



# WFWPI @ CSW69

10-21 MARCH 2025  
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

Theme:

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



Photo Credit: UN Web TV



**WOMEN'S FEDERATION  
FOR WORLD PEACE INTERNATIONAL**

NGO in General Consultative Status  
with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

**OFFICE FOR UN RELATIONS**

## HIGHLIGHTS

- WFWPI Intervention at "Turning Pledges into Progress" Side Event
- WFWPI Advocacy Training
- WFWP Parallel Events
- Meet & Greet: Mrs. Smriti Irani &
- WFWPI Leaders
- NGO CSW Artisan Fair
- WFWP Leader's NYC Outing





**Ms. Carolyn Handschin**  
**Director**  
**WFWPI Offices for UN Relations**



**Ms. Merly Barlaan**  
**Director**  
**WFWPI Office for UN Relations-New York**

Dear Partners, Colleagues and Friends,

It is with gratitude and pride that we reflect on the success of the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This year's session, marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, reaffirmed the global commitment to advancing women's rights and addressing barriers to achieving a world of sustainable peace, even amidst the challenges of escalating conflicts, climate change, and economic disparity. The adoption of the Political Declaration was a hopeful reminder that progress is possible when we stand together with courage and determination.

WFWPI opened Women's Month with a beautiful concert "Women Defying Gravity" on March 1, 2025, at Kalayaan Hall of the Philippine Center in New York City. The event was co-hosted by WICCAFE, and Women and Media featuring the mesmerizing performances of balladeer Thomas John Castanares and classical pianist Hyowon Barlaan. The concert paid tribute to the strength and resilience of women represented by the four women leaders who were honored as WFWPI's Global Women Peace Ambassadors. Over 90 guests joined to celebrate the heart-touching power of art and music to inspire positive change.

The WFWPI Advocacy Training from March 8-9 at the New Yorker Hotel was another milestone. With 60 CSW69 delegates from 17 countries, the training empowered women with the knowledge and tools to align local initiatives with the SDG's and the Beijing Platform for Action's 12 Critical Areas of Concern. The mock UN session gave delegates the chance to sharpen their advocacy skills and become more impactful in their local communities.

A highlight was our collaboration with the Philippine Mission to the UN for the Side Event on Women Peace and Security titled, "Turning Promises into Progress: Operationalizing the Pasay Declaration" on March 17. We are grateful to the Philippine government and the governments of El Salvador, Namibia and Slovenia for opening doors for dialogue and cooperation where women's role in peacebuilding is prioritized. WFWPI delivered an intervention introducing WFWPI's advocacy on "peace through forgiveness and healing" as fundamental steps towards a peaceful future. The importance of grassroots initiatives such as the Bridge of Peace project and the Young Global Women Peace Ambassadors Leadership Program was emphasized as best practices in achieving sustainable peace.

Other significant sessions included Parallel Events organized by WFWP Korea, Japan, and Taiwan chapters as well as WFWPI UN Office in Geneva - on education, technology, peace at the Korean DMZ, a hopeful meeting with Smt. Smriti Irani, Chair of Global Alliance for Gender Equality and Equity, and India's former Cabinet Minister to explore future partnerships; and a heartwarming fundraiser by WFWP Japan for Rwanda's Hope Technical Institute. This year WFWPI provided experiences, a platform and skills for our advocates to be more productive and impactful contributors to local and national governments.

At CSW69, women around the world celebrated important milestones as we take another big leap towards a new era where women and girls take their hard-earned share place in building a sustainable world of peace - in partnership with men.

