

**Joint EESC-AU ECOSOCC Declaration
for the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) / Beijing+30**

On the occasion of the 69th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC) reaffirm their unwavering commitment to the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As we mark 30 years since its adoption, we recognize both the progress achieved and the persistent barriers that continue to impede full gender equality and women's empowerment globally.

We welcome the sustained efforts of the European Union and the African Union, as well as globally, in promoting gender equality through comprehensive policy frameworks, including the EU Gender Equality Strategy and the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and the ILO decent work Agenda. We acknowledge the structural, economic, cultural and socio-political challenges that continue to disproportionately impact women and girls and emphasise the urgent need for accelerated, transformative action. We reaffirm the key role of social dialogue in this context.

While both continents must advance gender equality, Africa faces even more significant challenges that need intensified efforts. Systemic issues such as economic disparity, limited educational access, and deeply rooted patriarchal norms require urgent and comprehensive action.

Advancing gender parity in governance and decision-making

Women remain underrepresented in political and economic decision-making structures across both Europe and Africa.

We call upon governments, political parties, and institutions to adopt gender-responsive electoral and appointment mechanisms, such as gender quotas, zipped lists, and co-chairing arrangements.

Women's leadership is crucial to ensuring inclusive, equitable, and democratic governance.

Ending violence against women and girls

Gender-based violence (GBV), including femicide, domestic violence, and harassment, continues to be a global crisis and remains endemic in Africa.

We urge all nations to ratify and fully implement global and regional relevant instruments such as the ILO Convention 190, the Istanbul Convention, and the newly adopted AU Convention on

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU CEVAWG). National action plans to combat GBV must be fully funded, survivor-centered, and developed in consultation with social partners and civil society organisations. Legal and social protection mechanisms must be strengthened to provide access to justice and support services for all women, particularly those in vulnerable communities.

In addition, addressing emerging forms of GBV, such as online harassment and sexual digital forgery, is crucial.

Efforts must also be made to combat economic violence and strengthen protections for women's sexual and reproductive rights.

Bridging the digital gender divide

In an increasingly digital world, the gender gap in digital literacy, STEM participation, and technology leadership remains stark.

We call for increased investment in digital skills training for women and girls, affordable internet access, and the development of a human-centered Artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic tools that actively mitigate gender bias.

Women's voices must shape the future of digital innovation.

Promoting women's economic empowerment and a just green transition

Gender equality is a fundamental driver of sustainable development.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss, exacerbating existing inequalities, particularly in rural and deprived areas.

Economic disparities, including the persistent gender pay gap and limited access to financial resources, undermine the full participation of women in the workforce.

We advocate for gender-responsive budgeting, equal pay policies, decent jobs and targeted support for women-led enterprises. The green transition must be inclusive, ensuring that women, particularly those in rural areas, have equal access to sustainable development policies and benefit equitably from inclusive green jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Recognising and valuing unpaid care work

Women continue to bear the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, which limits their economic independence and career advancement.

We call on governments to implement comprehensive care policies that support work-life balance, promote good working conditions in the care sector and recognise unpaid care work as a key economic contributor.

Addressing systemic inequalities in the care economy is vital for advancing gender equality.

Ensuring women's inclusion in peace and security efforts

The inclusion of women in peace negotiations, conflict prevention, and security policy remains essential for sustainable peacebuilding.

We call for the full implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, ensuring that women are not only protected in conflict zones but also recognised as active agents of change in building stable and resilient societies.

Strengthening accountability and data-driven policy making

We emphasise the need for comprehensive gender-disaggregated data collection to inform evidence-based policy-making.

We call on governments and international institutions to integrate gender perspectives into all levels of policy design, implementation, and monitoring, ensuring that commitments translate into tangible outcomes.

Reaffirming civil society's role in advancing gender equality

Social partners and civil society organisations (CSOs), including women's rights groups and youth-led initiatives, play a critical role in advocating for, driving gender equality and holding institutions accountable.

We call for increased funding and legal protections to safeguard civic space and ensure participation of CSOs in decision-making processes.

We call for stronger engagement of CSOs in monitoring gender strategies, particularly through independent data collection and reporting mechanisms, to ensure effective policy implementation.

Looking forward: a renewed commitment to action

As we commemorate Beijing+30, we urge all stakeholders—governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector—to accelerate efforts towards achieving gender

equality. Political will, cross-sectoral collaboration, and sustained investment in women's empowerment are essential for building a just and equitable world.

It is imperative to challenge patriarchal norms, strengthen gender-responsive governance, and ensure sufficient resources for transformative action. While policy frameworks exist, effective implementation remains a challenge that must be addressed with urgency.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires comprehensive, integrated approaches that mainstream gender equality across all policies.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC) remain steadfast in their commitment to ensuring gender equality remains a global priority.