



# MenEngage Alliance joins feminist movements at CSW69 to push forward for gender justice for all

A summary report of activities and impacts of MenEngage Alliance's engagement at CSW69, March 2025

## A critical year at the Commission on the Status of Women

The 69th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) marked a pivotal moment for **women's rights and gender justice**, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA)*. As the world assessed three decades of progress since the *Fourth World Conference on Women*, the urgency of these deliberations could not be overstated.

Alarming analyses of *Agenda 2030* and the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* reveal that **SDG 5—gender equality—is falling**

**dangerously behind.** At the current rate, gender equality will not be achieved this century, and [recent backsliding could mean global gender inequality could be worse in 2030 than when the SDGs were agreed back in 2015](#). Meanwhile, a growing wave of backlash—driven by anti-feminist, anti-rights, anti-democratic forces, and climate denialism—is threatening hard-won gains at national, regional, and global levels, including within the UN itself.

In the face of these mounting challenges, the **work of civil society, UN agencies, and committed governments has never been more urgent.** Now is the time for bold, unwavering action to counter regression and drive forward the movement for gender equality worldwide.

*"This year's CSW drew over 13,000 participants in total: 186 Member States were represented, among them one Vice President,*



*Festus Kisa, MenEngage Alliance Co-Chair and Executive Director of Q-Initiative, delivers the collective MenEngage Alliance statement to the 12th plenary meeting of CSW69*

three Deputy Prime Ministers, and 97 Ministers. We also had the participation of over 5,845 NGO representatives—a new record for CSW—and we had a total of 283 side events, many spearheaded by Member States”.<sup>1</sup>

At CSW69, **feminist, LGBTIQ, and youth movements stood unwavering in the commitment for gender justice**, fiercely advocating throughout the negotiations of the CSW69 Political Declaration. Their relentless efforts ensured that further rollbacks on gender equality were thwarted, safeguarding hard-won gains. While nonbinding, CSW outcomes remain a **powerful measure of global consensus** on women’s rights, influencing policy directions worldwide.

Despite the **highly contentious negotiations**, the *Political Declaration* was adopted by consensus on the first day, reaffirming that **gender equality remains a core multilateral priority**. However, growing resistance from Member States—notably the U.S. and Argentina, which opposed inclusive language and DEI policies—sparked deep concern among advocates. The U.S. delegation’s push to define women and men strictly by biological sex, excluding gender identity references, signaled **a troubling shift that**

<sup>1</sup>[Speech: The Political Declaration’s vision must be made real - Change is there now to be grasped](#)

**could undermine future policy advancements.**

As the Dutch feminist coalition WO=MEN shared:

*“The adoption of the Political Declaration is only the beginning. Over the next four years, governments will have to translate these commitments into national policies and be held accountable for their implementation. At the end of CSW, governments agreed on four thematic priorities to be addressed in the coming years, including access to justice, the Sustainable Development Goals, humanitarian emergencies and care and support systems.”<sup>2</sup>*

With these outcomes, alongside the critical *CSW Revitalization Negotiations* (for more on this see below) arising from the Pact of the Future 2024, movement-building for gender justice will continue to be imperative to hold Member States to account for pushing forward for human rights and gender equality amidst complexifying geopolitical dynamics within the UN and at national level, as well as with backlash actors continuing to impede progress.

<sup>2</sup>[Holding the line for women’s rights: reflections on a high-stakes CSW](#)





# MenEngage Alliance at CSW69

This year, over 50 members gathered at CSW69 to come together to advocate for the advancement of the human rights of all women, girls, and LGBTIQ people. Through joint advocacy, strategic sessions, solidarity with other movements, internal learning and convening spaces, and progressive agenda-setting, the Alliance continued to present itself as the most influential network advancing men and masculinities work within the CSW space.

