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UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Background Guide 2026

Written by Kelsey Shabanowitz and Amina Bibi



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations Washington DC Conference (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to your committee, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Kelsey Shabanowitz and Assistant Director Amina Bibi. Kelsey holds a Bachelor's Degree in Forensic Science with a Concentration in Biology, as well as a minor in Political Science. Amina holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Criminal Justice and Sociology and serves as a youth advocate for the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY). The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Kaytlyn Marcotte, Catherine Tomczyk, and Tobias Willms, and Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser.

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Combatting Technology-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls
2. Promoting Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls

UN Women is the primary United Nations entity responsible for addressing women's rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls. Governed by an executive board consisting of 41 Member States, whose membership is divided regionally. UN Women supports international political negotiations to formulate internationally agreed standards and it aids Member States in implementing those standards by providing expertise and financial support.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. ET (DC time) on 15 October 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•DC Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact Under-Secretary-General, Tobias Willms, at dcusg.tobias@nmunstaff.org or the Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser, at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Kelsey Shabanowitz, Director
Amina Bibi, Assistant Director



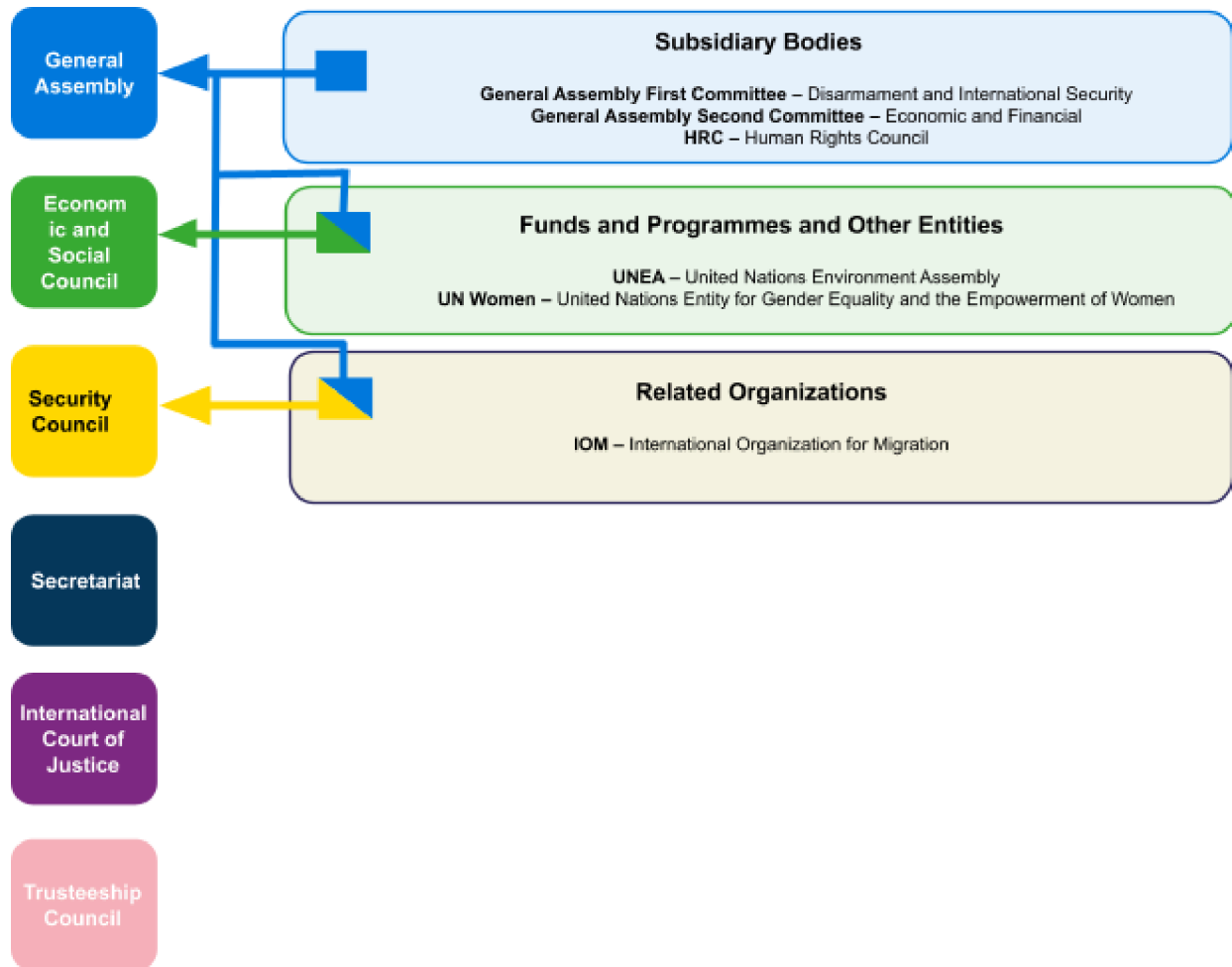
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United Nations System at NMUN•DC

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN•DC. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

UN Women was formed in 2010 as a result of General Assembly resolution 64/289 on “System-wide coherence,” and became operational in 2011.¹ UN Women is the lead United Nations entity on gender equality and seeks to advance women’s rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of all women and girls.² UN Women has nine focus areas: ending violence against women; peace and security; humanitarian action; leadership and governance; economic empowerment; innovation and technology; women with disabilities; youth; as well as the human immunodeficiency virus and the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.³ One of the most significant pieces of work performed by UN Women was the creation of a database that examined constitutions from around the world with a gendered lens.⁴ Through the database, UN Women observed that 325 laws were passed, revised, or repealed to further the rights of women, in addition to 16,600 organizations across 95 Member States strengthening their capacities to deliver resources to women.⁵and security; other disarmament measures and international security; and the disarmament machinery.⁶

Mandate, Function and Powers

UN Women was created through the merging of the Division for the Advancement of Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.⁷ Through this merger, UN Women absorbed all of the mandates and functions of the previous bodies.⁸ General Assembly resolution 64/289 on “System-wide coherence,” established that UN Women must work within the framework provided by the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) and the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995), in addition to any other applicable United Nations instruments that address gender inequality and the advancement of women.⁹

UN Women acts on two fronts: it supports international political negotiations to formulate internationally agreed standards for gender equality and aids Member States in implementing those standards by providing expertise and financial support.¹⁰ The mandate of UN Women can be summarized as:

- UN Women **will generally**: lead, coordinate, and promote the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and women’s empowerment; support

¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*. 2010. p. 1.

² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *About UN Women*. N.d.

³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *What we do*. N.d.

⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women launches first-ever database mapping gender provisions in constitutions worldwide*. 2013.

⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021.

⁶ Ibid. pp. 69-70.

⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *About UN Women*. N.d.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*. 2010; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. 1995.

