

FINANCING THE ELIMINATION OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

High-Level Panel at CSW68

12 March 2024, 1:15 PM - 2:30 PM ET
Conference Room 12 UN Secretariat



Concept Note: Financing the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, High-Level Panel at CSW68

Date: 12 March 2024

Time: 1:15 PM to 2:30 PM ET (NY Time)

Location: Conference Room 12, UN Secretariat – New York, US

The Government of Italy - in collaboration with the Governments of Burkina Faso and United Kingdom together with the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, the World Bank, and the Girl Generation - Support to the Africa-led Movement to end FGM/C (TGG-ALM) - has the honor of hosting a high-level panel discussion on the margins of the 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The theme of the 68th CSW is "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective."

BACKGROUND

Significant strides have been made globally in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which focuses on gender equality and empowering women and girls. Within this goal, Target 5.3 aims to eliminate harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM). Notably, the prevalence of FGM has declined over the past three decades, resulting in a girl today being one-third less likely to undergo FGM, and seven out of 10 women and girls in FGM-affected countries now oppose this harmful practice. While these achievements demonstrate progress, the efforts to achieve FGM elimination across affected countries by 2030 remain characterized by uneven and slow advancement; specifically, progress needs to be at least 10 times faster to meet the global target of FGM elimination.

It is crucial to acknowledge the intersecting challenges faced by women and girls in FGM-prevalent countries, as they often confront compounded disadvantages and deprivation, leaving them at heightened risk of harmful practices. Additionally, recent years have witnessed reduced investments dedicated to advancing gender equality, mainly due to the emergence of global megatrends and polycrises, such as public health emergencies, conflict, fragility, and climate-related challenges. These crises have diverted attention and resources away from promoting gender equality and addressing harmful practices, exacerbating the urgency of our response.

The practice of FGM, which is widely recognized as a violation of human rights, involves costs at various levels: (i) the individual level, preventing girls and women from fully enjoying their human rights and from contributing to their economies meaningfully; (ii) the societal level, including financial burdens on state economies. According to UNFPA, the cost of ending FGM by 2030 is \$3.3 billion, and the annual cost of treating the health consequences of FGM is approximately \$1.4 billion across 27 countries (WHO). FGM's health costs may rise by 50% by 2050 if no action is taken. In some nations, FGM's costs would reach 30% of yearly health spending, showing the economic gain of its eradication.

Yet, financial investment in the elimination of FGM remains grossly low. According to a landscape paper on *"Promising Innovative Financing Models that Support Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls"* by UNICEF, funding for ending FGM and child marriage has been declining, and remains volatile, unpredictable, and undocumented. However, there are clear positive externalities in investing in girls, and engagement with Innovative Financing should improve the predictability of funds and the efficiency of utilizing traditional financial resources.

This High-Level side event, taking place on the margins of the 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), aims to facilitate dialogue and create a rallying call for increasing financing/funding to end FGM. It will also serve to identify necessary actions for increased funding for FGM elimination, foster collaboration, and reaffirm our commitment to ending FGM. By bringing together leaders, policymakers, private sector stakeholders, civil society, and high-net-worth individuals, the event aims to inspire transformative and accelerated actions under high-level political guidance in response to the challenges under-funding poses to global crises.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

This High-Level event aims to provide a platform for key stakeholders engaged in eliminating harmful practices to discuss potential innovative ways to increase financing or funding for eliminating FGM to achieve gender equality and reach SDG 5.3 by 2030.

The panel will:

1. Discuss available opportunities and actions required to increase funding or financing for the elimination of FGM in the context of ongoing humanitarian crises, such as climate change, the after-effects of COVID-19, conflict, etc.
2. Amplify the voices of survivors of FGM, young people and women-led organizations and
3. Recommit to ending FGM.

FORMAT AND PARTICIPATION

The High-Level Panel will be a multi-stakeholder event involving high-level representation from Member States, Governments, United Nations Agencies, and Civil society organizations to

inspire a global movement for accelerating investment to end FGM. The event will be held in person and broadcast through UNWeb TV. Interpretation will be available in French.

POTENTIAL SPEAKERS

- Italy
- Burkina Faso
- United Kingdom
- Guinea
- World Bank
- Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF (TBC)
- Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA (TBC)
- Voice of Civil Society Organizations - Options UK and TGG-ALM
- Survivor of FGM
- Youth activist- Club des Jeunes Filles leaders (Guinea)

POTENTIAL GUESTS

- **Member States as Donors contributing to the elimination of FGM:** Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union.
- **Member States with a high prevalence rate of FGM:** Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, and Yemen.
- **Other Member States:** Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Columbia, and India.
- Civil Society Organizations and other activists.