

Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA), Inc.



November 2023

Dear Friends:

On behalf of Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA), Inc. (PW), we are pleased to announce that the application process is now open for the 68th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The PC(USA) has been engaged with gender justice at the United Nations since the early 1990s. In 2006, PW began mobilizing contingents of women from across the church to participate in CSW as part of a PC(USA) delegation, furthering our shared work for gender justice in the international community. Presbyterian Women received accreditation to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2018, thus strengthening the partnership between PW and the PC(USA) and enhancing Presbyterian visibility at the UN.

Presbyterian Women will form a delegation to attend the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held in person and online March 11–22, 2024. This letter provides information about the Commission (and the Forum, organized by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women/NY) and how to apply to be part of the Presbyterian Women delegation.

About the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

As UN Women explains, “The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.” Each annual session of the Commission focuses on a specific priority theme and a review theme. The focus of the 68th session of the Commission 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.” The review theme is: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw68-2024>).

During CSW65, more than 25,000 participants from around the world, including UN Member States, UN programs, agencies, and civil society come together to further gender equity for women. The UN invites nongovernmental organizations holding consultative status with ECOSOC to advocate for the inclusion of their organizations’ positions. The Commission publishes agreed conclusions with concrete recommendations for action by governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, to be implemented at the international, national, regional, and local levels.

About the NGO Forum

In addition to the official meetings of CSW, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women/NY organizes a forum of parallel events that takes place during the Commission. The forum begins with a consultation day and features events sponsored by nongovernmental organizations. The events provide additional opportunities for advocacy, learning, and networking. Normally, the events are held in venues off UN grounds. Because of the pandemic, 2021 and 2022 events were held online and will be hybrid for the 2024 commission.

About Ecumenical Women

Ecumenical Women is a coalition of approximately 20 Christian organizations representing more than 100 million Christians worldwide. Ecumenical Women believes that the church is a powerful transformative vehicle for the teaching, protection, and enforcement of women’s rights and gender equality when its constituents and leadership are informed and empowered. Presbyterian Women joins Ecumenical Women in transformative advocacy at the United Nations.

Presbyterian Women’s Participation in CSW and the NGO CSW/NY Forum

Through participation, delegates are inspired and equipped to advocate for gender equality and women’s empowerment at the international level, and to transfer what they learn at CSW to local, state, and national levels.

A limited number of grounds passes are provided to each NGO with ECOSOC status. Registered delegates will be able to attend side events (high-level panel discussions held on UN grounds). Anyone wishing to attend parallel events (part of the NGO CSW/NY Forum) will be able to participate online or in person. All events provide opportunities for advocacy, information exchange, and networking.

Tentative Schedule

Several short trainings via Zoom—between the beginning of February through the beginning of March
Presbyterian orientation (mandatory)—Friday, March 8, 2024, time and access TBA.

Ecumenical Women (EW) orientation (mandatory)—Saturday, March 9, 2024, time and access TBA.

NGO CSW/NY Consultation Day (optional)—Sunday, March 10, 2024, time and access TBA.

68th Session of Commission on the Status of Women—minimum participation is Monday, March 11– Friday, March 15, 2024; ideal participation is between Monday, March 11–Friday, March 22. Delegates are encouraged to attend as many events **in person** as possible. Attending some events online is also an option.

Presbyterian Women sponsors one event during the Commission. Time/Place/Topic TBA. This is mandatory for PWs.

More detailed information on programming and scheduling for all events will follow as it becomes available.

Goals of Participation

- To advocate, guided by PC(USA) General Assembly policy and the PW Purpose, within the Commission, with the goal of affecting the agreed conclusions of the Commission.
- To learn and use advocacy processes and skills within the UN context.
- To work in partnership with people of all ages on women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development and the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.
- To inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterian Women to demonstrate and proclaim God's justice, peace, and love at the Commission and in their local contexts.
- To expand the inclusive and caring community of women and their supporters.
- To build and nurture networks with global partners.

Expectations of Delegates

Members of the Presbyterian Women delegation represent the PC(USA) and Presbyterian Women. In light of these considerations, the following is expected.