¹⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How we work*. N.d.



intergovernmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in their formulation of policies; forge effective partnerships with civil society; help Member States implement the standards set by offering technical and financial assistance to those who request it; engage in humanitarian response efforts, ensuring gender commitments in humanitarian coordination mechanisms; and lead the implementing of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda through research initiatives, data collection, and learning exchanges.¹¹

- UN Women **will not generally**: dictate the specific actions required for the implementation of policies it recommends; direct or enforce any specific actions; or create new bodies.¹²

Governance, Funding and Structure

Under resolution 64/289 (2010), UN Women is governed by a multi-tiered intergovernmental structure whereby the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and CSW shall constitute the normative support functions and shall provide normative policy guidance.¹³ The structure in charge of providing operational policy guidance to UN Women includes the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the Executive Board of UN Women.¹⁴ The Executive Board is made up of 41 members, elected by ECOSOC for a term of three years.¹⁵ The regional allocation and number of seats includes: Africa (10), Asia and Pacific (10), Eastern Europe (4), Latin American and the Caribbean (6), Western Europe and other States (5), and contributing Member States (6), whereby four seats will be selected by and from the top 10 largest providers of voluntary core contributions to UN Women.¹⁶ The other two seats will be allocated to Member States that are not members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).¹⁷ The role of the Executive Board is to provide guidance to the Executive Director, ensuring that the activities of UN Women align with the policy guidance, and approving programs.¹⁸

Resolution 64/289 outlines that UN Women should be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, to be appointed by the Secretary-General in consultation with Member States, for a term of four years, with the possibility of renewal for one term.¹⁹ The current Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director is Sima Bahous, who has been in the position since 2021.²⁰ The resources required to fund all normative processes are obtained from the regular budget of the United Nations and approved by the General Assembly, whereas the budget for operational processes and activities at all levels is funded

¹¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *About UN Women*. N.d.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ United Nations, General Assembly. *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*. 2010.

¹⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN-Women Executive Board Members*. N.d.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*. 2010. p. 3.

²⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous*. N.d.



from voluntary contributions and approved by the Executive Board of UN Women.²¹ The total budget for 2026-2027 is \$1.05 billion.²²

²¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN-Women Integrated Budget 2026-2027: Informal Briefing with the Executive Board*. 2025.

²² Ibid.



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United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. 1995. Retrieved 10 February 2026 from: https://archive.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/u1281/bdpfa_e.pdf

United Nations, General Assembly. *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*. 2010. Retrieved 12 February 2026 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/64/289>



1. Combating Technology-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls

Introduction

Women and girls present in online spaces have experienced increasing levels of violence due to technological advancements, limiting their participation in public life and contributing to health concerns.²³ Technology-facilitated violence (TFV) against women and girls refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as phones, the Internet, and social media platforms, to carry out gender-based violence (GBV).²⁴ GBV is violence disproportionately affecting women that may cause physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering.²⁵ 16-58% of women and girls have faced or witnessed some form of digital violence during their lifetime that has had lasting effects on their health and well-being, according to the Secretary-General's 2024 report *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (A/79/500)*.²⁶ Utilizing digital technologies such as computers, smartphones, and the Internet to cause harm to individuals is known as digital violence, with primary methods including GBV, hate speech, cyberbullying, deepfakes, image-based digital abuse, and doxxing.²⁷ Deepfakes are images, audio, or videos that were altered using artificial intelligence (AI) to mimic individuals saying or doing things they have never said or done, now commonly used to facilitate digital abuse.²⁸ Women can be impacted both online and offline as a result of such events through physical violence, psychological harm, or economic and professional harm, and they may lose trust in their families and communities.²⁹ Women and girls from varying backgrounds have been affected by TFV, including those with disabilities, Indigenous women, women of color, migrants, the LGBTIQ+ population, and women in the political sphere.³⁰

During COVID-19, women and girls experienced heightened levels of cyber violence as they increasingly relied on ICTs for their everyday activities.³¹ Generative AI models use large portions of data to create videos, pictures, and other forms of digestible media that are becoming readily available to the public, further enabling online violence.³² AI has exacerbated TFV by spreading undetectable misinformation,

²³ United Nations Population Fund. *Preventing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF GBV)*. N.d. p. 1.

²⁴ United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective (A/HRC/38/47)*. 2018. p. 7.

²⁵ United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *General Recommendations Adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women - Eleventh session (1992) - General recommendation No. 19: Violence against women*. 1992. p. 1.

²⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: technology-facilitated violence against women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/500)*. 2024. p. 5.

²⁷ Global Foundation for Girls. *Introduction to digital violence*. N.d. p. 1.

²⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *AI-powered online abuse: How AI is amplifying violence against women and what can stop it*. 2025.

²⁹ Council of Europe. *The digital dimension of violence against women as addressed by the seven mechanisms of the EDVAW Platform*. 2022. p. 10.

³⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *FAQs: Digital abuse, trolling, stalking, and other forms of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls*. 2025.

³¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General (A/77/302)*. 2022. p. 4.

³² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How is AI Exacerbating Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls*. 2025. pp. 1-6.



facilitating sextortion, promoting harassment, and hate speech by keeping perpetrators anonymous.³³ Sextortion is a request to engage in unwanted sexual activity where the perpetrator employs psychological coercion or abuses their authority for personal benefit.³⁴ It is aggravated by the manosphere, which is a set of online communities, such as chat boxes and social media platforms, portraying men as victims of societal structures.³⁵ Furthermore, AI has been used as a tool to target women in the political realm, discouraging them from being involved in public spaces, ultimately leading to gender inequality.³⁶ According to a report produced by UN Women, there has been a 50% increase in self-censorship among women journalists and media workers from 2020 to 2025.³⁷ Adopting policies to mitigate TFV is a critical part of ensuring the safety of women and girls; however, in 2024, the World Bank reported that only 40% of 190 global economies have regulations addressing cyber-harassment.³⁸ Increased concerns surround the advancement of AI and its role in enabling and creating new forms of abuse; therefore, the World Bank emphasizes the need for global partnerships, technological innovations, and legal reforms to mitigate TFV and its effects.³⁹

International and Regional Framework

Member States are responsible for ensuring women and girls can participate in political, social, and economic spheres with respect for their rights and dignity, which includes protecting them from violence.⁴⁰ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) serves as a foundational human rights document, outlining the right to security of the person in Article 3, which encompasses both offline and online security.⁴¹ Article 2 of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) (1979) obligates States parties to take measures to protect women and girls by implementing legislation and legal protections.⁴² Additionally, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1989) requires States parties to protect children from sexual exploitation, trafficking, and other forms of violence by enforcing national, bilateral, and multilateral partnerships as outlined in Articles 19, 34, and 35.⁴³ Article 5 of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* (1993) prompts United Nations organs and specialized agencies to participate in regular meetings and produce outcome

³³ Ibid. pp. 6-8.

³⁴ International Association of Women Judges. *Stopping the abuse of power through sexual exploitation: naming, shaming, and ending sextortion*. 2012. pp. 9, 11.

³⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: technology-facilitated violence against women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/500)*. 2024. p. 9.

³⁶ Di Meco. United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Online Threats to Women's Political Participation and The Need for a Multi-Stakeholder, Cohesive Approach to Address Them*. 2020.

³⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Tipping Point: Online Impact, Manifestations and Redress in the AI Age*. 2026. p. 12.

³⁸ Elefante et al. World Bank Group. *Awful but lawful: Confronting technology-facilitated gender-based violence*. 2025.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979. p. 195.

⁴¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948. p. 2.

⁴² United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979. pp. 194-195.