With deepest gratitude for your inspiring partnership and support,

*Carolyn Handschin*  
Director, WFWPI Offices for UN Relations

*Merly Barlaan*  
Director, WFWPI Office for UN Relations-New York

## CSW69 SIDE EVENT TURNING PLEDGES INTO PROGRESS: FORGING COLLABORATION AND CONVERGENCE FOR ADVANCING WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY”

By Rachel Beth Tamayo, WFWPI UN Representative

WFWPI supported the Philippine Mission to the United Nations for a side event on March 17, 2025, on the topic of “Turning Promises into Progress with the theme of Forging Collaboration and Convergence for Advancing Women, Peace and Security” held at Conference Room 9, UN HQ. Mrs. Merly Barlaan, Vice President for Administration and Director of WFWPI UN Relations New York, delivered an intervention highlighting the important role of women in facilitating a peaceful future through forgiveness and healing. This event was organized by the Republic of the Philippines, in partnership with the governments of Namibia, El Salvador, and Slovenia.

The side event aimed to identify key strategic recommendations for the implementation of the Pasay Declaration; explore a shared vision among its actionable steps to accelerate their implementation; and engage relevant stakeholders during the discussions on resource mobilization, policy integration, and capacity-building efforts that will ensure the recommendations' alignment with national and regional WPS priorities.



L-R: Hon. Susana Guadalupe H. Marcaida, Executive Director for Peace Sustainability, H.E. Ermelita V. Valdeavilla, Chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Women, Mrs. Merly Barlaan, WFWPI Vice President of Administration.



Photo Credit: UN Web TV

Ms. Merly Barlaan emphasized the importance of investment in capacity - building and the vital role of women facilitating reconciliation at the grassroots level. She highlighted the Bridge of Peace project, which fosters forgiveness and trust-building in post-conflict zones, and the Young Global Women Peace Ambassadors Leadership Training Program, which empowers young women with skills in mediation and peace advocacy.

Watch the full discussion, you can find it [here](#) at UN Webtv.



# WOMEN DEFYING GRAVITY CONCERT

By: Marivir Montebon, WFWPI UN Representative



The Women's Federation for World Peace International opened the celebration of March, Women's History Month, with beautiful music. Young performers balladeer, Thomas John Castanares and classical pianist, Hyowon Barlaan debuted as duo performers for "Women Defying Gravity," a kick-off concert to celebrate Women's History Month in New York City. The two wowed the audience at the Kalayaan Hall (Freedom Hall) of the Philippine Center on 5th Avenue on March 1, 2025.



The concert was timed to open the 69th Session of the Committee on the Status of Women at the UN which celebrates the 30th year of the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action for women's empowerment. Women Defying Gravity is dedicated to women all over the world defying poverty, stereotypes, and all sorts of inequities.

Castanares and Barlaan serenaded over 90 guests, with classical music and popular songs, as a tribute to the leadership and sacrifices of women leaders in the community. The concert, directed by Marivir Montebon, was co-sponsored by the Women's Immigration and Communications Cafe and Women & Media. Its proceeds were for the Global Women Peace Ambassadors Program (GWPA) and the continuity of WICCAFE's #narrativesoftruth podcast.

# WFWPI ADVOCACY TRAINING

By Priscilla Garces, WFWPI UN Representative



The Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) conducted a two-day Advocacy Training from March 8-9 at the New Yorker Hotel in New York City on the theme: **"Equipping women and girls for peacebuilding and partnership through education, advocacy, and empowerment: Localizing the Beijing Platform for Action and establishing lines of reporting to the United Nations and our governments."** The training aimed to equip WFWPI leaders and advocates with the necessary knowledge and skills to create impactful partnerships for social and institutional change. The 60 participants gathered from 17 countries across the continents of North America, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Caribbean.

In the two-day training, participants delved deep into the tools of advocacy, learning about the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its importance in the commitments of governments to its citizens and to the United Nations today.

By the end of this engaging training, the participants gained the skills to: align their local projects with the Beijing Platform for Action; identify local good practice models in the 12 Critical Areas of Concern; discover how civil society and government partnership works; prepare a Statement and formal advocacy document (Voluntary Local Review (for SDGs), Shadow Report to be used for their advocacy work with their respective governments and the United Nations; and gain understanding of the intergovernmental CSW Forum. The highlight was when the delegates had the opportunity to participate in a mock debate of the 69th Commission on the Status of Women, representing each nation and practiced advocating for local and national priorities and concerns, contributing to the annual CSW outcome document, the "Agreed Conclusions."



