

## EPISCOPAL PRESENCE AT UNCSW 68

**“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”**

**March 11<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**



### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### **What is “UNCSW” and what happens there?**

The [United Nations Commission on the Status of Women \(UNCSW\)](#) is an official, two-week UN meeting that meets annually, since 1946, to study the conditions facing women and girls around the world, promote women’s and girls’ empowerment and women’s rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields, and to make recommendations on urgent problems they face. In 1995, the [Fourth World Conference on Women](#) adopted the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), a global policy framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women that set out 12 Critical Areas of Concern. Ever since, it has been the policy framework reference for the annual UNCSW meetings. Each year, a priority theme and a review theme – and sometimes, an emerging theme – provide the context for dialogue and decision-making during this important two-week meeting.

The official UNCSW meeting is preceded by preparatory regional meetings throughout the year and then the annual two-week meeting in the spring at UN headquarters in New York City. The annual meeting consists of an ongoing plenary session and side events organized by member states and UN entities. In addition, there are public, “parallel” events that occur at the same time as the UN meeting. These events may take place in the immediate vicinity of the UN, or elsewhere – but they are “parallel” in that they happen alongside, and at the same time, as the official meeting. All the events mirror the themes of the official meeting.

The [68th session of UNCSW \(“CSW68”\)](#) will be held from Monday, 3/11 to Friday, 3/22/2024. The priority theme for this year’s session will be ““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””.

#### **Why and how do Episcopalians engage at UNCSW? How will they do so this year?**

Episcopalians (and their wider Anglican Communion family) participate in UNCSW because they care about women and girls in all their diversity and want to be part of the global dialogue that seeks to empower them and improve their status worldwide.

There is a long, proud history of Episcopal engagement with the UN since its founding, and with UNCSW for many years. Many Anglican and Episcopal women were present in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on

Women that birthed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A very special chapter opened in the 2000s, when women from the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada joined forces to bring Anglican women from around the world to UNCSW. Our Anglican/Episcopal engagement has grown and changed since then. It includes grassroots engagement and official, institutional engagement with accredited delegations representing the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church and the Mothers' Union. All these efforts, together, have contributed to a sense of community and knowledge of what happens at the UN. Our combined presence brings the wisdom and experiences of our local parishes and communities as contributors to this global dialogue and we bring our UN experience and insights back home to our local contexts.

In 2014, The Episcopal Church achieved an important upgrade in its institutional relationship with the United Nations, when it was granted consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council. As a result, since 2015, The Episcopal Church has been able to bring up to 20 accredited representatives to observe the official UNCSW plenary meetings. Every year since 2015, a delegation nominated by our Presiding Bishop has represented our Church and advocated on behalf of General Convention policies at UNCSW.

Alongside the work of the Presiding Bishop's delegation, Episcopalians continue to come to UNCSW in the same ways they always have. They come to learn, to share their stories and experiences, to meet new people and make new connections, to represent other organizations, and for many other reasons. Their grassroots engagement is vital. One organic and important aspect of this ongoing engagement is that some Episcopalians, who have attended UNCSW faithfully for decades, return year after year to share their knowledge, raise up and train newcomers.

From 2020 – 2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic, both the Anglican and Episcopal delegations and wider presence at UNCSW continued virtually. We are delighted and give thanks to God that in 2024 we will return for the second time with an in-person and hybrid presence at UN headquarters in New York for CSW68.

### **How can Episcopalians get involved in UNCSW's 68<sup>th</sup> session?**

The full two-week UNCSW 68 meeting and related parallel events will be held in hybrid format (in-person in New York and virtually). This allows greater and more equitable access for Episcopalians who can participate remotely.