⁴³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*. 1989. pp. 169-171.



documents regarding cohesive plans to eliminate violence against women.⁴⁴ More recently, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA) (1995) encouraged Member States to promote technical and scientific training to ensure women's full participation in technology fields and decision-making spaces.⁴⁵ The Declaration also highlights the need for women and girls in decision-making spaces to influence laws and regulations, working to dispel the negative portrayal of women and abuse in the media.⁴⁶ General Assembly resolution 79/152 entitled "Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: the digital environment" (2024) takes a multi-tiered approach to improving the digital world by focusing on education, legislation, and the support of survivors.⁴⁷ This resolution advocates for the implementation of legislation by Member States to address the root causes of gender inequality and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, while also focusing on survivor support to provide women with legal assistance and access to justice.⁴⁸

The United Nations prioritizes taking coordinated action to eliminate TFV by closing the gender divide, implementing review mechanisms, and accountability efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴⁹ General Assembly resolution 70/1 on "Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (2030 Agenda) (2015) encourages Member States to implement strategies to accelerate SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) by empowering women and girls.⁵⁰ SDG target 5.2 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence in the public and private spheres, while SDG target 10.3 outlines the need to improve legislation to eliminate discrimination and ensure inclusion of diverse populations within and outside each Member State.⁵¹ Additionally, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is a space for Member States to share their progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda that also holds them accountable to national and regional goals through voluntary national reviews.⁵² Serving as the primary monitoring tool for the 2030 Agenda, HLPF meets annually with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and every four years at the SDG Summit to promote dialogue on how Member States and other stakeholders can best implement the 2030 Agenda.⁵³ The *Pact for the Future* (PFTF) (2024) reaffirms Member States' commitment to work towards eradicating violence against women and girls to fulfill the SDGs in action 8.⁵⁴ Annexed to the PFTF, the *Global Digital Compact* emphasizes the inclusion of women and girls in technical fields by 2030 to close the digital gender gap (DGG) through partnerships between Member States and relevant actors.⁵⁵ To ensure its effective implementation, Member States and United Nations entities are responsible for holding meetings and

⁴⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (A/RES/48/104). 1993. pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1). 1995.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: the digital environment* (A/RES/79/152). 2024. pp. 11-13.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 13.

⁴⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future* (A/RES/79/1). 2024. pp. 37-39.

⁵⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all girls*. N.d; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries*. N.d.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² United Nations, High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Mandate and Functions*. N.d.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future* (A/RES/79/1). 2024. p. 8.

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 22-23.



review sessions, such as the upcoming high-level review of the *Global Digital Compact* in 2027 and an in-depth review of the PFTF by Heads of State in 2028.⁵⁶

Several regional organisations have also developed frameworks for protecting women against TFV.⁵⁷ With financial and technical support from the Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the UN Women Office for Asia and the Pacific, the *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (2016-2025)* works to eliminate violence against women through institutionalized efforts.⁵⁸ Among other prevention and protection methods, the regional framework calls on Member States to implement actions that comply with human rights frameworks, such as CEDAW and the CRC, in addition to reviewing laws and adapting them to target new forms of violence against women, such as TFV.⁵⁹ In collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank, and additional regional organizations, the African Union developed the *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)*, which builds upon existing frameworks to implement gender-inclusive educational frameworks empowering women and girls to participate in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) fields to close the DGG.⁶⁰ Additionally, the framework highlights the need to invest in educational initiatives teaching citizens digital skills and how to use digital platforms responsibly to ensure safety and security.⁶¹

Role of the International System

Partnerships between the United Nations system, governments, and regional organizations are crucial to addressing legal and structural barriers to prevent TFV.⁶² The non-governmental organization (NGO) WeProtect Global Alliance partnered with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to create the Model National Response Maturity Model, providing Member States with accessible tools outlining key components that should be targeted to address online child exploitation within national responses in accordance with their needs.⁶³ Similarly, the Making All Spaces Safe program initiated by the United Nations Population Fund in partnership with Global Affairs Canada promotes targeted legal reforms and digital literacy to prevent and eradicate forms of cyberviolence.⁶⁴ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime developed *A Training Handbook for Criminal Justice Practitioners on Cyberviolence Against Women and Girls (CVAWG)*, which helps these groups to better understand how to effectively apply

⁵⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *About the Pact*. N.d.

⁵⁷ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW)*. N.d; African Union. *The digital transformation strategy for Africa (2020-2030)*. N.d.

⁵⁸ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW)*. N.d. pp. 14-66.

⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 19-20.

⁶⁰ African Union. *The digital transformation strategy for Africa (2020-2030)*. N.d. pp. 1-16.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 17.

⁶² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and addressing structural barriers: Agreed conclusions (E/CN.6/2026/L.2)*. 2026.

⁶³ WeProtect Global Alliance. *Preventing and tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse: A Model National Response*. N.d.

⁶⁴ United Nations Population Fund. *Making All Spaces Safe: Global programme to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence*. N.d.



legislation to cybercrime cases while remaining vigilant in how they should approach survivors.⁶⁵ The European Commission released its *Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030* in 2026, noting increasing concerns about the role of AI in producing deepfakes and expressing its commitment to collaborate with local and regional law enforcement to manage the effects of cybercrime.⁶⁶ The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) issued the *Resolution on the Protection of Women Against Digital Violence in Africa* (2022) to discuss the various capacities of online violence, increase awareness, push for stronger legislation, and promote women's access to education to eradicate the DGG.⁶⁷ Involving Member States from all regions, the High-Level Network on Gender-Responsive Policing is a network for sharing information and best practices on GBV.⁶⁸ It therefore complements the Secretary-General's UNiTE initiative that also focuses on strengthening law enforcement and judicial responses to violence against women and girls, ensuring that governments promote their safety at the national and regional levels.⁶⁹ Building on the BPfA, UN Women, Spain, and Congo launched the HeForShe Movement as an advocacy initiative, creating actionable plans outlined in their annual impact reports to advance gender equality.⁷⁰ UN Women's 2025 report on the impact of the initiative specifically calls on global citizens to protect women and girls in offline and online spaces by bridging the DGG through leadership and STEAM opportunities, in addition to digital skills.⁷¹ Additionally, the Human Rights Council (HRC) Advisory Committee facilitates regular studies that highlight and track the work of international and regional organizations, showcase the effects of TFV, and identify best practices that Member States and relevant stakeholders can implement to address the issue.⁷²

UN Women is committed to supporting agencies and initiatives working diligently to eliminate TFV through partnerships, laws and policies, support for feminist movements and awareness campaigns, and advancing research.⁷³ UN Women has been proactive in outlining long-term goals that target digital violence through inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based initiatives, and financing as part of its Draft Strategic Plan 2026-2029.⁷⁴ The Draft Strategic Plan highlights four target areas, including inviting women into decision-making and leadership positions to mitigate the impacts of TFV, partnering with women's organizations and governments to facilitate evidence-based research to ensure women live free from violence, implementing prevention programs, and focusing on survivor-centered justice.⁷⁵ To determine the effectiveness of international, regional, and local initiatives, the Commission on the Status of Women

⁶⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *A training handbook for criminal justice practitioners on cyberviolence against women and girls (CVAWG)*. 2022. p. 6.

⁶⁶ European Union, European Commission. *Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030*. 2026. p. 2.

⁶⁷ African Union, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. *Resolution on the Protection of Women Against Digital Violence in Africa - ACHPR/Res.522 (LXXII)* 2022. 2022.

⁶⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The High-Level Network on Gender-Responsive Policing: Building commitment on gender-responsive policing*. 2025. pp. 1-4.

⁶⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Call to action: UNiTE to end digital violence against all women and girls*. 2025.

⁷⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *HeForShe Champions for Gender Equality*. N.d.

⁷¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *HeForShe Alliance Impact Report 2025*. 2025. pp. 15-19.

⁷² United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (A/HRC/RES/56/19)*. 2024. p. 2.

⁷³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *FAQs: Digital abuse, trolling, stalking, and other forms of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls*. 2025.

⁷⁴ Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *DRAFT Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2025. pp. 10-13.

⁷⁵ Ibid.