- **Attendance:** Delegates are expected to attend as many short training sessions as possible, the Presbyterian Women's delegation orientation and the Ecumenical Women orientation, both held before the Commission starts, and to participate in at **least one week** of the Commission (see schedule above), a combination of in person and online. Attendance through the second week of the Commission is ideal for the full advocacy experience.
- **Preparation:** Delegates are expected to have knowledge of issues related to 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," knowledge of the PC(USA) policies on eradicating systemic poverty; knowledge of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals are key for full participation. Delegates are expected to read preparatory materials, especially the agreed conclusions of the 63rd session focusing on the social protection systems and access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw68-2024> and to participate in preparatory conference calls, videoconferences, and/or webinars. Delegates must have reliable access to email, since much of our communication will occur via email.
- **Advocacy, Worship, Education, and Communication:** Throughout the Commission there will be opportunities to engage in advocacy efforts, to plan and participate in worship services, to attend and lead educational events, and to share these experiences using social media and other communication tools. Delegates are expected to participate in some manner in all four of these—advocacy, worship, education, and communication—while participating in the Commission and the Forum.
- **Participation:** Delegates are expected to make the Commission their top priority during the online event and to work together to enhance PW's advocacy efforts.

- **Reporting back while participating in the Commission:** Each day, delegates are expected to report to the Presbyterian Women's delegation on the events in which they participated. Delegates are encouraged to use social media to share their experiences with a wider audience; assistance will be provided.
- **Reporting back after the Commission:** Delegates may be asked to write articles after the Commission. All are encouraged to share their experiences at the Commission with the wider church—including, but not limited to, Presbyterian Women groups, their congregation, other congregations, and their mid-council.
- **Use of contact information and photographs:** Members of the Presbyterian delegation give permission to the programs and ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA), Inc., to use their contact information and photographs within the church.

Application Process

- To apply, please complete the attached application and return it to the PW CSW Planning Team by email to Patricia Longfellow, patricia.longfellow@pcusa.org by Sunday, **December 10, 2023**. Space is limited, so all applicants may not be accommodated.
- Individuals selected as delegates must have a knowledge of and experience with the issues addressed by the 68th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In addition, efforts will be made to select a delegation that reflects the diversity of Presbyterian Women including age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity, ordination status, geographical distribution.
- Decisions on participation will be sent out by **December 31, 2023**. If selected, instructions for confirming your participation will be included in that notification.
- For more information, direct emails to the PW CSW Planning Team at patricia.longfellow@pcusa.org

We look forward to your participation.

Presbyterian Women CSW Delegate Team

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**Presbyterian Delegation Application
United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
March 11-22, 2024**

**Application Deadline: December 10, 2023
Email completed applications to the PW CSW Planning Team
c/o Patricia Longfellow, patricia.longfellow@pcusa.org**

Name as it appears on a government-issued ID:			
Permanent Address:			
Street:	City:	State:	Zip:
Email:	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	
Date of Birth:	Weight (lbs or kg):	Height (cm or in):	
Place of Birth:			
Eye color:	Hair color:	Race:	
Ethnicity:	Gender:	Sexual Orientation:	
Emergency Contact:			
First Name:	Last Name:	Phone Number:	
Congregation:			
Presbytery:			
Synod:			
What is your current active PW involvement/participation: (e.g., congregation, Presbytery, Synod, or national roles or PW staff)?			
List any PC(USA) Affiliations: (e.g. Young Women's Ministries, Presbyterian Men, Hunger, Peacemaking, Campus Ministry, PC(USA) staff, etc.)			
Have you previously attended the Commission? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
If yes, what year(s) did you attend?			

**All personal information given in this section will be used for the process of applying for United Nations Badges at the Commission and not used for any other purposes. Please be as accurate as possible.*

- **Describe your involvement and interest in women's issues and the work of the United Nations.**
- **This year's Commission focuses on** "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." The review theme is "Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls."
- **What do you know about this work? What experience, if any, do you have in this advocacy or work?**
- **Which challenges and conditions related to gender equality and the empowerment of women have most affected the women and girls in your community over the last ten years?**
- **What do you want leaders at the United Nations to know and do in the future about enhancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls?**

- **What do you hope to gain from your experience as a PW delegate and what do you hope to do with that experience once you return home?**

You will be notified by **December 31, 2023**, about whether you have been selected to be a member of the Presbyterian Women delegation to the **68th** Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.