and peace. The Declaration acknowledged that despite progress in many areas, women continued to face discrimination, exclusion and unequal opportunities across virtually every aspect of life. It therefore called for coordinated action to remove barriers and create conditions in which women and girls could participate fully and equally in society.

The Platform identified twelve critical areas of concern that required urgent attention. These included women and poverty, education and training, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment and the girl child. These twelve areas continue to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing the challenges affecting women worldwide.



What made the Beijing Platform particularly groundbreaking was its recognition that gender inequality is not confined to a single issue or sector. Rather, it is embedded within social, economic, political and cultural structures. The Platform therefore called for a holistic approach to change, recognising that progress in one area is often linked to progress in others. This integrated understanding of equality remains one of the Platform's greatest strengths and continues to influence global gender policy today. Over the past thirty years, the Beijing Declaration has contributed to significant progress in many parts of the world. More girls are attending school than ever before.

Women's participation in political life has increased in many countries. Legal protections against discrimination have expanded. Awareness of violence against women and girls has grown substantially, and greater attention is being given to issues such as women's economic empowerment, leadership and representation. The influence of Beijing can be seen across international frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the work of UN Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. Together, these mechanisms have reinforced the commitments first articulated in Beijing and have helped maintain momentum towards gender equality. Yet while progress has undoubtedly been achieved, the aspirations of the Beijing Platform remain far from fully realised.

Women continue to face significant inequalities in many parts of the world. Gender based violence remains widespread.

Women remain underrepresented in political and economic leadership. Economic inequality persists, and many women continue to shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid care responsibilities. Conflict, displacement, climate change and economic instability continue to have profound impacts on women and girls globally.

The reflections emerging from recent international discussions, including the Seventieth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2026, reinforce the continuing relevance of the Beijing Platform. Many of the issues debated during CSW70, including access to justice, women's participation in decision making, protection from violence and institutional accountability, directly reflect the priorities established in Beijing three decades ago. This demonstrates both the enduring value of the Platform and the reality that significant work remains to be done. From a United Kingdom perspective, the Beijing Declaration continues to serve as an important benchmark for assessing progress towards gender equality.

The UK has made substantial advances in many areas covered by the Platform. Women have achieved greater representation in politics, public life, higher education and professional sectors. Legal protections against discrimination have strengthened, and public awareness of issues affecting women and girls has increased significantly. However, many of the challenges identified in Beijing remain relevant today. Violence against women and girls continues to be a major concern. Women remain underrepresented in some senior leadership positions across politics, business and public institutions. Economic inequalities persist, particularly in relation to earnings, pensions and caring responsibilities. Women from minority ethnic communities,



disabled women, migrant women and those experiencing poverty may continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage.

The Beijing Platform therefore remains an important framework for informing policy, advocacy and public debate within the United Kingdom. It encourages governments, institutions and civil society organisations to evaluate progress not only through legislation but also through measurable outcomes and lived experiences. It reminds us that equality requires sustained effort, accountability and long term commitment. For the National Alliance of Women's Organisations, the Beijing Declaration holds particular significance.

Indeed, the twelve award categories recognised through the NAWO National Awards reflect the twelve critical areas of concern identified within the Beijing Platform for Action. In this way, the awards themselves represent a celebration of the organisations, activists and leaders who continue to advance the vision first articulated in Beijing in 1995.

NAWO has long played an important role in ensuring that women's voices are represented within national and international discussions concerning equality, rights and social justice. By bringing together organisations from across the women's sector, NAWO contributes to the collective effort required to turn international commitments into meaningful change. The organisation's work reflects the spirit of partnership, participation and accountability that lies at the heart of the Beijing Platform. As we reflect on thirty years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, there is much to celebrate. Progress has been achieved, barriers have been challenged and opportunities have expanded for millions of women and girls around the world. Yet the journey towards full equality remains unfinished.

The enduring lesson of Beijing is that gender equality cannot be achieved through isolated initiatives or short term commitments. It requires sustained political will, strong institutions, active civil society engagement and the meaningful participation of women and girls at every level of society. It requires us to remain vigilant in protecting progress while continuing to push for change where inequalities persist. Thirty years after its adoption, the Beijing Declaration remains as relevant and necessary as ever. It continues to inspire action, guide policy and provide a shared vision for a more equal world. As organisations such as NAWO and its members continue their work, the principles of Beijing remain a powerful reminder that equality is not only a goal but a responsibility shared by governments, institutions, communities and individuals alike. The challenge before us is not simply to remember Beijing, but to continue building the future it envisioned.

12 CRITICAL AREAS OF BEIJING PLAFORM

1. **WOMEN AND POVERTY**: Addressing the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women.

2. **EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN**: Tackling inequalities and barriers in access to education and training opportunities.

3. **WOMEN AND HEALTH**: Improving access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services.

4. **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**: Promoting integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

5. **WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT**: Supporting the protection, participation, and rights of women in conflict and peacebuilding processes.

6. **WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY**: Challenging inequalities in economic structures, employment, and access to resources.

7. **WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING**: Advancing women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles.

8. **INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**: Strengthening policies, institutions, and systems that promote gender equality.

9. **HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN**: Promoting and protecting women's rights as fundamental human rights.

10. **WOMEN AND MEDIA**: Addressing the under-representation of women in media and challenging harmful stereotypes.

11. **WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT**: Encouraging women's participation and leadership in environmental decision-making.

12. **THE GIRL CHILD**: Tackling harmful practices and violence affecting girls, including child marriage and FGM.


gamaal
A new culinary App
CELEBRATING SOMETHING?
bring the flavour of home cooked food to your party!
Maffe Tigga
Chickpeas Rice Curry
The Thiebou
Get a curated new experience.
Reach out today and make your event a culinary delight!
ORDER NOW!
www.gamaal.co.uk
+44 7375 870 112
gamaal
Google Play
App Store


RTMEDIA
CREATIVE IDEAS.
POWERFUL RESULTS.
We help brands stand out and grow through creative design, smart marketing and digital innovation.
OUR SERVICES
Graphic Design
Creative visuals that communicate and inspire.
Photography
High-quality photos for every moment and brand.
Digital Marketing
Data-driven strategies to grow your online presence.
Web Design
Modern, responsive websites that drive results.
Video Editing
Engaging edits that tell your story powerfully.
Digital Transformation
Smarter processes and digital solutions for the future.
Social Media Marketing
Content and campaigns that engage and convert.
Ads & Campaigns
Google, Facebook & influencer marketing.
AD
Rudoe.Dziva
Creative Designer
Your vision.
Our creativity.
Real impact.
+44 7737 475 204
info@rtmedia24.com
www.rtmedia24.com
SCAN ME
Visit our website
GRAPHIC DESIGN • PHOTOGRAPHY • WEB DESIGN • DIGITAL MARKETING • DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Our Members & Partners



Follow NAWO:

www.linkedin.com/company/national-alliance-of-women-s-organisations/
www.facebook.com/nawo.online/
www.instagram.com/nawo_uk/
www.x.com/nawoorg
www.nawo.org.uk