(CSW), operating under the auspices of ECOSOC, holds annual meetings to discuss policy recommendations aimed at achieving gender equality.⁷⁶ UN Women acts as the secretariat for CSW, where it shares policy recommendations through input from the United Nations system, human rights bodies, civil society, and academia.⁷⁷ During its 67th meeting (CSW67) in 2023, CSW highlighted the role of technology in attaining gender equality and noted both the benefits and the negative effects of technological advancement.⁷⁸ Building on CSW67, CSW70 (2026) pinpoints the need to improve justice systems that will directly impact those affected by TFV, addressing exploitation and other forms of digital abuse.⁷⁹ The Secretary-General's 2026 report on CSW70 promotes digital literacy and data protection as tools for providing women with access to justice institutions online, keeping in mind care responsibilities and geographical barriers.⁸⁰

NGOs have also organized initiatives to protect women and girls from online violence affecting their safety and well-being.⁸¹ Human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, are committed to upholding the rights outlined in the UDHR through a set of priorities within its Global Strategic Framework that are implemented and monitored globally.⁸² Amnesty International partnered with Fondation Botnar for the RIGHTS Click Program, calling on technology companies and governments to regulate online platforms for children while working directly with children to consider their perspectives when developing policies to address health and well-being in the digital realm.⁸³ Additionally, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) specifically works to support those affected by crises and conflicts, such as women and girls across 40 countries, through its Strategy100 vision, which addresses persistent challenges and includes empowering and investing in communities to strengthen them.⁸⁴ *Safe Space to Learn: Digital Literacy and Inclusion for Women and Girls in Humanitarian Settings* is a training guide released by the IRC to teach women and girls how to safely navigate and be present in digital spaces, further closing the DGG.⁸⁵ In partnership with UN Women, the European Union, and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, the Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action program works regionally in Africa and South America to lead key initiatives providing digital security, training, and awareness campaigns.⁸⁶

⁷⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d.

⁷⁷ Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *DRAFT Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2025. p. 15.

⁷⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls: CSW67 Agreed Conclusions*. 2023.

⁷⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW70 (2026)*. 2026.

⁸⁰ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and addressing structural barriers: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2026/3)*. 2026. pp. 15-19.

⁸¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104)*. 1993. p. 4.

⁸² Amnesty International. *Who We Are*. N.d.

⁸³ Fondation Botnar. *Pathways to young people's wellbeing*. 2024.

⁸⁴ International Rescue Committee. *Strategy100: Empowering people in crisis and beyond*. N.d.

⁸⁵ Beiruti et al. International Rescue Committee. *Safe Space to Learn: Digital Literacy and Inclusion for Women and Girls in Humanitarian Settings*. N.d. p. 12.

⁸⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *ACT*. N.d.



The Role of AI and Other Emerging Technologies in GBV

AI-facilitated violence has created new forms of abuse, amplifying the impact of TFV through the spread of deepfakes, sextortion, and doxxing, leaving women vulnerable due to inadequate access to justice and insufficient accountability from tech companies.⁸⁷ National AI strategies were found in only 24 of the 138 countries assessed in a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) study, which limits the likelihood of countries addressing discrimination and gender stereotypes on online platforms.⁸⁸ The General Assembly adopted resolution 78/265 on “Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development” in 2024, highlighting the need to respect international law and the fundamental human rights of every individual when using AI so as not to cause harm to those most vulnerable to its effects.⁸⁹ UN Women’s AI School is an initiative with over 3,000 participants that teaches United Nations Staff, policymakers, youths, and civil society how to safely use AI.⁹⁰ The program hosts weekly meetings and expert talks on topics including “the deepfake deluge” and “AI safety & humanitarian corridors,” and shares toolkits that professionals and community members can use to influence policies, training, and community efforts.⁹¹ Furthermore, in addition to policy implementation, including women in spaces where digital technologies are developed will help close the DGG and address inequalities in the digital world, as done by the six program objectives outlined in the UNESCO *Information for All Programme (IFAP) Strategic Plan 2023-2029*.⁹²

Coordinated data collection on an international scale through AI and modern programs is the next step to advancing research and interventions addressing TFV, according to a 2022 UN Women expert group meeting on “Stepping up action to prevent and respond to Online and ICT-Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls.”⁹³ The High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence released a report that notes the need to govern AI at the international level through its five guiding principles created with input from leading experts.⁹⁴ Alongside input from governments and other stakeholders, experts called for children to have a voice in creating safety measures to ensure AI systems are designed for all members of society.⁹⁵ UNESCO established a toolkit to use red teaming to learn how to test AI systems to identify their vulnerabilities, which Member States and civil society can use to create new laws and systems that address these vulnerabilities.⁹⁶ Red teaming explores any flaws and harmful qualities that may be in

⁸⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *AI-powered online abuse: How AI is amplifying violence against women and what can stop it*. 2025.

⁸⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How is AI Exacerbating Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls*. 2025. p. 6.

⁸⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development (A/RES/78/265)*. 2024.

⁹⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A.I. School: Lessons Learned for AI Upskilling*. 2025.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² United Nations, General Assembly. *Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: the digital environment (A/RES/79/152)*. 2024; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Information for All Programme (IFAP) Strategic Plan 2023-2029*. 2023. pp. 9-10.

⁹³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Stepping Up Action to Prevent and Respond to Online and ICT-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls*. 2022. p. 7.

⁹⁴ United Nations, High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence. *Governing AI for Humanity: Final Report*. 2024. p. 38.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 32.

⁹⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Red Teaming artificial intelligence for social good*. 2025. p. 3.



generative AI models through controlled testing in which results are shared among AI companies to improve their design and safety features, as well as with policymakers to address GBV.⁹⁷ AI can be utilized positively by Member States and civil society alike; therefore, UNESCO released its *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* in 2022 to guide society on responsible AI use.⁹⁸ The report reminds Member States to be proactive in financially supporting gender-sensitive digital policies, strengthening AI systems through evidence-based initiatives, and including women in the design of AI systems.⁹⁹

Addressing TFV against Women and Girls in Public and Political Life

Women and girls who are active in the public and political world, including politicians, activists, and journalists, face many challenges and forms of discrimination amid the growth of digitalization.¹⁰⁰ Due to the frequent spread of misinformation, women in politics often encounter the "chilling effect," which is the silencing of individuals due to fear of personal security threats and disinformation campaigns directed against them.¹⁰¹ UNESCO reports that female journalists are likely to be diagnosed with mental health conditions, with 25% of them being diagnosed with anxiety or depression and 13% experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁰² Another study conducted by UNESCO found that 30% of female journalists censored themselves on social media due to GBV.¹⁰³ Managing social media platforms through the implementation of transparent policies is crucial to ensuring the safety of women and girls online, as mentioned in HRC resolution 59/15 on "The safety of journalists" (2025).¹⁰⁴ Action 8 of the PFTF calls on states to remove barriers to ensure that women have the right to fully participate in political and public life.¹⁰⁵ The *Global Digital Compact* further expresses the need to respect international law and to foster an environment where women can enjoy their fundamental freedom to participate in politics while being protected from the harms of digital technologies.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the African Commission notes the need for gender-sensitive media literacy and digital security training and to reconsider surveillance laws, as they disproportionately affect women.¹⁰⁷ The Digital Services Act (2022), adopted by the European Parliament, calls for the eradication of disinformation on online platforms.¹⁰⁸ The Organization for Security

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 8.

⁹⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*. 2022. pp. 14-15.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ Koch et al. Sage Journals. *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence Against Politically Active Women: A Systematic Review of Psychological and Political Consequences and Women's Coping Behaviors*. 2025.

¹⁰¹ European Union, European Parliament. *Digital Services: landmark rules adopted for a safer, open online environment*. 2022; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Accelerating efforts to tackle online and technology facilitated violence against women and girls (VAWG)*. N.d. p. 6.

