

WFWP International: How the Coronavirus Impacted CSW64

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Through the recommendation of Secretary-General António Guterres, it was decided that the Sixty-Fourth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) convene on 9 March 2020, but under a more procedural nature. The Commission made an important decision to operate under unprecedented circumstances due to the outbreak of COVID-19, which currently impacts 162 countries around the globe. For the health and overall safety of the global community, it was agreed that there would be no general discussion during the Session, and that all 500 side events would be cancelled. It is with great appreciation that the Secretary-General, as well as the CSW64 Chair, thank the delegates for their flexibility and cooperation during these challenging times.

During the opening remarks at the UN General Assembly, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women, emphasized the extraordinary nature of CSW64. She used her speech to address how it was always going to be a different year for CSW, placing emphasis on the anniversary of crucial resolutions that were adopted 25 years ago in Beijing. She stated, "This is a special year for gender equality. It has been 25 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action," and continued by recognizing, "The foresight and enlightenment of the member states who adopted such a comprehensive agenda for gender equality." The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in its relation to the human rights of women and girls, is considered to be the most imperative adaptation of our time.

Secretary-General António Guterres, continuing to further delineate the importance of this crucial year for gender equality, stated, "This Commission is an opportunity to further galvanize the momentum for gender equality and women's rights that has been growing around the world." He continued by underlining, "Women's rights are human rights, and gender equality is central to all the sustainable development goals." Every year, the Commission essentially launches a discussion in our global community, which further illuminates the need for concrete action in regards to gender equality.

Women Federation for World Peace, International (WFWPI) planned a Parallel Event to be held on 11 March 2020, which aimed to focus on the current climate around the gender equality movement and the beneficial avenues in achieving gender equality. Unfortunately, in light of the huge scale back of CSW64 due to COVID-19, the Parallel Event was also cancelled under the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General. WFWPI aimed to use this event to further highlight what happens when both women and men unite and commit to work together in resolving global problems under the main essential goal of building world peace.

A statement from the Youth Representative at the Global Network of Women Peace Builders from Afghanistan during the opening of CSW64 further addressed this same goal of world peace in her speech by highlighting, "It is important to remember that to end and prevent our conflict, we must address gender impact. Afghan women, young women and girls, must meaningfully participate in the peace process and political decision making at all levels in order to ensure sustainable and inclusive peace and development." WFWPI's Parallel event for CSW 64 looked to illuminate this very idea through focusing on the theme, "Gender Equality: A Forward Looking, hopeful Perspective." Through the proper inclusion of both men and women on all peacebuilding levels, the ideas set forth in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action can continue to be fulfilled within our global community.