

Outcome of Women's Commission 2013

Negotiations between delegates to this year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) concluded by resolving that violence against women and girls must end, but consensus did not come easily (*The Guardian 16 Mar 2013*). Up until the very last minute it looked as if a small group of countries was going to [derail the process](#) and undermine previous agreements, as they did last year.

After months of behind the scenes lobbying and two weeks of difficult negotiations in New York, the CSW outcome document includes strong statements about the intrinsic human rights of women and girls, [gender](#) equality, women's empowerment and reproductive rights - the last being an area of particular contention.

While welcoming the news that agreement had finally been reached, civil society groups expressed dismay ([civil society groups expressed "deep concern"](#)) that some governments are attempting to unravel longstanding international commitments to protect women and girls from harm. Over one billion or a third of the world's female population suffers from violence, often at the hands of intimate partners or other family members.



In the words of the NGO, Action Aid, "The process has raised some clear red flags about the state of global thinking on women's rights. A small but significant number of countries, led by Iran, Russia, Syria and the Vatican, have pushed hard to roll back language on women's rights to where we were decades ago. The backlash against women we have seen at this year's CSW should send a strong message to all governments that we must redouble our efforts and investment in these issues."

The CSW outcome document emphasises the need to end harmful traditional practices, including child marriage, and calls on member states to ensure services are focused on marginalized groups, such as indigenous women, older women, female migrant workers, women with disabilities, women living with HIV and women held in custody.

UN Women's executive director, Michelle Bachelet, said she was particularly heartened that an agreement was reached this year. "By adopting this document, governments have made clear that discrimination and violence against women and girls has no place in the 21st century. There is no turning back."

For more information open the following link (highlight then click control) and those in the text:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/mar/16/activists-welcome-un-agreement-womens-rights>

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