¹⁰² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *New global report reveals growing impact of online violence on women journalists*. 2026.

¹⁰³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Accelerating efforts to tackle online and technology facilitated violence against women and girls (VAWG)*. N.d. p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations, Human Rights Council. *The safety of journalists (A/HRC/RES/59/15)*. 2025.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*. 2024. p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 37.

¹⁰⁷ African Union, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. *Resolution on the Protection of Women Against Digital Violence in Africa - ACHPR/Res.522 (LXXII)* 2022. 2022.

¹⁰⁸ European Union, European Parliament. *Digital Services: landmark rules adopted for a safer, open online environment*. 2022.



and Co-operation in Europe has created toolkits and led awareness campaigns to help those involved in cases of digital political violence get access to justice.¹⁰⁹

The United Nations has encouraged Member States to adopt policies and legislation that foster a safe online environment to protect women in the political and social realm against TFV.¹¹⁰ Some concerns include discrimination against women based on their race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or nationality, in addition to patriarchal structures to which they are subject, resulting in the deliberate targeting and surveillance of women, whose information is then used to create hate campaigns against them.¹¹¹ UNESCO has collaborated with international bodies and organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote the safety of journalists through the implementation of legal frameworks and monitoring systems, as indicated in the *United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* (2012).¹¹² A 2023 follow-up report on the *Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity* (A/78/270) from the Secretary-General highlights emerging concerns on the digital safety of journalists as detailed in studies conducted by international and regional organizations, as well as providing recommendations to address them.¹¹³ The Global Media Defense Fund is a UNESCO initiative collaborating with not-for-profits in Africa, Arab states, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America, promoting projects to legally protect journalists and support research.¹¹⁴ Arab states, including Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Morocco, have defined TFV in their penal codes while also implementing actions such as establishing agencies, introducing helplines, and strengthening cybercrime units.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

As technology becomes more advanced and more heavily relied upon, UN Women upholds the need to mitigate TFV against women and girls on all levels.¹¹⁶ The international community is faced with cases of gender inequality that drive violence against women and girls, affecting their personal and social lives by silencing their voices and limiting their online participation.¹¹⁷ Key documents such as the BPfA have laid out the groundwork to promote women's rights globally, while United Nations bodies and human rights organizations work to develop and promote policies to mitigate TFV.¹¹⁸ Making the digital sphere

¹⁰⁹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. *Support and Encouragement for women in politics*. 2022. p. 12.

¹¹⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future* (A/RES/79/1). 2024. p. 3.

¹¹¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity: Report of the Secretary-General* (A/78/270). 2023. pp. 6-7.

¹¹² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Programme for the Development of Communication. *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*. 2012.

¹¹³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity: Report of the Secretary-General* (A/78/270). 2023. pp. 6-13.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Global Media Defence Fund*. 2026.

¹¹⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Violence against women in the online space: Insights from a multi-country study in the Arab States - Summary report*. 2021. pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *FAQs: Digital abuse, trolling, stalking, and other forms of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls*. 2025.

¹¹⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women Strategy: Preventing and eliminating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls*. 2025. p. 16.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at 30: How it transformed the fight against gender-based violence*. 2024.



accessible and safe for everyone also means addressing the DGG, as UN Women stresses that it is one of the main barriers to implementing safe laws and technology designs that are inclusive of women and responsive to their concerns.¹¹⁹ UN Women remains committed to collaborating with Member States and other stakeholders to address TFV globally for a more just and sustainable world.¹²⁰

Further Research

As delegates research the topic, they should consider the following questions: How has your Member State addressed TFV? Does your Member State have national and regional plans that it participates in to mitigate TFV? What are some of the challenges associated with addressing TFV, and how can Member States work on these challenges? Are there protections for marginalized groups of people? Are there any monitoring mechanisms in place to assess the effectiveness of legal frameworks?

¹¹⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *In focus: International Women's Day*. 2023.

¹²⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Stepping Up Action to Prevent and Respond to Online and ICT-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls*. 2022.



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<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220701IPR34364/digital-services-landmark-rules-adopted-for-a-safer-open-online-environment>

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2. Promoting Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls

*"Although violence in the private domain is now widely recognised as a human rights violation, violence against women and girls, especially sexual harassment in public spaces, remains a largely neglected issue, with few laws or policies in place to prevent and address it."*¹²¹

Introduction

Women and girls regularly restrict their daily activities in fear of GBV and a lack of public resources for victims.¹²² According to the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (DEVAW) (1994), GBV is defined as violence against women and girls, or threats thereof or to their liberty, that are likely to result in harm or suffering.¹²³ UN Women has found that one in three women worldwide, or approximately 840 million, have experienced GBV, fewer than 40% of whom seek support due to potential social repercussions.¹²⁴ Examples of GBV include sexual, psychological, or physical abuse, as well as the loss of economic and decision-making power, and harmful societal or religious practices, such as virginity testing and forced marriage.¹²⁵ The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has raised concerns regarding GBV and how the lack of victim advocacy prevents women and girls from entering public spaces and seeking services like education and healthcare.¹²⁶

Creating safe environments for women and girls is a fundamental element in progressing sustainable development, as mentioned in General Assembly resolution 70/1 on "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (2030 Agenda) (2015).¹²⁷ SDGs 5 (gender equality) and 11 (sustainable cities and communities) focus on the establishment of equal opportunities and empowerment of women, and address the need for inclusive and safe public spaces for everyone, respectively.¹²⁸ UN Women defines safe cities for women and girls as cities where equal protections against discrimination and GBV are established to protect women and girls' freedom of movement and access to recreation, health services, and education in public spaces.¹²⁹ The creation of safe cities involves incorporating gender equality into the development of urban sectors, such as healthcare and education.¹³⁰ Refugee

¹²¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Asia and the Pacific. *Creating Safe Public Spaces*. N.d.

¹²² United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Safer Cities Programme: A Safer and Just City for All*. N.d. p. 2.

¹²³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (A/RES/48/104). 1994. p. 3.

¹²⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and figures: Ending violence against women*. 2025.

¹²⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Gender-based violence against women and girls*. N.d.; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Harmful practices*. N.d.

¹²⁶ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Safer Cities Programme: A Safer and Just City for All*. N.d. p. 2.

¹²⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. N.d.

¹²⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1). 2015. pp. 21-22.

¹²⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces - Global Results Report*. 2017.

¹³⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Safety Governance Approach for Safe, Inclusive, and Resilient Cities: A Practical Guide for conducting Safety Governance Assessments in urban environments*. 2020. p. 7.



women and girls, as well as victims of GBV seeking healthcare, often lack safe public spaces to seek support and treatment regarding GBV due to gender-exclusive infrastructure.¹³¹ Gender-exclusive infrastructure refers to the exclusion of marginalized groups, such as women, girls, and refugees, from public spaces, resulting in unequal access to basic services and further hindering sustainable development.¹³² An example of gender-exclusive infrastructure includes improper water and sanitation management, as roughly 44 million pregnant women worldwide have developed hookworm infections due to poor sanitation efforts, and menstrual hygiene is often overlooked, causing other infections and diseases.¹³³ Equitable infrastructure seeks to implement gender-transformative measures, such as women-only spaces and adequate lighting in public spaces, to ensure equal opportunities regardless of gender, which can boost the empowerment of women and help close the gender gap.¹³⁴ By closing the gender gap and prioritizing the safety of women in cities and public spaces, the global gross domestic product (GDP) could increase by as much as \$7 trillion.¹³⁵ Involving women and girls in the development of safe cities and safe public spaces can improve the quantity and quality of gender-responsive policies in every sector worldwide.¹³⁶

