



**High-Level Side Event at the 70th Session
of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70):**

**Advancing Women's Access to Justice: Building justice systems that deliver for all including in
fragile contexts**

**Wednesday 11 March 2026 | 10:00-11:15am | UNHQ Conference Room 8 (CR-8) | New York, NY
UNDP with UN Women, Brazil (tbc: the Netherlands, DRC)**

Justice is the foundation of development and resilient societies. Yet more than [five billion](#) people around the world today lack meaningful access to justice. For women and girls, especially in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, the barriers are higher and consequences more severe: over 60% of women in conflict and fragile countries report unmet legal needs. In situations of armed conflict and its aftermath, women and girls face compounded barriers, including gender-based violence, displacement, breakdown of institutions, and exclusion from peace processes and transitional justice mechanisms. In such contexts, formal justice systems often appear politicized, discriminatory, or detached from women's realities. Discriminatory laws, high costs, distrust and corruption often push women toward informal mechanisms that may not guarantee fairness or protection. When justice systems fail, trust erodes, inequalities deepen, and grievances can fuel cycles of exclusion and instability.

UNDP and its partners work across 170 countries to advance people-centred justice, strengthening justice systems, expanding legal aid and survivor-centred pathways, and promoting women's leadership. While promising models are emerging, including community-based mechanisms, mobile courts and digital justice platforms, gender justice requires system-wide reforms: sustained investment in formal justice institutions, better coordination with informal systems, and people-centred approaches that prioritize women and girls.

Country experiences demonstrate that gender responsive justice reforms can rebuild public trust and strengthen institutional legitimacy. The UNDP-UN Women [Gender Justice Platform](#) supports justice and security reforms in over 40 countries to close the gender justice gap and helping turn justice into a driver of development and peace. This includes mentoring prosecutors and police, to combat impunity; supporting survivor-centred justice responses; and promoting women's judicial leadership and institutional reform in justice institutions. The UNDP [Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions](#) is further equipping public officials including in judiciaries in over 100 countries to deliver policy and legislative reform and bolster accountability to citizens..

Today, amid intersecting crises, uncertainty and deepening inequality, there is an urgent need to reimagine justice systems so they respond to the realities of a rapidly changing world. Aligned with the priority theme of CSW70 – access to justice for all women and girls – this high-level event convenes decision makers and country leaders to focus on what it takes to move from commitment to delivery.

Overarching objective

The event will spotlight country experiences, civil society innovations, and emerging initiatives on legislation and legal reform to identify a small set of actionable choices that can be taken forward now – strengthening a people-centred gender responsive and ensuring reforms are financed, monitored and accountable. It will also explore how governments, civil society and international partners can work together to co-create and sustain reforms, including in fragile and crisis-affected contexts.

Proposed Agenda

Opening “Davos-style” Discussion (25min)

- **Alexander De Croo**, UNDP Administrator
- **Sima Sami Bahous**, UN Women Executive Director
- **Marcia Lopez**, Minister of Women, Brazil

Panel Discussion (35minutes)

- **Taras Kachka, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Ukraine** - *Delivering gender-responsive justice through institutional reform and coordination in a crisis context.*
- **Permanent Representative / Deputy Permanent Representative, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** – *Advancing women’s access to justice in conflict-affected settings, with a focus on accountability for conflict-related sexual violence, justice sector reform, and strengthening coordination between national institutions and community-based mechanisms.*
- **Hend Kabawat, Minister, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Syria**- *Advancing women’s access to justice with a focus on survivor-centred accountability, institutional reform, and gender-responsive approaches in -conflict affected settings.*
- **Amrita Kapur, Secretary-General, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)**- *Feminist peacebuilding pathways to justice in fragile and conflict settings — survivor-centred accountability, women-led legal aid and community mechanisms, and how to finance and protect women’s rights organizations to sustain reforms.*

Interventions from the floor (10 minutes)

Open discussion with Member States, UN, civil society including women’s groups, academia and others.

Closing Remarks – the Way Forward (5 minutes)

- **Michelle Muschett, UNDP Assistant Secretary-General and Director, Regional Bureau Netherlands (tbc)**

Moderated by Raquel Lagunas, Head of Gender Equality, UNDP