## ADVOCACY TRAINING TRAINERS





















## GLOBAL WOMEN PEACE AMBASSADORS AWARDEES



Smt. Smriti Irani



Dr. Maria Santiago- Valentin

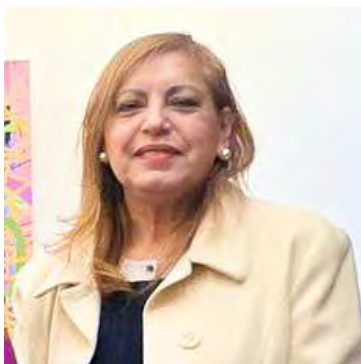
Ms. Menchu de Luna Sanchez

Ms. Sandra Banerjee

Dr. Dely Go



Ms. Sue Phillips



Ms. Maria Garces



Ms. Julisette Hatulan



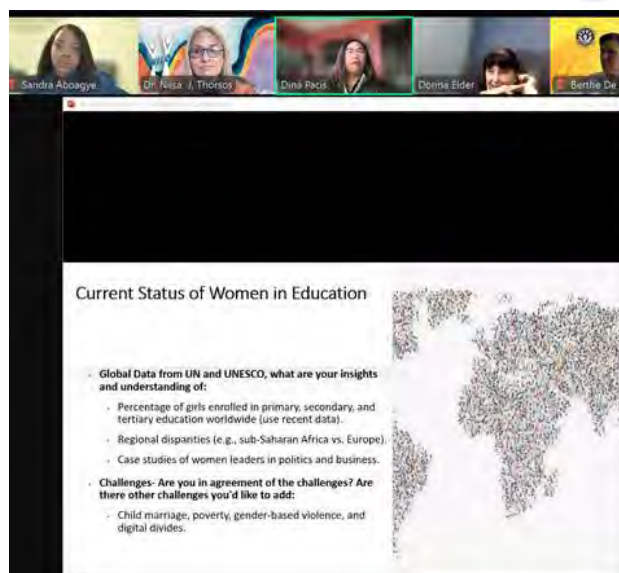
Ms. Kathleen Cronin



### 3/10 EDUCATING WOMEN: UNLOCKING GLOBAL POTENTIAL & OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WORLDWIDE (WILO)

WFWPI Office for UN Relations in Geneva, WILO and Soroptimist International, held a side event with the focus on women's status in education and leadership roles, emphasizing historical evidence from the 20th century and the shift toward greater opportunities in the 21st century. Topics discussed included literature, educational data, barriers that women face, and success stories.

Finally, the event addressed how globalization is reshaping women's access to education and leadership, along with strategies for creating more inclusive and equitable opportunities that foster lasting change for gender equality.



### 3/11 SHAPING TOMORROW: YOUNG WOMEN PIONEERING CHANGE FOR EQUALITY



On March 11, PPSEAWA International and #PPSEAWATaiwan co-sponsored an inspiring panel at the UN NGO CSW69 in New York, featuring global advocates, including President of WFWPI, Moriko Hori, working to empower young women as agents of sustainable and institutional change.

The discussions centered on innovative best practices and case studies from NGOs emphasizing public participation, social innovation, and actionable strategies. By strengthening collaborative networks and equipping young women with leadership tools, the goal is to ignite a movement of advocates committed to driving transformative change for a more equitable future.



### NGO BRIEFING 69TH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: REVITALIZATION OF CSW



Photo Credit: UN Web TV

An NGO Briefing with civil society was called by the CSW69 President on March 14. The Mission of Netherlands and the Ambassador of Ireland delivered remarks about progress on the Political Declaration & developments around new Working Methods. NGO CSW Presidents from NY, Geneva, Vienna were invited to report on recommendations for CSW Revitalisation. From the UN ECE Region, Carolyn Handschin focused her remarks on the use of peer pressure and report cards in monitoring states innovative engagement with civil society, instating a legal dimension to the CSW conclusions, and responsibilities of civil society to foster collaborative relations at home -and year-round. Watch the full discussion [here](#) at UN Web TV.

