

WYDE

Women's Leadership

Transforming social norms: Advancing women's leadership

CSW 69 Side event

WYDE Women's Leadership¹

10 March 2025, 10.00am – 11.15am

ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

BACKGROUND

Thirty years after the Beijing Conference, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) remain a blueprint for equality. Amid global challenges, women leaders face increasing attacks, impacting progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Structural, socioeconomic, and cultural barriers, rooted in unequal power relations and discriminatory norms, hinder women's participation. Today just 25 countries are headed by a woman. Women make up 22.9 per cent of cabinet members heading ministries, 27.2% of national legislators, and 35.5% of local legislature positions.

The [CSW65 Agreed Conclusions](#), the [Generation Equality Forum](#) (GEF) through its [Action Coalition \(AC6\)](#) on Feminist Movement and Leadership as well as recent normative developments culminating with the adoption of [CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40](#) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, have put special focus on advancing women's leadership and participation in political and public life and provide renewed commitments towards achieving parity in decision-making through intersectional, inclusive feminist leadership, and structural transformation — which align closely with the WYDE Women's Leadership initiative.

Against such a backdrop, the European Union is funding an initiative implemented by UN Women, International IDEA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). Launched during CSW68 in 2024, **the WYDE | Women's Leadership initiative is a collaborative global effort working to advance women's full and effective political participation, representation and decision-making at all levels, especially those most often left furthest behind.** Over three years, WYDE | Women's Leadership will leverage collective action, partnerships, coordination, knowledge, and resources at global level to advance women's political participation and decision-making through social norms change, networking and global advocacy.

¹ *WYDE | Women's Leadership* is part of the **Women and Youth Democratic Engagement** initiative (WYDE), funded by the European Union, that seeks to empower and strengthen the rights, and participation in public and political life of youth and women as key actors of development and change.



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As part of the social norms work, the project is aiming to promote ‘transformative social norms **through evidence-based advocacy and capacity building**’ and the side-event presents an opportunity to deep-dive into this work.

OBJECTIVES

The in-person side event will bring WYDE Women’s Leadership partners as well as representatives from the EU together with members of Parliament, local governments, women’s movements, civil society organizations, experts and women leaders, including from youth groups with the objectives to:

- Engage in a dialogue on social norms impact on women’s political participation.
- Share of good practices in identifying and addressing discriminatory social norms surrounding women’s political participation.
- Hear from partners, women’s groups, office holders and experts on their efforts to promote social norms change as one of the enduring challenges to women’s political participation.

The event will ensure a diverse representation of stakeholders, including geographical balance and youth representation.

WHERE AND WHEN

Date: The event will take place from 10.00 to 11.15a.m. on 10 March 2025 as a CSW69 side event.

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters New York, in-person participation.

Registration: (for passholders) [through this link](#).

AGENDA AND SPEAKERS

Time	Session and speakers
10.00-10.15am	<p>Welcome and Moderation: Kristina Lachaga, Women and Girls’ Empowerment Advocate / Recording Artist and Host</p> <p>Opening remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiara Adamo, Head of Unit, Human Rights, Gender and Democratic Governance, Directorate General International Partnerships, European Commission • Sarah Hendriks, Director, Policy, Programme, Intergovernmental Division, UN Women <p>Video on WYDE Women’s Leadership (2 min)</p>
10.15-10.50am	<p>Discussion Segment: Social Norms and Women’s Political Participation (40 min)</p> <p>Women’s right to equal political participation and representation is integral to the Beijing Platform for Action adopted 30 years ago. However, this right is far from realised at any level of government, in large part because of discriminatory social norms that constrain women’s voice and participation. <i>Panelists are invited to engage in a discussion about the role and impact of</i></p>



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	<p><i>social norms on women's participation in political and public life and hear about initiatives seeking to combat discriminatory norms.</i></p> <p>Setting the scene: Brenda Kombo, Consultant, Social Norms, UN Women</p> <p>Moderated discussion (40mn) with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cynthia López Castro, Senator and President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Mexico • Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu, Principal Advisor, Democracy and Inclusion, International IDEA • Emil Broberg, Councillor of Östergötland Region, Member of the Board of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions • Abosedede George-Ogan, Founder and Executive Director, Women in Leadership Advancement Network • Vandita Morarka, Founder and CEO of One Future Collective, AC6 member
10.50-11.10am	Questions & Answers Session (20 min)
11.15am	Closing



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