



# ICW-CIF

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES FEMMES

*Founded 1888*

## Concept Paper for the

### ICW-CIF Parallel Event at CSW68<sup>th</sup> Session

#### COMBATING POVERTY: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO FINANCE, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EDUCATION AND TRAINING

##### Background:

1. The International Council of Women (ICW), a Non-Governmental Organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, firmly believes that women's access to finance, social protection and quality education and training are gateways to women's empowerment and gender equality as well as being development multipliers that are essential for the eradication of poverty in the world, a major global challenge (SDGs 1, 4, 5).
2. With the view of implementing the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action's Critical Areas of Concern, United Nations (UN) specialized agencies, a decade ago, had initiated policies and programs to ensure the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment in various instruments and frameworks. Furthermore, the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 commits States to ensuring equal access to quality education and training, finance and social protection in efforts to reduce gender inequality and poverty. In addition, the General Assembly underscored the need for sustained action by all stakeholders to eradicate poverty in declaring the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty from 2018–2027. Such action must include increased efforts to address the structural causes of poverty through the implementation and integration of strategies at national and international levels, and with the conviction that each woman and girl, must be aware of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to live in dignity and to benefit from development.
3. Despite the significant efforts of the international community, particularly aid agencies, according to latest UN-Women projections, poverty has further deepened for women and girls, who constitute the majority of people living in extreme poverty. A recent United Nations report, "The Gender Snapshot 2023," warns that "if current trends continue, over 340 million women and girls – an estimated 8% of the world's female population – will live in extreme poverty by 2030, and almost one in four will experience moderate or severe food insecurity..." Furthermore, women and girls, who comprise 55.7% of the world's population aged 65 and over, face a higher risk of living in extreme poverty than men due to lifelong disadvantages from discrimination and inequalities.
4. Many factors contribute to economic insecurity and poverty for women of all ages. Women and girls carry most of the burden of unpaid care work, which can deny them opportunities for education, employment in the formal labour sector and access to social protection benefits. Even when women do have access to education and employment, their care responsibilities often lead to career interruptions, lower wages and savings, inadequate pensions, informal employment, greater economic



insecurity and more time spent on unpaid care work. In addition, since 2019, the world has faced a series of crises including a global pandemic, severe natural disasters and armed conflicts which have contributed to rising inflation, tightening financial conditions, greater food insecurity and increasing poverty.

5. Financial literacy and financial inclusion are essential for women's economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, greater participation in the economy and the accumulation of savings and financial assets. Research shows that women tend to spend most of their income on the welfare of their children and family, thus having greater access to social protection benefits can enable women to provide education for their children, achieve better health outcomes for their family members and acquire greater financial security for themselves after retirement.

6. Combating poverty is therefore critical to the sustainable development of the world. Ensuring equitable access to quality education and training, economic empowerment, financial resources, and social protection for women and girls is crucial for achieving economic security and preventing poverty among them.

## Objectives:

**In this Parallel Event, panelists** will discuss the importance of integrated policies and approaches to combat poverty through promoting access of women and girls to finance, social protection, and quality education and training. In addition, it will include practical examples and best practices to help design inclusive programs, schemes and policies to address the gender gap in finance, to promote women's access to education and social protection and to create an enabling environment to promote women's financial empowerment. It will also highlight relevant, formal and non-formal vocational training and gender responsive capacity development programs which are critical for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

## Speakers: (to be confirmed and in alphabetical order)

1. Lopa Banerjee, UN Women
2. Hanna Brix, World Bank
3. Randi Davis, UNDP
4. Lisa Henshaw, Global Citizen
5. Speaker from Union Nationale des Femmes Marocaines

## Expected Outcome

The envisaged outcome of the event will be a summary report of the discussions on the policies, strategies and best practices to promote women and girls' access to quality education and training, finance and social protection to achieve women's economic empowerment and gender equality as part of global efforts to eradicate poverty and to contribute to the achievement of the Development Agenda 2030.