International and Regional Framework

Safe cities and public spaces remain a fundamental human right for the global population, especially for women and girls.¹³⁷ Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) states that every person is entitled to the right to a secure, safe, and free existence, while Article 7 seeks to ensure that all individuals receive equal protection against discrimination.¹³⁸ Expanding on the UDHR, CEDAW (1979) is the foremost United Nations framework regarding women's rights, with Article 3 calling on Member States to take appropriate measures to advance women in society and provide them with equal protection of human rights as men.¹³⁹ To strengthen the principles established in CEDAW, Article 3 of DEVAW advocates for the safeguarding of women's rights through equal societal protections, including the rights to security, liberty, and freedom from discrimination and inhumane treatment.¹⁴⁰ The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (Beijing Declaration) (1995) is a formative framework for establishing focus areas concerning women and girls under CEDAW and DEVAW, and addresses how every level of government and communities can update existing policies through topic-specific action plans.¹⁴¹ Paragraph 23 of the Beijing Declaration advocates for women and girls to maintain access to every

¹³¹ United Nations Office for Project Services. *Infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women*. 2020. pp. 5-6.

¹³² Ibid. p. 5.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 15.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 5; United Nations Development Programme. *Documenting Gender Responsive and Transformative Best Practices in Lebanon*. 2025. p. 4.

¹³⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and figures: Economic empowerment*. N.d.

¹³⁶ United Nations Office for Project Services. *Infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women*. 2020. p. 28.

¹³⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Creating safe and empowering public spaces with women and girls*. N.d.

¹³⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

¹³⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979. p. 195.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 3-4.

¹⁴¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*. 2014. pp. 3-4.



fundamental human right without infringements, while paragraph 24 asks the international community to remove any discriminatory policies preventing the advancement of women and girls.¹⁴²

Frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda, the *New Urban Agenda* (NUA) (2016), and the *Pact for the Future* (PFTF) (2024) have reaffirmed the importance of providing women and girls with safe cities and public spaces in the 21st century.¹⁴³ SDG target 5.2 advocates for the protection of women and girls against violence in public spaces, while target 11.7 emphasizes the necessity of providing safe and equitable public spaces for women and girls.¹⁴⁴ Along similar lines, NUA addresses key urban improvements that cities can make to achieve sustainable development.¹⁴⁵ Paragraph 39 of NUA advocates for the establishment of inclusive and safe cities and public spaces, allowing women and girls to participate in urban life without fear of societal consequences.¹⁴⁶ Created by UN-Habitat, the *NUA Monitoring Framework* (2020) addresses the need for measurement guidelines as a means of increasing awareness of the importance of public spaces and their expansion, as the quality of public spaces is used to observe the overall success of a Member State's urban development efforts.¹⁴⁷ Expanding on NUA, PFTF acknowledges the need for the global community to support women and girls and their overall well-being so the 2030 Agenda and SDGs can be achieved.¹⁴⁸

Regional economic commissions and UN Women offices have tailored their frameworks to region-specific concerns regarding the safety of public spaces for women and girls.¹⁴⁹ Overseen by the Economic and Social Council, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) supports regional and national development, as well as the collaboration between the region, other regional organizations, and United Nations bodies, to implement safe public infrastructure for women and girls.¹⁵⁰ UN-Habitat, the African Union, and ECA collaborated on *A Harmonized Implementation Framework for the New Urban Agenda in Africa*, establishing implementation guidelines for subregional and national governments, based on NUA, to advance urbanization in Africa while remaining aligned with regional priorities.¹⁵¹ More specifically, strategic outcomes 1.6 and 1.8 of the aforementioned framework acknowledge that a significant number of people feel unsafe when alone in their communities, and focus on the establishment of safe and inclusive public spaces and cities.¹⁵²

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 10.

¹⁴³ United Nations Statistics Division. *The Sustainable Development Goals Extended Report 2025*. 2025. p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 18, 22.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2017. p. 9.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *NUA Monitoring Framework and related indicators*. 2020. p. 76.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*. 2024. p. 8.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Initiative: Third International Compendium of Practices*. 2025. p. VI.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa. *About*. N.d; United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa. *Gender equality and the empowerment of women*. 2023.

¹⁵¹ United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa. *A Harmonized Implementation Framework for the New Urban Agenda in Africa*. 2020. p. x.

¹⁵² Ibid. pp. 46-47.



Role of the International System

UN Women partners with United Nations organizations and international bodies focused on promoting the safety of women and girls in cities around the world.¹⁵³ UN Women acts as the Secretariat for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the leading body for implementing gender equality policies worldwide.¹⁵⁴ The seventieth session of CSW (CSW70) (2026) highlighted barriers that women and girls face when seeking justice, and provided recommendations for Member States to develop action plans for their justice systems that prioritize the safety of women and girls in all aspects of life, including in public spaces.¹⁵⁵ In its 2025 report, *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Initiative: Third International Compendium of Practices*, UN Women found that involving stakeholders from multiple areas of urban life and infrastructure improves discussions regarding safe public spaces for women by incorporating different perspectives when creating protections against GBV for women in public spaces.¹⁵⁶ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provides aid to governments at all levels to address areas of concern, including women's rights to equal participation in society without fear of GBV.¹⁵⁷ Refugee women are disproportionately affected by GBV in public spaces, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) advises Member States to be active in setting up protections and providing services to victims.¹⁵⁸ The *UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation, and Response to Gender-Based Violence* (2020) established action areas for Member States to address regarding GBV, such as preparedness, planning, and implementation, reminding Member States of their responsibility for creating safe public spaces for women and girls.¹⁵⁹ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports policy reforms and the restructuring of urban infrastructure to hold agencies accountable and promote women's empowerment.¹⁶⁰ UNFPA's work with government officials in Türkiye to incorporate safer public transportation, improved lighting in public spaces, and the installation of security cameras has expanded to 25 municipalities across the Member State.¹⁶¹

International bodies and agencies involved in the development of safe urban infrastructure have funded and partnered with UN Women to create safe public spaces for the empowerment of women globally.¹⁶²

¹⁵³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Creating safe and empowering public spaces with women and girls*. N.d.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Snapshot: What is CSW?*. N.d.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW70 (2026)*. 2026; United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and addressing structural barriers (E/CN.6/2026/L.2)*. 2026. p. 4.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Initiative: Third International Compendium of Practices*. 2025. p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *OHCHR and women's human rights and gender equality*. N.d; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *What we do: an overview*. N.d.

¹⁵⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Gender-based violence*. N.d.

¹⁵⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation, and Response to Gender-Based Violence*. 2020. p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ United Nations Population Fund. *Gender-based violence*. 2024.

¹⁶¹ United Nations Population Fund. *Women-Friendly Cities: Making urban spaces safer and more inclusive in Türkiye*. 2025.

¹⁶² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Overview of funding partners contributions*. 2024.