### WFWPI Advocacy Training Mock UN Session: Agreed Conclusion





**WOMEN'S FEDERATION**  
with special focus on empowerment

**WFWPI Advocacy Training**  
CSW69, March 8-9, 2025  
New York City

**Concluding Recommendations:**  
**A Global Call to Action for Gender Equality and Sustainable Development**

The results of the WFWPI Advocacy Training 2025 survey underscore the diverse backgrounds, challenges, and aspirations of participants committed to advancing gender equality in line with the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). With representation from 17 countries and engagement in critical areas such as education, health, violence against women, and women's leadership, the workshop highlighted both successes and ongoing challenges in the field of women's empowerment.

**Challenges and Gaps**

While progress has been successful in fostering women's leadership, innovation, and confidence, persistent challenges remain in terms of resource mobilization, community engagement, and institutional support. Funding limitations, sustainability concerns, and organizational constraints continue to hinder progress. In addition, cultural diversity, limited awareness of programs, and structural barriers underscore the need for more inclusive and adaptable approaches.

**Strengthening Media's Role in Women's Empowerment**

Media is a powerful force—it can either drive progress or reinforce harmful norms. Today, it is often misused for control and division. However, if harnessed ethically, it can promote equality, respect, and positive societal change.

**Recommendations for Ethical Media Practices**

- Expand media initiatives that promote ethical storytelling and positive representations of women
- Establish mentorship programs through media platforms to support young women entering the industry
- Strengthen digital literacy programs to help women navigate and utilize media for empowerment
- Promote family-oriented policies in media workplaces to support women balancing career and family
- Highlight and support programs like WFWPI-Taiwan's Young Women Development Program, which emphasizes mentorship, education, and hands-on experience for young women to build confidence and leadership skills.

**Strengthening Support for Families**

**Click here to view the full text of the [WFWPI Agreed Conclusion](#)**





### **NGO CSW Artisan Fair 3/12**

WFWP Japan joined the NGO CSW69 Artisan Fair, selling handmade goods made by students from the Hope Technical Institute in Rwanda, which was founded by WFWP. Many people came to support and it was a beautiful time of connection and raising funds for a worthy cause.



### **WFWPI Leaders' Meeting with Smt. Smriti Irani**

On March 12, WFWPI Leaders met with Smt. Smriti Irani, Chairperson, Alliance for Global Good, Gender Equality and Equity; Former Cabinet Minister of India. It was a pivotal meeting, allowing for a promising future partnerships between WFWPI and India to develop.



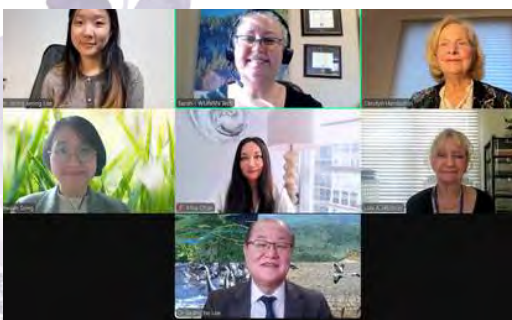
### **[Parallel Event] Empowering Women and Gender Equality Through Technology 3/13**

WFWP Taiwan and WFWP Korea co-hosted a parallel event at NGO CSW69 on "Empowering Women and Gender Equality through Technology." Speakers from Taiwan and Korea discussed the positive and negative impacts of technology on women, sharing real-life cases to highlight how technology can be a powerful tool for women's empowerment.



### **[Parallel Event] Empowering Women Through Education to Build a Gender-Equal Society 3/14**

Kon Wen Cultural Foundation led by President Winnie Chao and WFWP Japan co-hosted a parallel event at NGO CSW69 on "Empowering Women through Education to Build a Gender-Equal Society." Speakers from Taiwan, Japan, and the U.S. shared insights on women's education, empowerment, neurodiversity, and WFWP Japan's Global Volunteerism, highlighting education's impact through real-life cases and inspiring stories.



