



Interactive dialogue on CSW 70 priority theme

Access to justice, eliminating discriminatory laws, and addressing other structural barriers

10 March 2026, 13:15-14:30 (EST)

ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Title: “Bridging systemic gaps: Advancing justice for all women and girls.”

Overview

The interactive dialogue will examine the challenges outlined in the [Secretary-General’s report](#) across formal and informal justice systems, including discriminatory laws and other structural barriers that restrict women’s and girls’ access to justice. These gaps are most visible in women’s and girls’ lived experiences, which reveal persistent discriminatory laws, norms, and practical obstacles that increase risks of violence and revictimization.

Evidence generated through legal-needs surveys, qualitative studies, and community-based justice work provides insight into the most widespread justice needs, including family law and personal status, gender-based violence, employment and labor, as well as administrative justice. These experiences also reveal the links between justice needs and conflict, post-conflict, and crisis settings, emerging digital justice mechanisms, as well as traditional or customary justice systems, which represent in many contexts the primary avenue through which women and girls seek remedies.

Reinforcing justice along these critical gaps requires political will, institutional change, and support for autonomous broad-based feminist movements and civil society, including for climate justice, harnessing technology and evidence-based approaches for progress.

Justice reforms should be guided by the realities and priorities identified by women and girls themselves, ensuring that legal systems are responsive, inclusive, and capable of delivering equitable outcomes. This also requires transforming gender-biased norms and patriarchal masculinities within justice institutions to eliminate discriminatory attitudes, credibility biases, and systemic barriers – from legal education to courtroom practice.

These efforts must respond to a context in which almost one in four countries report that backlash against gender equality is hampering implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.¹ This makes the CSW 70 priority theme particularly timely and essential.

Objectives

- **Identify and analyze systemic barriers to women’s and girls’ access to justice, drawing upon women’s and girls’ lived experiences**, including discriminatory legal frameworks, under-resourced institutions, and harmful social norms, with a view to understanding persistent gaps.
- **Showcase practical, evidence-based and survivor-centred solutions to strengthen justice sector responses**, particularly in the area of family law, gender-based violence,² employment and labour law, among others, and advance inclusive, transformative access to justice across the life cycle.³
- **Mobilize all stakeholders, including Member States, UN entities, feminist movements and civil society actors, youth leadership and other partners to prioritize, fund, and collaborate on efforts that advance access to justice** and that align with international commitments, emphasizing investment in and support to reforms that are evidence-based, grounded in the lived experience of women and girls, leveraging UN Women as a global knowledge hub and convenor on the issue of access to justice.

Format and participation (75 minutes)

The event combines experience-driven **panel interventions** with a **moderated synthesis** aimed at identifying actionable, survivor-centred strategies to strengthen women’s and girls’ access to justice.

¹ UN Women, [Women’s Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing](#) (2025).

² The report of the Secretary General notes shortcomings in current justice sector responses to gender-based violence, e.g., low reporting rates of such violence and reluctance of women, girls, and persons of diverse SOGIESC to report cases; lack of survivor-centred and trauma-informed responses by police, coupled with institutional bias; high levels of perpetrator impunity. It also identifies solutions, including the introduction of contextually specialized justice mechanisms; increased funding for the justice sector; capacity-strengthening for actors across the justice continuum; and strengthening the collection of gender-based violence data in this sector.

³ At the two extreme points of that life cycle, girls and older women face particular and pernicious barriers in realizing their rights through justice systems.

Proposed agenda

13:15-13:30	Opening welcome and framing (15 min)
13:30-14:10	Lightning interventions from panelists (35 min)
	Synthesis (5 min)
14:10-14:25	Statements from the floor (15 min)
14:25-14:30	Closing remarks (5 min)