## Advocacy in National and Regional Preparatory Process Leading to CSW69

MenEngage Alliance members **participated in National Review processes** as Governments completed the mandated reviews of progress and gaps in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action over the last 30 years. RWAMREC, MenEngage Alliance Coordinating organization of the MenEngage Rwanda network, joined the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) to contribute key inputs on the work to engage men and boys in gender

equality. **These efforts to influence national level reviews, built upon the coordinated engagement of the Alliance within key regional ECOSOC preparatory processes in the lead up to CSW69.**

The Global Secretariat, alongside the Advocacy Working Group coordinated the strategizing, information sharing and participation of members in joining and monitoring various regional processes. **Members engaged in ECOSOC Asia Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) regional preparatory processes and monitored the Africa, and Europe/North American UNECE regional and SWANA meetings.** Breakthrough joined UN Women and Bandana Rana, of the CEDAW Committee, in a panel discussion at the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting, raising a collective call for the inclusion of work with men and boys in order to achieve the realization of the BDPfA.

**Joint inputs**, developed collectively where shared with members to utilize as advocacy messaging ensuring the inclusion of work on men and masculinities within the regional outcome documents. While discussions on engaging men and boys emerged within all spaces, including through contributions by UN agencies, Member States and CSOs, the outcome documents of the regional processes did not substantively include engaging men



MenEngage Alliance Caucus Meeting

and boys. The UNECE meeting did however center the following recognition of increasing policies to engage men and boys to address gendered stereotypes:

*"Tackling gendered stereotypes that hinder women and girls' progress remains a priority. Gendered stereotypes underlie gender-based violence and affect all areas of life, including educational choices, labour market success, economic empowerment, and political participation. Policy dialogue about experiences and good practices to address the negative impacts of stereotypes, especially in younger generations, is necessary. A few countries are developing policy action engaging with men and boys as actors for gender equality (e.g., Albania, Denmark, Iceland, Latvia, Sweden)."*

## Additional Resources

To read your Government's submission, see here: [National-level reviews](#)

To read your region's submission, see here: [Regional 30-year review processes](#)

## Developing Joint Agendas on Men & Masculinities

*UN Secretary General makes strong calls to agenda on men and masculinities*

This year, the Alliance welcomed a strong recognition of men and masculinities within the UN Secretary General's Report: [Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third \(E/CN.6/2025/3\)](#). UNSG Antonio Guterres, made **strong calls for more transformative leadership by men in positions of power and recognized the work of organizing working on men and masculinities through feminist approaches as key allies** in the struggle for gender equality.

*"33. Men and boys also play a key role in supporting feminist movements and transforming patriarchal social norms. Men in leadership positions across public and private sectors, and in cultural and religious leadership roles, have a role to play in*

*challenging discrimination, unequal power between women and men, and discriminatory narratives that promote male dominance, and advocating for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their rights. In this respect, recent years have seen more pro-feminist men's organizations stand together with women's rights movements and organisations seeking to transform patriarchal masculinities."*

MenEngage Alliance members strategized on ways to engage with the UNSG during CSW69, to build upon his nuanced political positioning on the agenda of masculinities, including by joining the *UNSG Town Hall with Civil Society*, held as part of the official deliberations of the session. Anthony Keedi (ABAAD), registered to contribute to the joint question/comment on behalf of the Alliance, although not selected, it stands as an important contribution that the Alliance agreed to continue to advocate to present to the UNSG in the future.

MenEngage Alliance Collective Question/Comment to the UNSG:

*As your mandate comes to end, and as a vocal supporter for work to transform patriarchal masculinities and work with men and boys for gender justice, as well as a man in a position of power modeling leadership to advance women's rights - how do you see this work to transform patriarchal masculinities and work with men and boys for gender justice being further advanced for the transformation of societies and systems (including the United Nations) in the short, medium and long term?*

## MenEngage Alliance Joint Written & Oral Statements

This year, most MenEngage Alliance members with ECOSOC accreditation, came together to put forward bold calls on the special occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the BDPfA as a global network. **Because of the Alliance's principal role in advancing the work to engage men and boys over the last two decades**, it was uniquely positioned to deliver a historical assessment of progress in these efforts since Beijing, evaluate the current state of the field of



work and lay clear recommendations for the road ahead. Through a consultative drafting process, *ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality*, *Rwanda Men's Resource Center (RAMREC)*, *Work with Perpetrators e.V* and *Sonke Gender Justice Network*, jointly developed a joint written statement, alongside the *Global Advocacy Working Group* and *Youth Reference Group* of the Alliance, to provide the network's collective political agenda.