### **[Parallel Event] Beyond Beijing, Women & Youth Create Peace Space on Korea DMZ 3/17**

Seeking an alternative strategy to end the protracted political division between North and South Korea through women's innovation and commitment to peace, the hosts invited experts to contribute proposals to a future Womens Peace Garden and meeting project at the De Militarized Zone. This engaging event was co-sponsored by WFWPI, WUNRN, and Border Meetings.



## WFWPI LEADER'S OUTING TO LIBERTY ISLAND



On March 15, WFWPI Leaders embarked on a ferry from NYC to Liberty Island and Ellis Island to dive deep into America's history. The young leaders visited the Statue of Liberty, which was a gift from France to the United States. The Statue of Liberty symbolized freedom, democracy, and hope, particularly for immigrants seeking a new life in America. To end the day, the leaders dined for lunch at Fraunces Tavern, a historical restaurant that the 1<sup>st</sup> President of the United States, George Washington, dined at with his comrades!



## ADVOCACY TRAINING ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



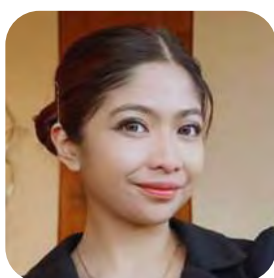
**Carolyn Handschin**  
Co-chair



**Merly Barlaan**  
Co-chair



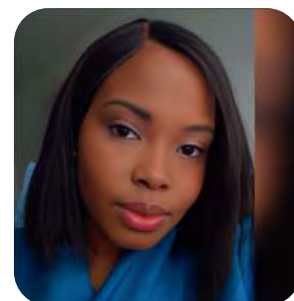
**Mako Mori**  
Project Coordinator



**Rachel Beth Tamayo**  
Communications & Logistics



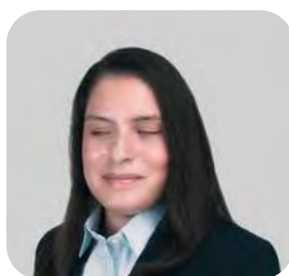
**Lina Quindel**  
Program / VNR



**Sandra Aboagye Brenya**  
Program / B+30 BPfA



**Dr. Marivir Montebon**  
Media



**Priscilla Garces**  
Rapporteur



**Maria Garces**  
Hospitality / Food



**Juliesette Hatulan**  
Hospitality / Accommodation



**Anupam Dutta**  
Partnership / Technology



**Dr. Elaine Duval**  
Registration



**Shinwon Barlaan**  
Media Assistant



**Mia Vacarella**  
Media Assistant



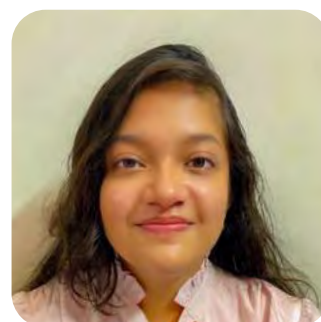
**Megan Guzman**  
Usher



**Tyra Poler**  
Usher



**Hyowon Barlaan**  
Technical Coordinator



**Arshia Dutta**  
Technical Coordinator





**Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon  
& Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon**  
Co founders, WFWPI

### Our Deepest Gratitude

We extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to WFWPI's Co-founders, Rev. Dr Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, for embodying the value of true love, the only hope for peace in our world.

We also express our heartfelt gratitude to all of our precious donors, especially the Takenaka Family, Pacific Foods Inc., Ocean Peace, International Protection Group LLC., Ocean Providence, The New Yorker Hotel, and Sue Phillips for their generous contributions.

Through your generous support, we were able to educate and equip leaders with advocacy tools needed for institutional change, as well as expand our network of peacebuilders, forge global partnerships, and create impactful partnerships for positive social and institutional change.



**International Protection  
Group LLC**



**PACIFIC  
FOODS INC.**

