ANGLICAN/ EPISCOPAL PRESENCE AT UNCSW 64

“Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”

March 9th – 20th, 2020

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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 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, at the same time as the official meeting. All the events relate to the themes of the official meeting.

The 64th session of UNCSW (“UNCSW 64”) will be held from Monday, 3/9 to Friday, 3/20/2020. The priority theme for this year’s session will be “Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”.

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

Episcopalians and Anglicans are interested in taking part in UNCSW because they care about women and girls, 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 Episcopal and Anglican women were present 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 together to bring Anglican women from around the world to UNCSW. Our engagement has grown and changed since then. It includes grassroots engagement and official, institutional engagement with two accredited delegations, one representing the Anglican Communion and one representing The Episcopal Church. All of these efforts, together, have contributed to a sense of community and knowledge of what happens at the UN. Our presence helps our parishes and communities understand how their local ministry contributes to this global dialogue and how, as Episcopalians, we carry that back home once we have been at the UN.

In 2014, The Episcopal Church experienced 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 appointed by our Presiding Bishop has represented our Church and advocated on behalf of General Convention policies at UNCSW.

However, Episcopalians continue to come to UNCSW in the same ways they always have. They come to learn, to share their stories and experience, to meet new people and make new connections, to follow their own advocacy agenda, 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 year after year, return annually to share their knowledge, train and raise up newcomers.

In 2020, the traditionally strong Anglican and Episcopal presence continues with participants and delegations representing more than ten countries worldwide.

**How can Episcopalians get involved in UNCSW’s 64th session?**

Episcopalians can participate in UNCSW 64 both in New York City and 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 is announced in mid-summer the year before the UNCSW session, via a Public Affairs press release and the Episcopal UN social media, with a link to the application on the [Episcopal UN webpage](#). The application process closes in the fall. The Presiding Bishop nominates delegates from the pool of applicants and announces the nominations in November.
  - **Come on your own or with an Episcopal Church group.** Many Episcopalians choose to come to UNCSW individually or with a group. There have been groups from Anglican Women’s Empowerment, National and New York-based Episcopal Church Women, 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 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”. 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 February.
- Attend official “side events” at the United Nations. While the UNCSW meetings are not open to the public, it is often possible to attend UNCSW side events that are held within the UN premises. Look for the list of side events on the UNCSW 64 website to be posted in 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 at the Episcopal Church Center, churches in the Diocese of New York and other venues in New York City. Check this website and Episcopal Church’s calendar in February for details.

- Remotely
  - Educate yourself about the issues. Read the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and updates on UN Women’s website.
  - Watch live or archived sessions of UNCSW’s official meetings at webtv.un.org. The entire two-week meeting is livestreamed and can be viewed afterwards, as well.
  - Organize an event in your parish, school or local community that relates to the UNCSW theme. Share your event online via #CSW 64, #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.
  - Follow UNCSW 64 developments on UN Women’s dedicated UNCSW webpage and social media using hashtags #CSW64, #Beijing25 and #GenerationEquality.
  - Follow Episcopal and Anglican engagement at UNCSW via social media and share your own experiences, stories and thoughts via hashtags #EpiscopalUN (all things Episcopal Church and the UN) and #EpiscopalCSW (our Episcopal Church involvement at CSW, continuous reporting from year to year).
  - Submit a guest blog to our Episcopal Church and the UN webpage. Send articles of 250-500 words + photo to lmain@episcopalchurch.org.

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

- At the Episcopal Church Center. Since the early 2000s, the Episcopal Church Center has served as a gathering place for Episcopalians and Anglicans who wish to participate in UNCSW activities and events, worship, pray, meet with each other, and educate themselves about the themes in order to take that back home and train up new leaders.

  Please check back in February for an updated schedule of events on this FAQ sheet.

- Other venues in New York City. Various Episcopal churches in the New York area also host their own UNCSW parallel events and hospitality. Please check in with local churches and consult the Episcopal Church calendar for updates.

  If your group or venue is offering a UNCSW-related event that you would like to publicize, please let us know via the Episcopal Church calendar.

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 Church’s calendar and use the #CSW64, #EpiscopalUN, and #EpiscopalCSW hashtags to share with the wider Church.

Whether you are interested in coming to UNCSW as a Presiding Bishop’s delegate, on your own or with a group, locally or remotely, you are welcome. January 30, 2020