The [joint written statement](#) highlights the **lack of political commitment** to the *Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)* and the regression of gender equality, worsened by **rising patriarchal backlash and global conflicts**. It calls for dismantling patriarchal structures that perpetuate violence and discrimination, emphasizing the need to engage men and boys in gender justice while ensuring feminist accountability. The rise of **online misogyny and authoritarian leaders promoting anti-feminist policies** is identified as a major challenge. The statement urges governments to reaffirm their commitment to gender equality, **implement transformative policies and programs to engage men and boys**, and invest in accountability mechanisms to protect the rights of women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ individuals.

The collective of MenEngage members also agreed on the value of submitting a **joint oral statement, as a vital opportunity to raise our political voice - live - at the official**

**deliberations of CSW69.** On behalf of the Alliance, Festus Kisa, MenEngage Alliance Co-Chair and Executive Director of Q-Initiative, delivered the collective statement (pictured on the cover) within the 12th plenary meeting of CSW69, noting:

*The **Beijing Declaration recognized men and boys as key allies** in gender justice, yet no country has fully achieved gender equality due to deep-seated patriarchal norms.*

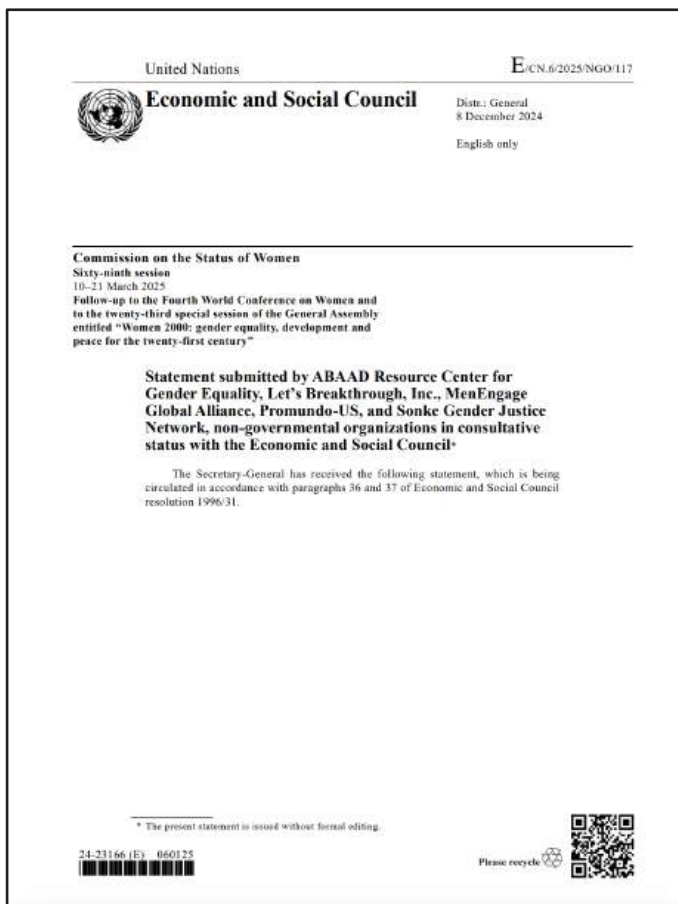
*Despite progress led by feminist movements, efforts to challenge these norms face increasing **backlash** at national, regional, and global levels.*

*Work engaging men and boys has expanded beyond **gender-based violence** to address **SRHR, LGBTIQ+ rights, unpaid care work, climate justice, and feminist peace.***

*Effective programs must go **beyond individual behavior change to transform patriarchal systems** and ensure accountability for perpetrators of gender-based violence.*

***Intersectional feminist approaches** are essential to avoid harm, as research warns that focusing solely on behavior change without systemic transformation can reinforce inequalities.*





Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Colombia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The Alliance shared key **technical inputs in two rounds of the negotiations**, including advocating the collective positioning of the Women's Rights Caucus on SRHR, GBV, climate justice, diversity language and men and masculinities.

