

Children and the Promise of Gender Equality: Achieving Shared Care Responsibilities and Addressing Gender-Based Violence at Beijing+30

Event Summary

This year marks 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the founding blueprint for advancing women's rights and gender equality globally.

Three decades later, continued progress on gender equality is under threat; women's rights are under attack around the world. In this context, the [Women's Refugee Commission](#) joined [ChildFund Alliance](#), [Equimundo](#), [Plan International](#), the [Bahá'í International Community](#), the [Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary](#), and [Save the Children](#) to create a space of optimism and hope at the Commission on the Status of Women's 69th annual session in New York.



Members of the panel discussed how supporting shared care responsibilities, implementing gender-transformative humanitarian interventions, and enabling the meaningful participation of children and young people could help tackle gender-based violence.

The event, “Children and the Promise of Gender Equality,” focused on how supporting shared care responsibilities, implementing gender-transformative humanitarian interventions, and enabling the meaningful participation of children and young people could help tackle gender-based violence as well as allow us to envision a future where

gender equality is a reality, where the rights of current and future generations are valued and protected. The event was co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Australia, Austria, Ecuador, and Italy.

The event opened with statements by young leaders and children expressing their aspirations for gender equality and their demands to policymakers. **Siloé**, a young Congolese-Irish leader, called on participants to challenge the societal norms that discourage girls from assuming leadership roles, and to recognize how online gender-based violence threatens to silence young activists – especially girls and young women.

“The future is not something we passively inherit, but something we actively create.”

- Siloé, Youth Advisory Panel Member, Plan International, Ireland

Ruby, from Nepal, highlighted how gender-transformative programming can be lifesaving and emphasized the importance of engaging men and boys as allies.

“Together we can create a world where every girl, boy, and individual, whatever their gender identity or sexual orientation, can live free from fear.”

- Ruby, Nepal, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Ayandziswa, a young climate activist from Eswatini, **reflected** on how advancing gender equality is essential to shield society as a whole from gender-based violence, sexual abuse, and exclusion.

“We need platforms to dream, speak, and act. Solidarity isn’t just unity, it is power. Equality isn’t just a battle between genders, but a movement for all. Stand up, speak up. Strengthen one, strengthen all.”

- Ayandziswa, youth climate activist, Eswatini

Nour, from Lebanon, **shared** how discriminatory nationality laws that prevent women from passing their nationality to their children leave children feeling like second-class citizens in their own countries.

“The time has come for international efforts to ensure that no-one is excluded from rights due to outdated laws that do not align with modern civil rights standards.”

- Nour, Lebanon



Ayandziswa, from Eswatini, and Nour, from Lebanon, presented via video.

In a [video](#) shared by ChildFund Alliance and its Italian member WeWorld, a girl in Afghanistan shared her aspiration to become a teacher so that she may spread literacy within her community and educate girls and women in particular.

In a high-level panel discussion, facilitated by **Jana Berchtold**, UN Youth Delegate, Austria, representatives from the governments of Italy, Ecuador, and Australia shared their experiences regarding the key challenges and opportunities for advancing gender equality with children and young people. **Arianna Tanca Macchiavello**, Minister for Women and Human Rights, Ecuador, spoke about how Ecuador is protecting girls from sexual violence through comprehensive sexuality education, improved sexual and reproductive health and rights, and adapting legal frameworks to improve protection in digital spaces. **Anna Ascani**, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, Italy, spoke of the critical importance of education as a weapon with which to eradicate gender inequality. **Dr. Anna Cody**, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission, shared powerful examples of how community-led solutions led by Indigenous groups, particularly those that engage boys, have played a critical role in addressing gender-based violence and domestic violence in local communities.

A civil society panel facilitated by **Stefania Piccinelli** of WeWorld, invited civil society groups to share learnings from research and programming on transforming gender dynamics and the role of children. Research by Equipundo, presented by **Giovanna Lauro**, indicates that young men and young women think about gender equality in starkly

different ways, with many young men feeling gender equality has gone “too far.” She emphasized the importance of engaging young men on gender equality early in their lives, noting that “adolescence is too late.” **Lily Jacobi**, Women’s Refugee Commission, shared research on the prevalence of sexual violence against adolescent boys and male youth in humanitarian emergencies. She spoke about new guidance and resources on how humanitarian responders can create humanitarian interventions that are more inclusive, accessible, and appropriate to the needs of adolescent boys and male youth survivors of sexual violence. Reflecting on gender-transformative humanitarian interventions, **Stefania Piccinelli** urged participants to think beyond the needs of the initial stages of emergencies, noting that we are now living in an age of protracted humanitarian crises – for example, the average displacement now lasts 17 years. WeWorld’s new report on Afghanistan, “[Her Future at Risk: The Cost of Humanitarian Crises on Women and Girls](#)” highlights how the intersection of natural disasters, conflict, and the systematic attack on the rights of women and girls has created a protracted crisis where women and girls are impacted disproportionately. **Debora Cobar** of Plan International advocated for the meaningful participation of girls in decision-making on issues that affect their lives, noting that their inputs lead to more impactful practices. She provided examples from Guatemala, where girls came together to lead campaigns against child marriage. **Martha Moghbelpour**, a CSW delegate for the Bahá’i International Community, closed the panel with stories of solidarity and collective action from across 3,000 localities in India, where boys and girls, men and women have come together to systematically advance gender equality through programs that build unified and more just and equal communities.

Kathleen Sherwin of Plan International concluded the event by reflecting on the solutions offered by speakers – such as engaging men and boys as both allies and beneficiaries of gender equality, urging a sense of positive masculinity, creating safer digital spaces, and supporting community-led solutions, new approaches to humanitarian programming, and the meaningful engagement of children and youth.

[Watch a recording of the event.](#)