

Advancing Economic Justice for Gender Equality at CSW70

Policy Priorities for the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Walking the Talk



Executive Summary

The 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) convenes at a time of deepening economic inequality and systemic injustice. Gendered economic disparities, rooted in unequal access to resources, unpaid and underpaid care work, discriminatory fiscal policies, and extractive global economic systems, continue to undermine the realisation of women's human rights and achieving SDG5.

Aligned with CSW70's priority theme of access to justice, economic justice is central to the full enjoyment of human rights for women and girls in all their diversity. Structural economic inequalities undermine access to justice and systematically constrain women's participation and leadership in public life, while also increasing vulnerability to gender-based violence. Advancing gender equality therefore requires gender-transformative economic policies that dismantle these barriers - ranging from debt justice and gender-responsive budgeting to expanded care infrastructures and progressive taxation.

Such reforms are essential to building just and inclusive societies in which women and girls can access their rights fully, exercise power, and participate meaningfully in economic and political decision-making. Grounded in the lived realities and leadership of feminist movements, particularly in the Global South, this policy brief sets out priority actions to advance feminist economic justice.

Why Economic Justice Must Be Central

Despite decades of commitments, women remain overrepresented among the working poor, the informally employed, and those providing a disproportionate share of unpaid care. Recent global shocks; pandemics, climate crises, conflict, and debt distress, have intensified these inequalities. At the same time:

- Austerity measures and debt servicing have reduced public investment in health, education, care, and social protection,
- Feminist and women's rights organisations face chronic underfunding despite providing frontline economic and social support,
- Economic policies continue to be shaped without meaningful participation from those most affected.

Economic justice is therefore not a sectoral issue- it is foundational to gender equality, democracy, and sustainable development. CSW70 must address how global, national, and local economic systems reproduce gendered and racialised inequalities, and how they can be transformed.

Our Call to Action

Economic justice is inseparable from gender justice. CSW70 must send a clear message:

Transforming economic systems is essential for access to justice and to achieving equality, dignity, and rights for all women and girls.

This requires sustained political will, redistribution of resources and power, and recognition of feminist movements as key economic justice actors, not marginal stakeholders. By centering care, equity, and accountability, CSW70 can help shift economic systems toward justice rather than exploitation.

Priority Areas for Action at CSW70

1. Recognise Care as the Backbone of the Economy

Unpaid and underpaid care work sustains households, communities, and economies, yet remains systematically undervalued. Women, particularly in the Global South and those with a migrant, racialised, and low-income background, carry a disproportionate share of this work.

Key priorities:

- Commit to public investment in the care economy, including Long-Term Care and healthcare.
- Ratify the Convention on Domestic Workers, formally the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers and implement policies that recognise, reduce, redistribute reward and represent unpaid care work, including paid care leave and social protection.
- Ensure care workers' rights, including decent work, fair wages, and social protections, regardless of migration or employment status.

2. Advance Feminist Fiscal and Macroeconomic Policies

Fiscal and macroeconomic decisions are among the most powerful determinants of gender equality. Yet they are often treated as gender-neutral, obscuring their unequal impacts.

Key priorities:

- Reject austerity such as global debt regimes and imposed structures of finance that are built upon patriarchal and colonial measures that undermine women's rights and exacerbate inequality.
- Adopt progressive taxation systems that redistribute wealth and reduce gender and income disparities.
- Increase public spending on social infrastructure and services essential for economic justice.
- Implement gender-responsive budgeting aligned with human rights and equality commitments.

3. Strengthen Accountability and Participation in Economic Governance

Economic policymaking remains largely inaccessible to feminist civil society, despite its profound gendered impacts.

Key priorities:

- Ensure meaningful participation of feminist organisations in economic decision-making spaces, including budgeting and recovery planning.
- Invest in gender-disaggregated and intersectional data to track economic justice outcomes.
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms to monitor implementation of CSW conclusions and Beijing commitments related to economic justice.

4. Resource Feminist Movements as Economic Justice Actors

Feminist and women's rights organisations are central to advancing economic justice through advocacy, service provision, accountability, and community-based alternatives. Yet feminist movements, particularly in the Global South, continue to receive less than 0.2% of global ODA directly despite leading frontline work on rights, climate adaptation, and peacebuilding. Funding is increasingly fragmented and short-term, leaving movements vulnerable to burnout and backlash.

Key priorities:

- Shift from short-term, project-based funding to core, flexible, and long-term financing for feminist organisations.
- Treat the failure to fund gender equality and feminist movements as a systemic economic risk, not a discretionary choice.
- Support participatory and locally led funding mechanisms that redistribute decision-making power.
- Establish rapid-response funding to sustain feminist economic justice work during crises and backlash.

5. Ensure Decent Work and Economic Rights for All Women

The sexual and racial division of labor continues to deepen labor market inequalities.

Key priorities:

- Guarantee labour rights, living wages, and social protection for women across formal and informal economies.
- Address intersectional discrimination based on race, caste, disability, age, migration status, and sexual orientation.
- Support collective organising that includes domestic workers, care workers, and informal workers.

This document is part of the emerging recommendations from the Financing for Feminist Futures (F4FF) Conference, compiled by the Walking the Talk consortium. A more comprehensive Reflections Paper, sharing the diverse range of perspectives, reflections and strategies will be published at a later moment.

The Walking the Talk Programme aims to boost the adoption of Feminist Foreign Policies (FFP) and equitable financing for gender equality in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands and the European Union.

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