## Analysis of the Outcomes of the CSW Political Declaration Negotiations

**Progress on the normative framework included:**

- **Reaffirmation of Gender Equality**  
**Commitments:** Despite global pushback, the adoption by consensus of the Political Declaration reaffirmed commitments to gender equality and women's rights, signaling continued international support.
- **Strengthening CSW's Role:** Member states committed to revitalizing CSW by enhancing accountability mechanisms, improving civil society engagement, and ensuring marginalized groups' participation.
- **Recognition of Care Work:** The 5R framework (Recognition, Representation, Remuneration, Reward, and Redistribution) was included, marking progress in acknowledging and valuing care systems.
- **First-Ever Mention of Gender-Based Violence:** For the first time, a CSW Political Declaration explicitly referenced gender-based violence, recognizing its intersectional dimensions.
- **Acknowledgment of Digital Gender-Based Violence:** Member states addressed online harassment, digital surveillance, and anti-rights movements in digital spaces, reinforcing commitments to human rights in online and offline contexts.

**Set-backs and "watering-down" of commitments to gender equality:**

## Language advocacy on the Political Declaration commemorating 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The negotiations on [Political declaration on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women](#), continued in line with prior years, posing another difficult and contentious multilateral negotiation on the most important normative framework for women's rights within the United Nations on a yearly basis.

MenEngage Alliance members worked alongside the [Women's Rights Caucus](#), submitting joint inputs gathered through consultation with the *Global Advocacy Working Group* and the *Youth Reference Group*, and supporting in the advocacy outreach to 24 Member States, via member's relationships with Government contacts in Rwanda, Botswana, South Africa, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands, Iceland, Germany, Spain, Norway, Netherlands, Finland, Canada,

- **Omission of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR):** The lack of explicit references to SRHR marked a significant regression, reflecting growing opposition to bodily autonomy.
- **Failure to Recognize Girls' Participation Rights:** The absence of explicit recognition of children's and adolescents' rights in decision-making, particularly in humanitarian and peacebuilding contexts, was a missed opportunity for intergenerational equity.
- **Stagnation on Climate Justice Language:** Despite women and girls facing the brunt of climate change, the declaration failed to advance climate justice commitments, merely repeating language from 2020.
- **Failure to include Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE),** protection for Women Human Rights Defenders and gender transformative approaches

### **Analysis of the Language on Men & Masculinities in the CSW Political Declaration**

In preparation for the negotiations, the Global Secretariat carried out an [Analysis of Past CSW Political Declarations & Recommendations on Language on Men and Masculinities](#) (MenEngage Alliance), in order to inform the red lines in language advocacy, as well as potentials for progressing the normative framework on language to engage men and boys and transform patriarchal masculinities.

**This year's political declaration saw meaningful progress, addressing for the first time in a political declaration, the need for Member States to implement programs and policies to engage men and boys** as part of their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the BDPfA.

*13. Further recognize the importance of men and boys fully engaging as strategic partners and allies, as well as agents and beneficiaries of change for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of*

*all women and girls, including their economic empowerment, and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, **and the need to design and implement national policies and programmes to fully engage men and boys in efforts to achieve the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including by addressing the root causes of gender inequality, such as negative social norms and gender stereotypes, and eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls;***

**This language built substantially** on the call for Member States to merely “**commit to taking measures to fully engage men and boys in efforts** to achieve the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action” as adopted in the *Political Declaration Beijing+25*; and language that did call on Member States's responsibilities for policy action, and only included the recognition of the multiple roles of men and boys in achieving gender equality, centered in the Political Declaration of Beijing+20 - “Further recognize the importance of men and boys fully engaging as strategic partners and allies, as well as agents and beneficiaries of change”.

Despite progress in the articulation of Member States as duty bearers in advancing this work, **key progressive language advocated by the Alliance, did not make it in.** MenEngage Alliance continued to push for the need to:

- Work beyond men and boys as individuals, to the **transformation of patriarchal masculinities, ideologies and systems**
- The links between hegemonic patriarchal masculinities and **LGBTIQ violence and the maintenance of the gender binary**
- Explicit references to **online and offline misogyny** and the need to end all forms of impunity, especially for **men in positions of power**





*The Opening Session of CSW69, and adoption of the Political Declaration. Photo by UN Women*

- **Centre accountability** as a central pillar in all programs and policies working to engage men and boys in gender justice

Members will continue to advocate for these key progressive language political positions in coming CSW sessions, **with many already adopted in other UN negotiations through the advocacy of the Alliance** - as the network continues to play its critical role as the leading advocacy collective monitoring and advocating for feminist informed language on men and masculinities, alongside leading feminist, LGBTIQ, and youth advocacy collectives.

