

The UK is putting women and girls at the heart of everything that we do, from development to diplomacy: UK National statement at the UN Commission on the Status of Women General Discussion

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Statement by The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State (Minister for Skills) and Minister of State (Minister for Women and Equalities) at the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

In recent years, we have seen monumental shifts in gender equality.

We have made some gains, which we must celebrate!

But we have also seen the dismantling of hard-won rights and women facing the devastation of war and climate disaster.

We're all here with a shared purpose.

To see a world where all women and girls have the opportunity to achieve the best outcomes in life, free from violence and discrimination.

This year's priority theme provides us with an opportunity to examine obstacles that prevent women from seeking and obtaining legal remedies.

Too often, we see women and girls denied access to justice because of socio-economic, cultural, and institutional barriers that prevent them from exercising their rights.

So we should remain steadfast in our commitment to dismantle those barriers.

We were pleased to adopt a strong Agreed Conclusions on the key theme of access to justice for all women and girls earlier this week, which the UK was proud to support in the spirit of multilateralism.

In the UK, we have taken a bold stance and set our ambition high.

We have designated violence against women and girls a national emergency.

And made it one of our missions for the government to halve rates within a decade.

Our new 10-year strategy includes a whole society approach to prevention, justice, and support.

Internationally, we are putting women and girls at the heart of everything that we do, from our development to our diplomacy.

We have recognised violence against women and girls is also an international emergency and

pledged to step up UK action to tackle this cross-border threat.

By strengthening our partnerships here at CSW, we will use all possible levers to promote women's rights and freedoms, protect sexual and reproductive health and rights for all women and girls, and ensure the multilateral system remains a powerful force for gender equality.

As the rollback on women's rights intensifies, we join many others in reaffirming our commitment to advancing gender equality.

The pace is too slow.

Geopolitical tensions are rising, and women and girls are suffering.

But by joining forces, sharing learning and expertise, we can deliver a better future for women and girls everywhere.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-is-putting-women-and-girls-at-the-heart-of-everything-that-we-do-from-development-to-diplomacy-uk-national-statement-at-the-un-commission-on>