



SPECIAL PROCEDURES
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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



Permanent Mission
of the Republic of
Namibia to the
United Nations



Concept Paper

Emerging Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls: Bridging the Gap Between Lived Reality and Policy Framing Through a Family-Centered Lens

CSW 70 (2026) – Side Event
10 March 2026, 4:00-6:00 pm, Nigeria House, New York

For Registration, click [here](#)

Organized by
Global Helping to Advance Women and Children
(DBA Family Watch International)

Co-sponsored by:
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the UN, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Djibouti to the UN, the Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the UN, the OIC Permanent Observer Mission to the UN, C-FAM, and the Heritage Foundation

Background and Rationale:

Despite decades of an international commitment to eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG), important forms of such harm remain **systematically under-examined** in global policy spaces, including within the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). While CSW has played a role in advancing women's legal protections and access to justice, its policy focus has tended to restate its concerns regarding known and long standing forms of violence on which there are clear international standards and obligations (e.g. the subjugation of women and child marriage, female genital mutilation etc.) relying on agreed on language in the dock of adopted UN resolutions and statements. In doing so, it ignores the evolution of the phenomenon of violence against women and girls and its emerging manifestations particularly, the lived realities of women and girls across diverse social, cultural, and economic contexts, often leaving **new and evolving patterns of harm** under-addressed.

In practice, many women experience violence not only through overt physical abuse, but also through structural and commercial practices that commodify, sexualize, or instrumentalize the female body and seek to legitimize the accompanied practices. These forms of harm frequently fall outside conventional policy frameworks, are framed as matters of individual choice, or are addressed in fragmented ways. As a result, they receive limited attention in multilateral fora despite their clear harmful impact on women and girls' dignity, safety, and equality.

This parallel event responds to a growing concern among Member States, experts, and civil society actors that **a gap has emerged between policy framing and women’s lived realities**. It seeks to contribute to CSW 70 by examining emerging and under-acknowledged forms of violence against women and girls, while exploring **preventive and socially grounded and legal policy responses that seek to understand these emerging and underexplored manifestations of violence against women and girls**, such as family-based solutions, criminalization of new and emerging forms of violence and more robust access for reporting, protection, assistance and reparations for victims of these forms of violence.

The event will focus on selected forms of violence that are frequently overlooked or insufficiently addressed in CSW discussions, including the legalization of all aspects of prostitution; the legalization and normalization of surrogacy; the pornification, sexualization and commodification of women and girls bodies and reproductive functions through the normalization of prostitution, surrogacy, and pornography. These are taking place in tandem with a stripping key definition and concepts of their material realities such as “sex” “woman” which are essential for advancing the equality of men and women, as well as understanding and responding to violence against women and girls.

Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution

Women in prostitution face high levels of physical and sexual violence, coercion, and violence and implies serious human rights violations. Yet policy debates are increasingly trying to normalize and legitimize the engagement of vulnerable women and children by falsely claiming that they consent to their own exploitation; while ignoring the responsibility of buyers of sexual acts in fueling the demand for prostitution. Victims are often left unprotected; unassisted and with little access to exist measures

Hyper-Sexualized Digital and Commercial Environments

The expansion of online pornography, sexualized media, and commercial sexual content has reshaped social norms, particularly affecting girls and young women, cementing harmful social stereotypes and normalizing physical violence and exploitation against women and children, including girls. These environments contribute to objectification, coercion, and increased vulnerability to exploitation, including trafficking. Digital platforms continue to enjoy impunity, particularly for crimes of sexual digital forgery, otherwise known as “deepfakes” and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images as well as profiteering from violent and degrading content.

Reproductive Exploitation and Surrogacy Practices

Surrogacy raises concerns related to the exploitation of women and girls, the commodification of their reproductive capacities and bodies, and the long-term impact on the health, safety, and rights of women and children that are exploited in surrogacy. These issues are often discussed in abstract terms that apply to services and objects that can be sold and bought and from the perspective of the buyer (commissioning parents) terms rather than through a violence-prevention or protection lens.

Erosion of the definition of sex and its centrality to the experiences of discrimination and violence experienced by women and girls

Changes in legal and policy frameworks that seek to deny the material reality of biological sex, have raised concerns among women regarding to women’s rights to equality, non-discrimination. The weakening of the definition of sex directly impacts access to single-sex services, shelters, sports, and detention facilities. These developments have practical implications for women's safety and privacy, but are often difficult to discuss in multilateral settings.

Integrating a Preventive and Family-Sensitive Perspective

While legal protections, policies and state interventions remain essential, many policy responses to violence against women and girls are **not sufficiently comprehensive**, reactive, and sporadic - focusing on harm after it occurs. In particular, the approaches do not sufficiently include the family. This event proposes complementing these approaches with greater attention to **preventive and social dimensions**, including the role of the family and the community.

Across societies, the **family remains the first line of protection, care, and resilience for women and girls**. Studies show that when family and community structures are weakened or bypassed, the exposure of women and girls to exploitation and violence increases. A family-centered perspective does not replace legal safeguards; instead, it helps identify **upstream factors** that influence women and girls' safety, dignity, and well-being.

This approach allows for discussion on how families play a critical role in:

- Preventing exploitation and abuse.
- Providing social, emotional, and economic support.
- Transmitting norms that uphold dignity, responsibility, and mutual care.
- Facilitating and connecting the well-being of women and children.

Objectives of the Event:

By centering this discussion within a **family-based, preventive framework**, this event seeks to enrich CSW 2026 with perspectives that are too often sidelined—yet essential for achieving meaningful, lasting protection for women and girls. Particularly, it aims to:

1. Highlight emerging and under-examined forms of violence against women and girls.
2. Identify gaps between policy frameworks and lived experiences.
3. Provide expert insights, including from the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, Ms. Reem Alsalem.
4. Explore preventive, socially grounded, and family-sensitive policy responses.
5. Encourage Member States and stakeholders to adopt more holistic, socially grounded approaches in CSW negotiations and outcomes.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of emerging forms of violence within CSW deliberations.
- Greater openness to additional preventive and socially informed policy approaches.
- Practical considerations for Member States and stakeholders.
- Strengthened dialogue between UN mechanisms, Member States, and civil society.