See MenEngage Alliance's language mapping resources [here](#).

## **Negotiations on the Revitalization of the Commission on the Status of Women**

On the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Member States are also undergoing negotiations on the possibilities of revitalizing and reforming the Commission on the Status of Women. Born from the Pact of the Future, the proposal for UN system wide reform arising from the intergovernmental negotiations of the Summit of the Future in 2024, the CSW Revitalization process marks an imperative discussion taking place at CSW69 and

beyond, towards the potential to enshrine clearer procedures, modalities, mechanisms and substantive discussions to ensure the rights of all women, girls and LGBTIQ peoples worldwide.

For this reason, the Alliance submitted a [Joint Statement on the Revitalization of CSW](#), centering collective recommendations for **member states on how and why CSW should reform towards a more inclusive, responsive, protective, progressive and meaningful space**. The Alliance also actively participated and elevated ongoing feminist mobilization and [joint recommendations of the Women's Rights Caucus](#) and [NGO-CSW](#).

MenEngage Alliance is an active participant in the Commission on the Status of Women, engaging from national to regional to global level annually and with a delegation of over 50 members engaging in the session in New York each year for over a decade. The recommendations on CSW reform are informed by our experiences and expertise with CSW and with other United Nations human rights and development mechanisms broadly, as well as through ongoing conversations debriefing on past CSW sessions with Alliance members. We will continue to monitor this vital process to ensure positive outcomes, especially in light of low bars being set during the official plenary



with member states on this topic at CSW69. Without the ongoing push from feminist movements, we cannot not ensure transformative outcomes to revitalization of CSW.

## Convening members for joint agenda setting on anti-patriarchal work to engage men and boys at the UN and beyond

The Global Secretariat of MenEngage continued to convene the yearly MenEngage Alliance Opening Caucus Meeting, where our members have a dedicated space to connect and strategize with each other, build relationships, and shape our shared agenda and strategies for CSW69. Amidst the context of **intense funding cuts in the field of gender justice**, following announcements by the Trump administration in the US, the cuts to foreign aid and gender equality by the Governments of the Netherlands, among others, members discussed how to continue to stand in solidarity as a collective at these difficult times for those working to advance gender equality.

**Members also crowdsource information from the group on various key topics of CSW69** including: Updates on the negotiations of the Political Declaration, CSW Revitalization & Methods of Work negotiations, opposition monitoring updates, and and key Feminist, Youth and LGBTIQ Spaces and Discussions to join in solidarity. Members also shared their own events and spaces with the group.

As follow up to the meeting, it was agreed by the group that the Global Secretariat would **compile and sign-post over the listserv, key resources regarding alternative funding sources and stop gap funding mechanisms, as well as map surveys quantifying the scope and impacts of funding cuts** on the field of gender justice. These were disseminated in recent weeks to all members. You can see the [message here](#).

The MenEngage Alliance Caucus meetings continue to be a **pivotal space** for joint

coordination and agenda-setting, in which participating members are able to connect to carry out joint activism and advocacy and to respond to urgent and emergent actions arising from CSW sessions as they unfold.

## Organizing high-level events and sessions to influence global policy and practice on engaging men and boys

MenEngage Alliance, alongside UN Women, OHCHR, WHO, Swedish International Development Agency, Government of Rwanda, the Government of Sweden, RWAMREC, Breakthrough, Equimundo, Sonke Gender Justice, ABAAD, MenEngage Iberia, organized the side event, Men and boys as agents of change to feminism and tackling barriers to solidarity, held at the Permanent Mission of Rwanda during CSW69.

Speakers examined the growing resistance among men and boys to feminism and explored various ways to overcome these trends, including through the implementation of gender transformative programming to engage men and boys across a variety of thematic areas, working together to understand the manosphere and other misogynistic online and offline spaces and tactics that radicalize young men, and discussed underlying key transversal principles for the work on men and masculinities.

