



#SheSurfsFreedom

CSW67

Reaction Statement and Proposed language for CSW67 Draft Agreed Conclusions

The World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) welcomes the CSW 67 Draft Agreed Conclusions. As the only global movement geared entirely to every girl and any girl, with 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 152 countries, we express our support for much of the language included so far. Innovation and technological advancements, along with digital education opportunities, represent exciting opportunities for the empowerment of women and girls across the globe. However, the language of the final outcome document must go further to address systemic gender inequality that upholds the exclusion of women and girls from the digital environment. Furthermore, there are a number of areas where the language must be strengthened to address urgent global issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic shocks, conflict situations, climate change and natural disasters, all of which are disproportionately affecting women and girls.

We urge member states to protect and include the language proposed below to ensure girls and women are at the forefront and reap the benefits of innovation and technological change and technological advancements.

Responding to urgent global pressures disproportionately affecting women and girls

Women and girls are often at the forefront of urgent global pressures, yet they are commonly left behind, due to lack of support, skillset, education and economic position. When conflicts occur or when natural disasters happen, they are often left behind, displaced or abused,

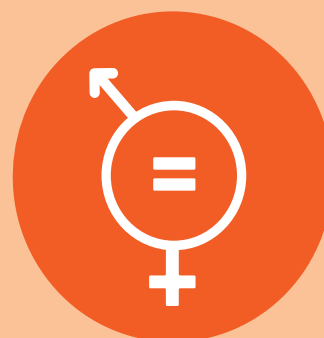


leading them to face further barriers including being pushed further beyond the poverty line and a reduction in their human rights. Despite these disproportionate impacts, their needs are also commonly forgotten in responses to global pressures. Therefore, collaborative work that includes women in decision-making needs to be done to avoid the disproportionality of the effects of armed and non-armed conflicts, climate change, and COVID-19. This is why we believe recognition and emphasis on Paragraph 5 and 22 be supported.

The following text should also be **ADDED** to Paragraph 22: It recognizes the increased levels of gender-based violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, including torture, sexual violence, child, early and forced marriage and trafficking. It recommends urgent action to address obstacles in accessing education, healthcare, including sexual and reproductive care, and other essential services in these situations. **(Based on CSW65 (para 28), CSW63 (para 39), CSW62 (para 34).)**

Achieving gender equality

We commend the emphasis placed throughout the document on achieving gender equality. Gender inequality is the root cause and consequence of gender-based violence and creates harmful gender roles, norms and expectations for women and girls across all areas and stages of their lives. Until gender inequality is fully addressed and equality is achieved, gender-based violence, unequal power relations and gender discrimination will continue to exist. It is, for this reason, we believe the language in paragraphs 4,5 and 6 should be strengthened and protected.



Proposed language:

4.

It [**DELETE** “acknowledges”] [**ADD emphasizes**] that achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women’s full, equal effective and meaningful participation and decision-making in the context of innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age is essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. It [**DELETE recognizes**][**ADD affirms**] that women and girls play a vital role as agents of change for sustainable development. **(Based on CSW66 (para 4), CSW65 (para 9), CSW63 (para 10), CSW62 (para 8), CSW61 (para 6).)**

5.

The Commission [~~acknowledges~~][**ADD emphasizes**] the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives in their respective regions and countries, and their follow-up mechanisms, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls including in the context of innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age. (Based on CSW66 (para 5), CSW65 (para 10), CSW63 (para 7), CSW62 (para 7), CSW61 (para 8), CSW60 (para 6).)



It is also important to recognize the global context in which this year's CSW is taking place. That is, particular pressures from COVID-19, economic shocks, natural disasters and armed conflicts risk impeding our progress to achieving gender equality or, in some cases, reversing it. That is why we welcome the inclusion of paragraph (rr) and wish to see this paragraph protected to ensure states recognize the need to include the voices of **ALL** women and girls in responses to conflict situations and humanitarian emergencies which too often disproportionately affect them.

Preventing and eradicating all forms of gender-based violence both online and offline



WAGGGS believes in creating safe, accessible place for everyone online and offline, it condemns all forms of violence against girls and young women. As an organization supporting young women and girls and as young women ourselves we strongly support paragraphs 18, 19, 20 & 21 which condemn all forms of violence and harassment against women and girls, detailing the multidimensional nature of this abuse. The language used in these paragraphs should be protected and strengthened to include recognition that there is a lack of investment in developing participation, decision making and raising awareness of digital skills of girls and women, as well as how this inequality can further lead to gender-based violence.

**Proposed
language:**

18.

The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, which are rooted in historical and structural inequalities and unequal power relations **[DELETE between men and women]**. It reiterates that violence **[ADD and harassment]** against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations, online and offline, in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, as well as child and forced labor, trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation and abuse are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level, **[ADD online gender-based violence including doxxing, cyber-stalking, image-based abuse, safety threats and trolling]**.

[ADD It recognizes that this is a result of the lack of investment in developing the digital skills of girls and women and a lack of awareness of the rights of women and girls online.] (Based on CSW66 (para 39), CSW65 (para 23), CSW63 (para 13), CSW62 (para 25), CSW61 (para 14), CSW60 (para 15).)