UN-Habitat remains committed to the creation of accessible and safe cities for all and recognizes how equitable infrastructure can further develop other areas of society.¹⁶³ UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme discusses case studies of successful urban safety programs, such as a project in New Delhi, India, which focused on mobilizing women and girls to challenge existing urban infrastructure.¹⁶⁴ In this case study, India's collaboration with Jagori, a non-governmental organization (NGO) for women's empowerment, focused on reclaiming public spaces for recreational use and reported that the majority of girls involved felt more confident to be in public spaces alone.¹⁶⁵ UN Women, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and UN-Habitat collaborated on Safe and Friendly Cities for All (2011-2017), a program aimed at introducing protections for women and interventions to improve urban safety infrastructure in cities such as Greater Beirut (Lebanon) and Marrakesh (Morocco).¹⁶⁶ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a key agency in promoting sustainable development, including through long-term investments in gender equality and equitable infrastructure that support broader societal development.¹⁶⁷ A study performed by Arup, an architecture and design firm based in the United Kingdom, alongside UNDP and the University of Liverpool, reiterated the need for women's involvement in equitable infrastructure design and highlighted successful programs implemented by various Member States.¹⁶⁸ Examples of successful implementations include the establishment of women-only public spaces, improving lighting in high-traffic areas, and designing walkways with stroller lanes, calming public art, and natural lighting to ease fears of GBV.¹⁶⁹ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development recognizes the need for equitable infrastructure to reduce women and girls' concerns of GBV, including well-lit spaces and enhanced security on public transportation, and provides best practices for Member States to advance all areas of society.¹⁷⁰

Regional bodies and organizations often partner with UN Women to address region-specific challenges in creating safe public spaces for women and girls.¹⁷¹ During CSW69 (2025), regional economic commissions reviewed the 30-year progress of the Beijing Declaration.¹⁷² The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is a regional body that addresses the need for safe public spaces, encouraging Member States to report implementation challenges and successes to their economic commissions to be discussed in regional reviews.¹⁷³ Costa Rica is highlighted by ECLAC because 460 safe public spaces, such as businesses and public transport, were created in its

¹⁶³ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Building Gender-Inclusive Cities: Toward More Gender-Inclusive Programmes, Public Spaces & Cities in the Arab Region*. 2021. p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Safer Cities Programme: A Safer and Just City for All*. N.d. p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Safe and Friendly Cities for All: A Joint Programme between UNICEF, UN Women, and UN Habitat and UNICEF*. N.d. p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP - About us*. N.d; United Nations Development Programme. *Design cities to work better for women, says a new report by Arup, University of Liverpool and UN Development Programme (UNDP)*. 2022.

¹⁶⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Design cities to work better for women, says a new report by Arup, University of Liverpool and UN Development Programme (UNDP)*. 2022.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid; United Nations Development Programme. *Cities Alive: Designing Cities That Work for Women*. 2022. pp. 38-39.

¹⁷⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Women in infrastructure: Selected Stocktaking of Good Practices for Inclusion of Women in Infrastructure*. 2021. p. 16.

¹⁷¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW69/Beijing+30 preparations*. N.d.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.



communities through establishing a protocol and training personnel on how to handle GBV, thus improving safety for women and girls while observing and reporting cases of GBV.¹⁷⁴ UNDP, along with UN Women and UNFPA, assisted the European Union in the creation of Challenging Harmful Attitudes and Norms for Gender Equality, a program established to assist Central Asian Member States in implementing policies that protect GBV survivors while promoting women's rights in the region.¹⁷⁵ *Building Safe and Inclusive Cities for Women: A Practical Guide* was developed by the UN Women regional office in Asia and the Pacific to provide Member States with principles, strategies, training tools, and best practices for establishing safe cities throughout the region.¹⁷⁶ Additionally, *Arab Vision 2045: Realizing hope through thought, will and action*, created by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, recommends initiatives for regional Member States to incorporate into their infrastructure to advance sustainable development.¹⁷⁷ Creating safe public spaces for women and girls in West Asian Member States can support sustainable development through culturally informed approaches, which can be strengthened by involving women and girls in Arab culture and development opportunities that come from their heritage.¹⁷⁸

Addressing Safety Disparities for Refugee and Displaced Women and Girls

While women and girls are already at a societal disadvantage in terms of safety, refugee and displaced women face additional barriers to finding security in cities and public spaces.¹⁷⁹ Refugee women and girls are twice as likely to be subjected to GBV and xenophobia in public spaces while seeking basic necessities.¹⁸⁰ Migration is often viewed as a means of survival for girls and women to protect themselves from further oppression due to poverty, conflict, and violence at home.¹⁸¹ Displaced women and girls frequently face unsafe conditions and increased GBV during their displacement, reducing opportunities to access public spaces and services.¹⁸² However, Member States and cities that host migrant and refugee women and girls often lack the resources to care for them in the long term.¹⁸³ Depending on the location, the risk of sexual violence for refugee and displaced women and girls is approximately 20% higher than that faced by women and girls who have not been displaced.¹⁸⁴ Although some public services are

¹⁷⁴ United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. *Action for equality, development and peace in Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional report on the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 30 years on, in synergy with the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda*. 2025. p. 47.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *European Union and United Nations launch regional programme to advance gender equality and prevent gender-based violence in Central Asia*. 2026.

¹⁷⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Asia and the Pacific. *Building Safe and Inclusive Cities for Women: A Practical Guide*. 2011. pp. 1-2.

¹⁷⁷ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Arab Vision 2045: Realizing hope through thought, will and action*. 2025. p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 54.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations, Asia-Pacific Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group. *Good Practices Brochure: Stateless Women and Girls*. 2021. p. 3.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations Population Fund. *Five reasons migration is a feminist issue*. 2018.

¹⁸¹ United Nations Population Fund. *A call to protect women and girls on the move*. 2018.

¹⁸² Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement. *Women and Girls in Internal Displacement*. 2020.

¹⁸³ United Nations Statistics Division et al. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2021*. 2021. p. 16.

¹⁸⁴ United States Association for UNHCR. *UNHCR warns of devastating spike in risk of gender-based violence for women and girls forced to flee*. 2024.



provided in cities, they may already be limited, and displaced women and girls often experience additional delays in receiving aid.¹⁸⁵

International and regional agencies have made steady progress in providing refugee women with protections against GBV in public spaces.¹⁸⁶ While SDG 5 is the primary SDG focused on women's empowerment, SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) discusses the need for safe and responsible migration, the chance for migrants to have the same opportunities as native-born citizens, as well as the reduction of discrimination in legislation and policies at all levels of government.¹⁸⁷ The *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (GCM) (2018) serves as a formative intergovernmental agreement that safeguards migrants and refugees.¹⁸⁸ GCM discusses basic rights for migrants, including the reduction of vulnerabilities, eradication of xenophobia and GBV, and discrimination-free access to basic services offered to the public.¹⁸⁹ The United Nations Network on Migration offers various support methods, such as training on GCM, migration policy reviews, and GCM action plans per Member State.¹⁹⁰ As of 2024, UN Women and the International Organization for Migration entered into an agreement that aims to create migration policies with women's empowerment at the forefront, while also assisting migrant- and refugee-hosting cities in achieving safe integration into society.¹⁹¹

Refugee and displaced women play a vital role in identifying gaps in policies regarding safe public spaces, international dialogue around GBV, and healthcare systems.¹⁹² UNHCR determined that the earlier measures against GBV are established, the greater their impact on the refugee population can be.¹⁹³ For the implementation of these measures, however, a proportionate amount of funding is needed to provide the most essential services, and displaced women and girls are unlikely to seek services necessary for their integration due to fears of retaliation.¹⁹⁴ According to UNHCR, \$10.6 billion is needed to fund the various projects of the agency, including the integration of refugee women and girls into concepts for safe spaces.¹⁹⁵ With assistance from UNHCR and UNICEF, various Member States in Eastern Europe established so-called Blue Dots, which are support hubs at national entry points that offer resources to Ukrainian refugees, such as referrals for GBV victims to find aid.¹⁹⁶ Supporting refugees in finding employment and housing, involving them in decision-making processes, and simplifying access to

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1). 2015. p. 21.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (GCM). 2018.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Network on Migration. *Demand-driven Facility*. N.d.