Lopa Banerjee, UN Women Civil Society Director made strong calls to the importance of work to dismantle individual and institutional expressions of patriarchal masculinities, sharing that::

The poster features the title "Men and boys as agents of change to feminism and tackling barriers to solidarity" in bold orange and red text. Below the title, it lists the date "12 March 2020 | 10:00am-12:00pm EST", location "Permanent Mission of Rwanda, New York", and language "English". A QR code and "Join online" link are provided. The poster lists several speakers with their names and titles: Niyama Mungaho-Twanga (FPA Unit Manager, Burundi Gender Justice), Gloria Umutesiwe (Director of Programs, RWAMREC), Anthony Kasili (Program Lead, ManuMata, ABAAD), Nyaana Chonochury (CEO, Breakthrough), Lopa Banerjee (Director, UN Civil Society, CS-India, UN Women), and Erin Gerber (SDG Programme Specialist, UNFPA). A row of speaker photos is shown below. At the bottom, logos for various organizations like UN Women, SIDA, and others are displayed.



A full-house for the MenEngage co-organised Side Event, 'Men and boys as agents of change to feminism and tackling barriers to solidarity'

*"Across the world, we are witnessing the ways in which the institutions of state and capital—which are run by men—are privileging power and wealth in service of a muscular patriarchy, exacerbated by economic precarity, political polarization, war, and rising authoritarianism. A new kind of hyper-performative masculinity is surging. Men and boys as agents of change must work to transform systems and structures that are privileging patriarchy today. The work on transforming masculinities has to prioritize the full arc—from individual behavior to institutional norms—and it has to do that with the urgency, solidarity, and determination that this time demands."*

Gary Barker, CEO of Equimundo Center for Social Justice, unpacked the emergent economic and social manosphere and its massive appeal for men and boys;

*"The "manosphere" is profiting off men's current sense of precarity [and] the*

*pernicious effect of the manosphere is that it's weaponized by profit. The more outrageous you are, the more clicks you get, the more money you make. We also need to tell men: This version of capitalist patriarchy is a scam for you too. You're told to sacrifice your body for someone else's profit. The "get-rich-quick" schemes won't save you. Why are men and boys ending up in the so-called "manosphere," or why are they becoming part of the backlash agenda? Most young men who encounter figures like Andrew Tate aren't seeking out hate—they're looking for how to make money, how to get ahead. Tate's "Hustler University" sells them get-rich-quick schemes, and the misogyny comes as a free extra. The pernicious effect of the manosphere is that it's weaponized by profit. The more outrageous you are, the more clicks you get, the more money you make."*

Paola Dalwan Saher of Women Deliver reminded participants of the ongoing consequences of patriarchy to women, girls



and gender non-conforming individuals, as well as to society as a whole, and addressed the resurgent patriarchal ideologies embroiled within the backlash:

*"Patriarchy harms everyone. It erases trans and gender-diverse people through legislative and cultural violence. It distorts notions of consent for boys and men, particularly men of color, who face intersecting stereotypes that deny them innocence or humanity—branded as perpetual threats. These stereotypes harden into norms, infiltrating global policy spaces where "parental rights" and "family values" are wielded to dismantle progress. Simone de Beauvoir, one of our foremothers, who warned that whenever economic crises emerge, we must remain vigilant because women's rights are the first to be undermined. This is precisely what we're observing. When women's labor outside the home is no longer deemed necessary, there's a push to reinstate so-called "traditional values"—a call for women to return to the private sphere. Rather than*

*addressing structural inequalities exacerbated by neoliberal and austerity policies, states attempt to sell this societal project: "You're no longer needed in the workforce, so retreat to domesticity."*

Laxman Belbase, Co-Director of MenEngage Alliance further addressed how working through a men and masculinities lens must necessitate dismantling the gender binary as a core principle of its political aims:

*"This work [of engaging men and boys for gender justice] necessarily includes people of all gender identities. We must emphasize this because these conversations often fall into a binary approach - men versus women - when in reality, [for example] if we are not actively supporting trans rights, we cannot claim to be working for any kind of transformative change. We cannot divide ourselves along lines that ultimately contradict our own vision for equality."*