- **In New York City**

- *Become a delegate with the Presiding Bishop's delegation.* All are welcome to apply to be considered as a Presiding Bishop's delegate, an accredited representative who observes UN meetings, represents, and advocates on behalf of the Presiding Bishop. The application process usually opens in December in the year before the UNCSW session, via a Public Affairs press release and Episcopal UN social media, with a link to the application on the [Episcopal Church UNCSW webpage](#). The application process for CSW68 occurred in December 2023 and the Presiding Bishop is expected to announce nominations in mid-January 2024.
- *Come on your own or with an Episcopal Church group to attend public events.* Many Episcopalians choose to come to UNCSW individually or with a group. In past years, there have been groups from National and New York-based Episcopal Church Women, Anglican Women's Empowerment, the Anglican Church of Canada, parish youth groups, and more.
- *Attend "parallel events" in the UN vicinity.* There are literally hundreds of free, public events on offer in hybrid format that relate to the UNCSW themes. Most of them are coordinated by the [NGO Committee on the Status of Women \(NGO CSW\)](#). To sign up for all the events via one blanket registration, visit their website and register for the "NGO CSW/NY Forum". Note that registration is free and you do not need to be a member to register. Once registered, look for the list of parallel events on NGO CSW's website and related apps beginning in late February.
- *Attend official "side events" at the United Nations.* "Side events" are organized by at least one UN member state, and usually include civil society participation. While the UNCSW meetings are open only to accredited delegates, it is often possible to attend UNCSW side events that are held on the UN premises.

Look for the [list of side events on the UN Women's CSW 68 webpage](#) to be posted in late February. Events requiring an RSVP usually are open to the public. Be sure to RSVP early, as they fill up quickly.

- *Participate in joint Anglican/Episcopal worship and events.* You are warmly invited to join Episcopal Church-hosted events, with the participation of our wider Anglican and faith-based family! Events will be advertised on the [Episcopal Church UNCSW webpage](#). If you or your church are hosting an event, please let everyone know by submitting an event listing to the [Episcopal News Service Events page](#).
- **Remotely**
  - *Educate yourself about the issues* and follow UNCSW 68 developments on [UN Women's UNCSW 68 webpage](#), updates on [UN Women's website](#) and read up on the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#). Read about The Episcopal Church's position in the written statement submitted by the Presiding Bishop to UNCSW 67.
  - *Watch the UNCSW 68 official meeting livestream* at <https://media.un.org/en/webtv>. The entire two-week meeting is livestreamed and can be viewed afterwards, along with archived sessions.
  - *Follow UNCSW 68 developments* on [UN Women's dedicated UNCSW webpage](#) and social media using hashtags #CSW68 and #GenerationEquality.
  - *Follow Episcopal and Anglican engagement at UNCSW via social media and share your own experiences, stories and thoughts* via hashtags #CSW68, #EpiscopalUN (all things Episcopal Church and the UN) and #EpiscopalCSW (our Episcopal Church involvement at CSW, continuous reporting from year to year).
  - *Organize an event in your parish, school or local community* that relates to the UNCSW theme. Share your event online via #CSW68, #EpiscopalUN and #EpiscopalCSW.
  - *Pray for fellow Episcopalians and Anglicans* engaged in UNCSW's work, and all participants from around the world. Pray that the decisions made at UNCSW will further women's and girls' empowerment, gender equality and gender justice.
  - *Submit a guest blog* to our [Episcopal Church and the UN webpage](#). Send articles of 250-500 words + photo to [EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org).

### **What Episcopal and Anglican events are happening in New York City during UNCSW?**

- With UNCSW 68 being a hybrid event, it is possible to attend in-person or remotely the events being organized by The Episcopal Church or the Anglican Communion. Please check back in February on the [Episcopal Church UNCSW webpage](#). If you or your group are hosting an event, please let everyone know by submitting an event listing to the [Episcopal News Service Events page](#).

### **What UNCSW-related events are taking place outside New York City?**

We would love to know! Are you hosting a UNCSW-related event in your parish or local community? Publicize your event on the [Episcopal News Service Events page](#) and use the #CSW67, #EpiscopalUN, and #EpiscopalCSW hashtags to share with the wider Church.

Whether you are interested in participating in UNCSW as a Presiding Bishop's delegate, on your own or with a group, you are welcome.

Episcopal UN office  
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