

Soroptimists take the Fight for Women's Rights to the World Stage this March

As women's rights and violence against women and girls (VAWG) dominates global headlines, a leading women's charity, [Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland](#) (SIGBI), is taking its fight for women's rights to the world stage. Next month, the charity will head to New York to contribute to the UN's Commission on the Status of Women, pushing for urgent action and policy change.

The annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – the biggest women's congress – meets in March each year to address the widespread inequalities, violence and discrimination women continue to face all around the world.

While UN member states vote on resolutions, selected NGOs are given consultative status and are actively invited to participate in the work of the CSW. Since 1984, Soroptimist International (SI) has been proud to be one of the official organisations awarded consultative status by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

This is how women's charity, [Soroptimist International Great Britain & Ireland](#) (SIGBI), who were also awarded consultative status in 2013 – as one of the five Federations of the wider SI – play a crucial role in ensuring member states remain accountable, driving action and improvements for women's equality.

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Ruth Healey, President of SIGBI, said: "Our members – Soroptimists – are proud to have consultative status at CSW, and are looking forward to joining over 9,000 attendees in New York, as one of the biggest delegations of NGOs.

"As part of this, we will reflect on the progress made – and the work still to be done. We call on the Government to acknowledge the shortfall in action and results on women's rights, equality, and empowerment, especially as we reach an important milestone this CSW, thirty years after the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)."

Thirty years ago, world leaders made a promise – equal rights, opportunities, power, and safety for women and girls everywhere.

The 1995 [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) enshrines that promise. It is still the world's most comprehensive, visionary plan ever created, spanning 12 areas of focus, to achieve equal rights of ALL women and girls.

SIGBI's work impacts on all these areas, and they work hard to hold governments and decision-makers to account, ensuring they make progress and deliver on their promises.

Ruth added: "Thirty years on, we are not on track. Not only because of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, reactions to climate change and more, but also because governments around the world are working to reverse the critical changes which have already been made.

"With applications to this year's BPfA thirty per cent higher than usual, the numbers are indicative of the importance of Beijing30. It's time to push back against this unfortunate resistance, and fix the trajectory for all women and girls, now and in the future."

“We’re privileged, as a charity, to be able to participate in this event,” **Ruth said.** “At a grassroots level, our club activity spans 248 clubs, mostly throughout the UK, but also in Ireland, Malta, Asia and the Caribbean, and we currently have a total of 5,150 members taking action, via a diverse variety of projects, to stand up for women and girls.”

As one of the few charities with a clear link to the UN, SIGBI offers an opportunity for women who want to make a tangible difference.

While representatives, including SIGBI’s Director of Programme, Lindsay Green, are visiting New York, clubs across the UK are using their networks to deliver projects at a local, national and international level to educate, empower and enable women and girls.

SIGBI is a membership organisation which focuses on empowering women and girls to achieve their full potential. Learn more here: <https://sigbi.org/>

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