



**High-level session on preparing for Beijing+30 during UNGA
Saturday 21st of September 2024**

The key role of Women and Girls organisations

Speaker: Sascha Gabizon, WECF on behalf of the Women's Major Group

Thank you chair, I am glad to join this wonderful panel, I am with an ecofeminist network called Women Engage for a Common Future, and we are a long-time member of the Women's Major Group on whose behalf I speak today.

The Role of women and girls' organizations is and has always been key in securing that gender equality, equal rights, non-discrimination, and non-violence are front and centre of Member States commitments and that they are held accountable for these commitments.

A lot has changed since the day I went to Beijing, the 4WWC in 1995, where I was a young activist amongst the 30,000 civil society women in Huairou,

It was the most inspiring feminist strategizing event I have ever seen, - even though we were kept far away from the official venue in Beijing - we still had the global press and media join us, ...

We organised demonstrations and wrote statements, for feminist peace and for demilitarisation, for sexual rights and against the patriarchy,

And we were a new generation of diverse feminists with hope!

It is really sad and worrying that today's generation of feminists, such as the youth speaker before me, do no longer have that hope, many even have to fear to speak up as a feminist, ...we are going backwards almost everywhere, even in my own country the Netherlands, and when I see what is happening to my colleagues in Tbilisi in the Caucasus region for example

Where the current government has just passed legislation to stop the work of civil society organisations - with the so-called Russian 'foreign agent' law - AND they have just turned back the legislation on LGBTIQ rights - and 2 days ago, just after the parliament passed the anti-LGBTIQ law, a well-known Transgender-model was murdered in her home, her name was *Kesaria Abramidze*. This is horrendous. This is unacceptable.

The roll-back of rights which we see today, is deeply concerning.

Anti-rights groups, backed by authoritarian regimes and religious factions, are collaborating to undermine equal rights.

Often with in-transparent sources of funding the anti-rights groups are trying to attempt to divide us by spreading lies, hate and fear, insisting that not everyone deserves equal rights . this is their response to the progress we have made.

Without the civil society women, girls and feminist organisations we would not have had the progress we have seen in many countries, since 1995

Legislation to end early and forced marriage and FGM, to fight sexual and gender based violence, to give women land tenure rights, women rights to inheritance, political rights, same sex marriage, the right to safe and legal abortion,

We have many Women-led organizations providing direct services on the ground, for SRHR, shelters etc

Yes yes yes it is thanks to feminists who have continuously taken to the streets, often risking their lives and freedom, that we have seen progress in so many countries.

For the WMG it is essential that we clarify that a Feminist is a person of any gender that stands for equal rights for all, and that we take action based on an understanding of structural barriers, thus that we need to advance a decolonial approach, and that those of us in positions of privilege, make it our aim to advance the position and rights of those that are historically discriminated and continue to be discriminated.

So being privileged, sitting on this panel, and thinking towards Beijing+35, it is my duty, to speak up for an **Intersectional Decolonial Feminist Agenda of the Future**.

What do we want from this agenda?

- We want funding for feminist mobilization, co-leadership, collaboration and organizing to ensure our voices shape the policies that affect us
- We want governments and institutions to protect civic spaces, where feminists can openly resist anti-rights groups and advocate for gender equality.
- We call on governments to close the loopholes that fund anti-rights groups and build with us accessible equitable just ways of resourcing and financing the feminist transformative agenda
- We call to establishing dedicated, sustainable funding streams for civil society participation for ongoing policy engagement, not just for 1-off side events.
- We call to create formal advisory roles for civil society within government structures that can ensure that feminist perspectives directly influence policy decisions. - Kenya has really good examples
- We need parity representation of women in all their diversity in multilateral and national institutions, including in the economic and financial institutions!
- We need a global UN convention on tax coordination, we need the billionaires-tax!
- We need Member States and UNWOMEN to make sure that Civic Space and Human Rights are the core of our work these coming 5 years, towards Beijing+35 and towards achieving the SDGs.
- We need to support especially global South feminists group such as in the African region to organise at local level, we need to see the spirit of Beijing1995 back, mobilizing in the communities, bringing a positive narrative of equality, showing a path.. away from the sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination-

- We need UNWOMEN's highest level strong support for feminist CSOs, so that people do not need to fear to stand up for equal rights.

We need Policy processes where we re-balance power, such as we managed to do for the Generation Equality Forum process, - we had a somewhat long but super successful process to create the governance model for GEF ACs, with real power for young feminists and civil society, - we created a code of conduct that ensures we fully apply a human-rights and intersectional feminist approach.

We need self-governed feminist civil society organisation with global South leadership, such as we have created for the Women's Major Group.

We need to replicate this to all UN policy processes.

Let me end by saying, We call on you, UN Members states, to hold the line against the roll-back of equal rights, against those that are trying to silence us, civil society feminist, youth and LGBTQI organisations.

We demand from you, Member States, radical actions that advance women's rights in all their diversity, and robust accountability mechanisms to ensure that commitments lead to transformative change

Let's move forward, lets learn from feminist good practices, the civil society feminists are here to work with you! As an answer to Amina Mohammed the Under Secretary General of the UN, yes, we are ready to occupy the spaces and to be loud !!

Thank you