20.

The Commission **[DELETE recognizes][ADD condemns]** the magnitude of technology-facilitated online gender-based violence, **[5]** and the significant **[ADD and disproportionate]** physical, sexual, psychological, social, political or economic harm it causes to women and girls, infringing on their rights and freedoms, in particular for those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and those in public life. **[It is also concerned by the increase in targeted online violence when women and girls use their online platform to challenge misogyny and gender inequality.]** It also **[DELETE recognizes] [ADD reiterates]** the need to improve coherence of policy actions and amend legal frameworks, around principles focusing on human-rights and survivor-informed approaches, transparency, accountability and proportionality **[ADD to respond to all forms of online gender-based violence]** (Based on E/CN.6/2023/3, paras 35-36, 39-42).

21.

[ADD The Commission is also concerned that this exclusion from participation and decision-making further compounds gender inequality which is the cause and consequence of gender-based violence.]

Promoting innovation and technological change and digital education for gender equality

The integration of a gender perspective in innovation and technological change will be essential for reaching gender equality. It is not only women and girls who will benefit from inclusive technology and digital education but also their families, communities and economies. WAGGGS joins the commission in (Para 12, 13, 17, 23, 24) expressing concern that current innovation ecosystems do not achieve gender equality because it is instead characterized by an uneven distribution of power and financial resources, as well as creating further structural and systematic barriers. In the context of the increasing online radicalization of men and boys by misogynistic influencers and platforms, it is also vitally necessary to them how to use this technology and online spaces in a respectable, safe and responsible manner as allies and champions for gender equality.

To address the systemic barriers WAGGGS would like to see the inclusion of the following wording added to increase the accessibility for Women and girls to the digital and technological space:

Proposed language:

(e)

Implement **[ADD affordable and accessible]** programs to increase the digital literacy and skills of women and girls, focusing on their needs and building confidence and trust **[ADD and safety]** for meaningful use, including support for registering for identification papers, community engagement to challenge stereotypes, **[which also targets boys and men and their behavior in online spaces]**, public awareness campaigns and the development of online content for women and girls with limited literacy or accessibility, including older women, women with disabilities or women living in remote areas; (E/CN.6/2023/3, para 45(c)).



(f)

Promote whole-of-society and multi-stakeholder approaches **[ADD which are coproduced with women and girls, including those who face multiple discriminations]**, to foster collaborations across different societal sectors and combine knowledge, skills and resources towards concrete actions to bridge the gender digital divide; (E/CN.6/2023/3, para 45(d)).

(i)

[DELETE Incentivize] [ADD Provide] adequate funding and other incentives for financial institutions and venture capital firms to support women-owned enterprises in entering the digital economy, including through minimum quotas and tying investments to gender-transformative innovation; (E/CN.6/2023/3, para 45(g)).

26.

The Commission **[DELETE recognizes] [ADD is concerned]** that negative social norms and gender stereotypes are causing persistent **[ADD occupational segregation leading to][DELETE and]** gender gaps in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, preventing women's equal participation in the technology workforce, especially as content creators and entrepreneurs, and keeping them from attaining and retaining jobs in those fields. **[ADD It recognizes that this occupational segregation limits women's economic opportunities and enables a culture in male-dominated industries which tolerates sexism and sexual harassment against women in the workplace which compounds their exclusion from these industries.]** It notes that the outcomes of the Transforming Education Summit highlighted how digital literacy is negatively impacted by the lack of investments in ICT infrastructure and equipment, school connectivity, lack of public digital learning content and teachers' capacity. It emphasizes the need to leverage digital technologies to improve and supplement teaching, rather than replace in-person education, for women and girls. (Based on E/CN.6/2023/3, paras 14-17).

WAGGGS supports the implementation of a comprehensive definition of technology-facilitated violence which covers incidents such as online harassment, cyber-bullying, image-based abuse, doxxing and safety threats, in order to develop, amend and expand legislation to protect women and girls online. It is equally important that when incidents do occur those affected by any form of online gender-based violence receive timely person-centered support that is easily accessible which is why we ask member states to protect paragraph (oo). As well as to ensure other decision makers such as the private sector or NGOs can prioritize the prevention and elimination of online gender-based violence and promote innovation and technological change and digital education.

Proposed language:

(mm)

Adopt a comprehensive definition of technology-facilitated violence against women [ADD shaped by the experiences of women and girls in all their diversity online], as well as international methodological guidance, to understand and track patterns of harm and rights violations to guide evidence-based policymaking and programming; (E/CN.6/2023/3, para 45(z)).

(nn)

Develop, amend and expand legislation and policies and strengthen their implementation [ADD with adequate resources] to prevent and eliminate acts of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, with the meaningful participation of survivors of violence, young women and women's organisations, including survivor [DELETE informed][ADD -centered] [ADD and trauma-informed] responses and fast-track processes to facilitate the swift removal of illegal, harmful or non-consensual content; (E/CN.6/2023/3, para 45(aa)).

Finally, we welcome the language in the document highlighting that gender inequality is the root cause of all forms of gender-based violence, including offline and online forms. Consequently, we ask member states to protect language in paragraphs 37 (ll), 37 (qq) and 38 and commit to stopping this violence once and for all.