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HIGH-LEVEL PANEL CSW69

Stepping Up The Pace To End FGM: Proven Solutions, Strategic Alliances, And Empowered Movements

13 March 2025 | 1:15 PM to 2:30 PM (EST) | Conference Room 2, UN Headquarters, New York, USA

CONCEPT NOTE

The Government of Italy - in collaboration with the Governments of Burkina Faso, Canada, Djibouti, Sweden, the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and The Girl Generation: Africa Led Movement - has the honour of hosting a high-level panel discussion on the margins of the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The focus of the sixty-ninth session will be the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. This theme underscores the need to assess progress in eliminating female genital mutilation, identify existing gaps, and reaffirm commitments to address them.

BACKGROUND

Significant strides have been made globally in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which focuses on gender equality and empowering women and girls. Within this goal, Target 5.3 aims to eliminate harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM). Notably, the prevalence of FGM has declined over the past three decades, resulting in one in three girls (aged 15-19) undergoing FGM.¹ In total, 400 million people – two-thirds of the population – in countries with population data on FGM, want the practice to end.² However, despite this progress, an estimated 27 million additional girls are at risk of undergoing FGM by 2030 unless urgent action is taken and accelerated.³ Further, there are at least 230 million survivors—girls and women— who need care and support.⁴ While there has been a gradual decline in FGM prevalence in some countries and the pace of progress is picking up, there is much work to be done.

The rate of decline would need to be 27 times faster to meet the target of eliminating FGM by 2030.⁵ There is a need to do business “unusual” that is evidence-based to step up the pace.

The strong alliances and commitments among governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community members, and activists have been instrumental and must continue and expanded on. This year's high-level FGM side event, on the margins of the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), highlights the urgent need to take stock and step up the pace on Beijing 30+ action. This event will present evidence-based solutions on ‘what works’ to end FGM. Some of the key areas where the pace needs to be scaled up to pave the way for ending this harmful practice include engaging communities to transform

¹ Putting survivors at the forefront of the global movement to end female genital mutilation, Joint Statement, UNICEF, 05 February 2024, available at <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/putting-survivors-forefront-global-movement-end-female-genital-mutilation>

² Female Genital Mutilation: A global concern, UNICEF, 7 March 2024, available at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-a-global-concern-2024/>

³ UNFPA Technical Brief, 2023, available at <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA%20Technical%20Brief%20May%202023-rev.pdf>

⁴ Female Genital Mutilation: A global concern, UNICEF, 7 March 2024, available at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-a-global-concern-2024/>

⁵ Ibid.

social and gender norms, providing care and support to girls at risk as well as survivors, bolstering laws and policies, and focusing on girls' education.

Strengthening these partnerships and enabling social movements help not only accelerate progress but also counter the increasing backlash on girls' and women's rights globally. These pushbacks threaten the progress achieved over the past decades and require a unified, multi-stakeholder response to counter harmful narratives, preserve gains, and push forward. Collaborative efforts across governments, civil society, and grassroots organizations are essential to strengthen advocacy, mobilize resources, and ensure that women and girls remain at the forefront of the global agenda. Now is the time to step up on commitments to protect and uphold the rights of women and girls, ensuring a world free from FGM and other harmful practices.

This high-level side event, on the margins of the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), will emphasize three key areas of action to step up the pace of progress by:

1. Presenting Evidence-based Solutions

Highlighting proven strategies and actionable insights on 'what works' to end FGM. The discussion will advocate for scaling up effective interventions through targeted investments and enhanced implementation.

2. Strengthening Alliances

Convening leaders, policymakers, private-sector representatives, civil society organizations, and high-net-worth individuals to foster cross-sectoral collaboration and inspire transformative and accelerated actions under high-level political guidance.

3. Mobilizing Movements and Reaffirming Commitments

Empowering movements and reaffirming commitments from all relevant stakeholders to sustain momentum and ensure accountability in eliminating FGM.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

This high-level event aims to provide a platform for key stakeholders engaged in eliminating harmful practices to take stock of what has been achieved, assess the progress made, and determine where efforts and investments should be focused.

The panel will:

- Review progress by highlighting achievements and challenges in eliminating FGM over the past 30 years.
- Present evidence of what works based on programmatic evidence and analysis; "Update on What Works to End FGM" and "Practical Guide for Frontliners working in Movements against FGM"
- Reaffirm and advance new commitments by fostering renewed political will, and partnerships - stepping up the pace and resources to accelerate efforts toward the elimination of FGM.
- Enable social movements and elevate the voices of survivors, grassroots organizations, and change-makers driving progress in communities and countries most affected.

FORMAT AND PARTICIPATION

The high-level panel will have representation from member states, governments, the private sector, United Nations agencies, and civil society organizations. The event will be held in person and broadcast through UN Web TV. Interpretation will be available in French and Italian.

SPEAKERS

- Italy
- Burkina Faso
- Djibouti
- Deputy Executive Director - Programme, UNFPA
- Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
- Survivor of FGM
- Women-led organization - Kakenya's Dream
- Uganda
- Canada
- Sweden
- The Girl Generation: Support to the Africa-led Movement to End FGM
- Foundation - Zonta International

POTENTIAL GUESTS

- **Member States representing donors contributing to the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM:** Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union
- **Member States representing focus countries for the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM:** Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, and Yemen
- **Other Member States:** Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, Maldives, Malaysia, Columbia and India
- **Civil Society Organizations and other activists including survivors**
- **Private sector/Foundation**