

Concept Note

High-Level Side Event at the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70)

Title:

Access to Justice for Women: Pathways to Care, Recovery, Resilience, and Sustainable Peace

Organized by Lebanon, in partnership with the Arab Women Organization, and UN Women

In the Presence of the First Lady of Lebanon, Ms. Nehmat Aoun

Date: Monday, 9 March 2026

Venue: Conference Room 2 (max. capacity: 571) – UN Conference Building

Time: 3:00 – 4:15 pm (New York Time)

Background and Rationale

Women and girls globally, and particularly in the Arab region, experience compounded and intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerability as a result of armed conflict, protracted crises, climate shocks, natural disasters, economic downturns, health emergencies, and prolonged political instability. These overlapping challenges significantly undermine women's access to justice, weakening their ability to claim their rights, secure livelihoods, obtain redress for violations and violence, and participate meaningfully in recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding processes.

In conflict and post-crisis contexts, justice systems are often weakened, disrupted, or inaccessible. Institutional fragility, displacement, loss or lack of legal documentation, harmful social norms, and discriminatory legal and policy frameworks collectively hinder women's access to courts, administrative mechanisms, compensation and reparations schemes, labour protections, land and property rights, and social protection systems. Women and girls facing intersecting forms of marginalization, including survivors of sexual and conflict-related violence, internally displaced women, women heads of households, elderly women, women living in poverty, and women with disabilities, are disproportionately excluded. When justice systems fail to respond equitably, recovery and reconstruction processes risk reproducing structural inequalities rather than addressing their root causes.

Access to justice must therefore be understood as a holistic, multidimensional, and transformative concept. It extends beyond formal legal remedies to include protection from all forms of violence, including gender-based violence; access to civil, family, housing, land, and property rights; labour rights and social protection; economic and distributive justice; and women's equitable access to opportunities, resources, services, and recovery financing. Justice shapes who can reclaim land and housing, who can return to work, who receives compensation or social protection, and who can actively participate in rebuilding economies and communities. Without justice, recovery efforts cannot be inclusive, resilient, or sustainable.

During conflict, economic shocks, and social crises, including public health emergencies, the care needs of individuals, families, and communities increase sharply, while care infrastructure and public services are often strained or degraded. In fragile and crisis-affected settings, women spend nearly four times the amount of their day on unpaid care and domestic work compared to men.¹

In times of crisis, this burden intensifies as women care for injured or ill family members, displaced relatives, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Yet this essential contribution remains largely invisible and undervalued in legal, economic, and policy frameworks.

¹ [OECD \(2022\)](#).

When care work is not recognized, valued, and rewarded as work, women are systematically excluded from labor protections, social insurance schemes, pensions, and recovery and reconstruction programs, undermining their economic recovery and long-term security. As such, care is not only a social or economic concern, but a critical justice issue with direct implications for equality, recovery, and sustainable development.

At the same time, women and girls from marginalized groups face heightened and intersecting forms of exclusion in conflict and crisis settings. Structural barriers, such as limited access to information, services, mobility, representation, and decision-making, often prevent them from accessing justice mechanisms, protection services, and recovery initiatives. Similarly, women workers in fragile and crisis-affected economies are often disproportionately concentrated in informal, precarious, and unprotected employment. When markets contract, and livelihoods are lost, these women frequently lack access to employment contracts, labor dispute mechanisms, social protection, maternity benefits, or pensions, leaving them without effective legal remedies or recovery pathways.

Against this backdrop, the priority theme of CSW 70 on Access to Justice provides a timely and strategic opportunity to reframe justice not only as a legal entitlement, but as a cornerstone of recovery, care, social cohesion, and sustainable peace. In the Arab region, as in many parts of the world where conflict, displacement, and economic volatility persist, gender-responsive, inclusive, and people-centered justice systems are essential for restoring dignity, strengthening resilience, recognizing care, and enabling women's full and equal participation in social, economic, and public life.

This side event, organized by Lebanon in partnership with the Arab Women Organization (AWO) and UN Women, will explore how inclusive, survivor-centered, and gender-responsive justice systems can support women's recovery and resilience in conflict and crisis contexts. The discussion will take a holistic perspective, with particular attention to women and girls from marginalized groups, working women in both formal and informal economies, and women engaged in unpaid and underpaid care work across the Arab region.

Objectives of the Side Event

The side event aims to:

- Highlight access to justice as a foundational pillar for women's recovery, economic security, dignity, and social inclusion in conflict and post-crisis contexts.
- Examine legal, institutional, economic, and social barriers faced by working women, particularly those with disabilities, in informal and precarious employment, and by women from marginalized groups in accessing justice, protection, services, and recovery opportunities.

- Promote the strengthening of care services, care infrastructure, and comprehensive social protection systems as integral components of recovery, resilience, and peacebuilding efforts.
- Showcase promising practices, policy reforms, and innovative approaches that advance gender-responsive, inclusive, and survivor-centered justice systems in diverse conflict and crisis settings.
- Strengthen coordination and partnerships among governments, UN entities, regional organizations, and civil society to integrate justice and care considerations into recovery, reconstruction, and redistribution frameworks at national and regional levels.