¹⁹¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *IOM and UN Women scale-up efforts to advance women's rights, protection, and empowerment in migration policies and humanitarian responses*. 2024.

¹⁹² Joireman et al. World Bank Group. *Displaced Women and Girls in Cities*. 2024.

¹⁹³ United States Association for UNHCR. *UNHCR warns of devastating spike in risk of gender-based violence for women and girls forced to flee*. 2024.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Aid cuts leave refugee agency unable to shelter six in 10 fleeing war in Sudan*. 2025.

¹⁹⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *What are the integration challenges of Ukrainian refugee women?*. 2023.



other specific services are common strategies used for refugee integration in multiple cities worldwide.¹⁹⁷ In Jordan, UNHCR and UN Women worked with the national government to provide safe spaces for services such as mental health support, as well as training programs designed to promote the economic empowerment of Syrian refugee women and girls.¹⁹⁸ By providing refugee women with a platform to discuss their needs, public infrastructure gaps regarding forcibly-displaced women are addressed, thereby making safer public spaces easier to achieve for both displaced and native-born persons.¹⁹⁹

Fostering Safe Public Healthcare Spaces for Women and Girls

Women and girls who experience or fear becoming victims of GBV often limit their time in public spaces, which affects their ability to perform everyday activities.²⁰⁰ The stigma of seeking professional assistance after experiencing physical or sexual GBV heightens these fears, causing a decline in physical and mental health among women and girls.²⁰¹ A survey performed by the World Bank in 51 Member States found that only 2% of women seek healthcare services after experiencing GBV, while the majority of women seek help through their own or their partner's family.²⁰² Girls are often unable to seek treatment as victims of GBV and face additional barriers to seeking assistance independently due to their age, further emphasizing the inequalities that women and girls face in the public healthcare system.²⁰³ If GBV survivors are unable to seek treatment, the consequences can include physical and mental symptoms, sexually transmitted diseases and infections, and pregnancy complications.²⁰⁴

UN Women works with international organizations, like the World Health Organization (WHO), to provide women with greater access to public healthcare services.²⁰⁵ SDG 3 (good health and well-being) advocates for universal access to all forms of healthcare, and complements SDG 5 by reinforcing the commitment to eliminate discrimination.²⁰⁶ Making resources and care for GBV survivors accessible, approachable, and reliable can reduce stigma and provide a safe space for survivors to rebuild the confidence to enter public spaces.²⁰⁷ UN Women and WHO partnered to issue RESPECT Women (2020), a framework highlighting the intersection between GBV and accessible and public healthcare services for survivors.²⁰⁸ The "S" in RESPECT represents the provision of public services regarding GBV, which, according to the framework, need to be strengthened in both high- and low-/middle-income Member

¹⁹⁷ Roberts Lamont. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Five approaches for more refugee-friendly cities*. 2022.

¹⁹⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Evaluation of UNHCR's Approach to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention, Risk Mitigation and Response - Annexes*. 2025. p. 45.

¹⁹⁹ Roberts Lamont. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Five approaches for more refugee-friendly cities*. 2022.

²⁰⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls*. 2025. p. 1.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² World Bank Group. *Escaping gender-based violence*. 2022.

²⁰³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*. 1995. pp. 14, 16.

²⁰⁴ World Health Organization. *Violence against women*. 2024.

²⁰⁵ World Health Organization. *Women's health*. N.d.

²⁰⁶ Ibid; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 16.

²⁰⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *RESPECT Women: Strategic Summary*. 2020. pp. 10-11.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 12; World Health Organization. *Violence against women*. 2024.



States.²⁰⁹ UNFPA emphasizes the need for safe public healthcare services, especially in areas experiencing conflict, stressing that \$1.4 billion is needed to provide adequate healthcare for women and children, including those experiencing GBV.²¹⁰

Implementing public healthcare services tailored to GBV survivors can destigmatize seeking help by fostering safe practices, which can empower women to enter public spaces without fear.²¹¹ According to the United Nations Office for Project Services, creating women- and girl-friendly healthcare facilities as well as separate exam rooms and bathrooms based on gender can serve as a starting point for communities in improving their healthcare infrastructure.²¹² Additionally, equitable healthcare infrastructure can be promoted in cities by making facilities accessible via public transportation to ensure that all persons can access medical care if needed.²¹³ RESPECT Women advocates for the modernization of existing healthcare policies surrounding GBV survivors and gender equality, as well as the investment of resources in healthcare programming.²¹⁴ Investments into public healthcare services for GBV survivors can include training healthcare providers in appropriate practices for treating patients through physical or mental health services, teaching providers to look out for recurrent signs of abuse, and providing them with effective patient communication techniques.²¹⁵ In Bangladesh, the International Rescue Committee, an NGO addressing humanitarian crises, collaborated with Columbia University to create sanitation facilities designed for refugee women and girls.²¹⁶ As the challenges faced by women and girls evolve, UN Women aims to further address healthcare infrastructure gaps at all levels and to adapt existing infrastructure to the changing needs, to provide safe public healthcare services, and to improve research and implementation efforts regarding effective healthcare policies, with the goal of eradicating GBV.²¹⁷

Conclusion

Amid the persistently high prevalence of GBV globally, UN Women will continue to empower women and make urban infrastructure safer for all people.²¹⁸ Frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing Declaration emphasize the necessity of safe cities and public spaces for women and girls in achieving

²⁰⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women*. 2019. p. 10.

²¹⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *\$1.4 billion needed for sexual and reproductive health services in crisis-hit countries*. 2024.

²¹¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*. 1995. p. 39.

²¹² United Nations Office for Project Services. *Infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women*. 2020. p. 23.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ World Health Organization. *Violence against women*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *RESPECT Women: Strategic Summary*. 2020. p. 12.

²¹⁵ World Health Organization. *Violence against women*. 2024.

²¹⁶ World Bank Group. *Gender and Forced Displacement in Cities*. 2023. p. 17.

²¹⁷ World Health Organization. *Violence against women*. 2024.

²¹⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Initiative: Third International Compendium of Practices*. 2025. p. 1.



sustainable development worldwide.²¹⁹ If their safety is not adequately promoted, women and girls, as well as marginalized populations such as refugee women, remain at risk of GBV in public spaces.²²⁰ Addressing inequalities faced by refugee women and girls in accessing public infrastructure in cities, as well as improving public healthcare services for women and girls, is essential for the development of safe cities and safe public spaces globally.²²¹ Adequate investment and funding, the creation of more proactive policies for the prevention of GBV, and institutional reforms are among the measures that are necessary to make cities safer for women and girls worldwide.²²² Achieving this goal could increase the global GDP by as much as \$7 trillion.²²³ UN Women continues to ground its work in existing frameworks, while raising global awareness of the systemic changes needed at all levels to achieve gender equality and public spaces free of GBV.²²⁴

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: What other types of infrastructure can be considered public spaces? Are there marginalized groups of women and girls that may be at as high a risk of GBV as refugee and displaced women? Does your Member State have sufficient protection for women and girls in public spaces? If not, what can your Member State integrate into its infrastructure to empower and protect women and girls? Finally, what factors can prevent a Member State from implementing safeguards for women and girls within its urban infrastructure?

²¹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 22; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*. 2014. pp. 3-4.

²²⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Creating safe and empowering public spaces with women and girls*. N.d.

²²¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls*. 2025. p. 2.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and figures: Economic empowerment*. N.d.

²²⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls*. 2025. p. 2.



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