Watch the event recording [here](#):



*Gisèle Umutoniwase, Director of Programs, RWAMREC, speaking at the MenEngage co-organised Side Event, 'Men and boys as agents of change to feminism and tackling barriers to solidarity'*



*Joni van de Sand, co-director of MenEngage Alliance, speaking at the panel, Safer Digital Space.*




**SAVE THE DATE**

**Transforming Patriarchal Masculinities and Misogynist Norms in Online Platforms to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls Across the Online-Offline Continuum**

Please join us on the margins of the 69th Commission on the Status of Women



**MONDAY**  
**MAR 10**    4.00pm - 5.30pm

Conference Room 1925  
 UN Women HQ  
 220 E 42 St








The Side Event - ***Transforming Patriarchal Masculinities and Misogynist Norms in Online Platforms to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls Across the Online-Offline Continuum*** - organized by UN Women, EDVAW Platform, UNESCO, Government of Iceland, Equimundo, and MenEngage Alliance, addressed critical topics regarding the rise of **technology-facilitated violence**, which has amplified harmful masculinities, misogynist norms, and violence against women and girls (VAWG), both online and offline. Digital platforms have become key spaces where misogynist narratives flourish, normalizing discrimination and fueling backlash against gender equality. A major contributor is the "**manosphere**," an online network opposing feminism, reinforcing patriarchal ideals, and radicalizing young men against progress in gender rights.

Joni van de Sand, MenEngage Alliance Co-Director, joined the panel discussion on **Safer Digital Space**, and spoke to how the backlash disproportionately affects women's rights activists, feminist

advocates, and human rights defenders, who face online harassment, cyberbullying, and threats, undermining their activism and legitimacy. Joni also highlighted how we must also recognize that technology itself is not the root cause, as it is merely amplifying and reflective of the existing patriarchal social norms.

Despite these challenges, digital platforms also hold potential for transformative change. Feminist movements, alongside evidence-based approaches to engaging men and boys as allies, offer ways to counter harmful narratives and reshape social norms. A key strategy is targeting the "moveable middle"—individuals whose attitudes can shift toward supporting gender equality and addressing men's gendered experiences and concerns.

As Joni says, "what was considered unthinkable just weeks ago in terms of online misogyny, political sexism, racism, and fascism is now shockingly commonplace. Still, in just the past two years, we've seen inspiring global initiatives actively engaging young men in alternative spaces. Organizations like Spain's "**Bróders**" aren't just support groups but deliberate political projects transforming masculinities toward equality and care."



## #StandWithHer campaign launch

Film Director Nisha Pahuja, alongside Futures Without Violence, Equipundo, Equality Now, MenEngage Alliance, and UN Women, co-hosted the screening of the Oscar nominated documentary film, *To Kill a Tiger*, as part of the UN Women CSW69 Film Series: Storytelling for Impact.

The documentary film draws upon work on men and masculinities in Jharkhand India, which included the work of MenEngage Alliance members. Centered around the story of a young girl who was gang-raped and the journey of her and her father towards empowerment and a complex legal victory. With cultural pressure to get her married to the rapist, instead, her father with the support of a men's group and a local NGO - they ensured the prosecution of the rapist and supported the father to continue the girl's education including putting her through college.

MenEngage Alliance Co-Directors Joni van de Sand and Laxman Belbase, joined the reception following the film screening and committed their support on behalf of the Alliance to support and amplify the advocacy campaign developed to accompany the tour of the film across various continents.

The #StandWithHer campaign is a petition that seeks to amplify collective solidarity and voice, especially on Capitol Hill, to end all forms of violence against women and girls, with the aim to gather 10,000 signatures in the coming months.



*A still from the Oscar-nominated feature documentary, *To Kill a Tiger*, which has been a launchpad for the #StandWithHer campaign in which MenEngage Alliance is a one of the NGO partners. Above: MenEngage co-directors Laxman Belbase and Joni van de Sand spoke at the film's CSW screening and launch event for the #StandWithHer campaign.*





**MenEngage Alliance**

working with men and boys for gender equality